Faculty of Economics and
Social Sciences
Chair of Strategy

B370 Corporate Sustainability Strategy

Syllabus (Summer Semester 2027)

Instructor: Prof. Dr. Timo Sohl

Content

This module explores key issues and current debates in corporate sustainability from both theoretical and practical perspectives. It adopts a multi-stakeholder approach to firm strategy, exploring its antecedents, boundary conditions, and various forms of impact and performance. The module investigates why some companies are more successful than others in engaging stakeholders to achieve economic, social, and environmental sustainability, while maintaining competitiveness.

Learning target

In this module, students will learn how companies can balance their economic, social, and environmental impacts, and how a stakeholder strategy can help achieve corporate sustainability. Students develop an understanding of both long-standing concepts and recent developments in corporate sustainability and stakeholder governance. They will develop the skills to assess a firm's value creation for different stakeholders and apply this knowledge to real-world company cases.

Topics

1. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
    a. The role of business in society
    b. Strategic (instrumental) CSR
2. Corporate Governance
    a. Publicly traded vs. closely held firms
    b. Agency problems
    c. Governance mechanisms
3. Stakeholder Governance
    a. A stakeholder view of the firm
    b. New stakeholder theory (NST)
    c. Effects of stakeholder orientation
    d. Alternative types of ownership
    e. MNCs, SMEs, and sustainability

Structure

Lectures

- N/A (see ALMA)

Tutorials

- N/A (see ALMA)
- Discussion of problem sets (open questions, single-choice questions, and mini case studies). It is important to prepare for the tutorials in advance!
- The content of the tutorials is identical within a week
- Two sessions are offered to allow students from different degree programs and years to participate

Enrollment information

No registration required.

Coursework

- 6 ECTS-Credits (lecture + practice course).
- Written exam (60 minutes), registration is required.

Teaching methods

Independent study, oral participation.

Course language

English.

Bibliography (selection)

Freeman, R. E., Harrison, J. S., & Wicks, A. C. (2007). *Managing for stakeholders: Survival, reputation, and success*. Yale University Press.

Jensen, M. C. (2010). Value maximization, stakeholder theory, and the corporate objective function. *Journal of Applied Corporate Finance*, *22*(1), 32-42. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6622.2010.00259.x.

McGahan, A. M. (2023). The new stakeholder theory on organizational purpose. *Strategy Science*, *8*(2), 245-255. https://doi.org/10.1287/stsc.2023.0184.

Rasche, A., Morsing, M., Moon, J., & Kourula, A. (Eds.). (2023). *Corporate sustainability: Managing responsible business in a globalised world*. 2nd Ed. Cambridge University Press.

Professor

Timo Sohl is a Professor of Strategy at the University of Tübingen. He holds a Ph.D. in Management from the University of St. Gallen and a Diploma (MSc equivalent) in Economics from the University of Heidelberg. His research is published in leading management journals such as *Management Science*, *Organization Science*, and the *Strategic Management Journal*. He currently serves as an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Organization Design*. Prior to his academic career, he gained some practical experience at multinationals such as SAP and BOSCH in Germany and China.