UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Ethics and Management of Sustainability

2627-2-F6303M015

Learning objectives

Understanding and Knowledge

This course addresses the ethical responsibility of managers and institutions and it aims to provide knowledge and understanding of:

- the field of study of businesss ethics, sustainability and firm responsibility,
- the actions and corporate decisions at the individual and organizational level through the lens of principles and moral values
- the core processes underlying the management of ethical issues within institutions;
- the levers for creating sustainable and shared value;
- the evolving relationship between business and society;
- major ethical challanges and basic frameworks for understanding success and failure in managing ethics, sustainability, and corporate responsibility.

Understanding and Knowledge application

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- analyze ethical challenges and dilemmas at the individual, organizational, and societal level in national, international, and multicultural contexts;
- compare different theoretical frameworks and paradigms and apply them to a range of contemporary challenges;
- demonstrate analytical skills to develop, implement, and evaluate sustainability frameworks in relation to ethical challenges in business practice and decision-making;
- generate solutions to address problems;
- work effectively in teams.

Making judgement

Class participation, presentations, and case study discussions will foster the development of independent and reasoned judgement regarding complex business decisions, as well as critical thinking skills for analyzing how ethical issues and sustainability are managed in organizational settings.

Communication Skills
Class participation, presentations, and case discussions will help students develop communication skills such as the ability to articulate and debate key ethical, economic, social, and environmental challenges faced by public, private, and non-profit organizations; ask meaningful questions; build and present logical arguments; express personal viewpoints; and develop empathy and active listening skills.

Learning skills
The course provide teaching materials, tools, testimonials and experience to support the students learning, in-depth exploration of the course topics, as well as in the practical application of concepts within organizational contexts.

Contents

Business ethics and sustainability are key in the contemporary management of institutions. Ethics is a crucial component of individual and group behavior, and it is at the heart of organizational responsibilities. The growing importance related to the notion of sustainability stimulates reflections on the ethical and social responsibilities of organizations that go beyond their economic responsibility.

Organizations are increasingly required to expand their awareness of their role in society to include others such as employees, customers, suppliers, local communities, governments, and international organizations. The course will focus on the complex challenges of national and international institutions, and on emerging governance structures, on management systems, and innovative business models that can support ethical behaviour and the alignment between the interests of a company and the expectations of the society.

Detailed program

This course will explore the following topics:

- Introduction to ethics
- Business for Society: business corporate from the perspective of business ethics, sustainability and social responsibility
- Individual Ethics, decision-making process and ethical dilemma
- Ethical approaches to the interpretation of ethical problems
- Multidimensional frameworks of ethics and sustainability
- Global and local interdependences
- Sustainable and innovative business models
- Change management, values, governance, and leadership
- Ethical and knowledge management
- Digital scenario and ethical challenges

Prerequisites

None

Teaching methods

This course is provided through a blended learning approach. It is designed as an interactive laboratory of 48 hours, of which approximately 16 hours are lectures that integrate didactic delivery (frontal lectures with the use of slides, audio and video) with interactive teaching (case analysis, testimonies, role play and design of classroom interventions), and 32 hours are devoted to conducting a project work with distance techniques and cooperative learning mode (group work).

Assessment methods

The assessment aims to test the preparation on the topics of the program and the ability to reflect on and discuss critical points of the program.
It will be structured as follows: written exam with open/closed question (true/false, multiple-choice) or a brief case study analysis, group project work and contributions in class discussion.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Textbook: Cavenago, D. (2026). Scelte aziendali, etica e bene comune. Pearson. E-text.
Teaching material uploaded on the e.learning platform and course, reading materials indicated at the beginning of the course.

Semester

II semester

Teaching language

Italian

Sustainable Development Goals

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS | PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS