



CIEE in Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Course name:	Business and Sustainability in the Netherlands
Course number:	BUSI 3004 AMNT
Programs offering course:	Business & Culture + Social Sciences
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. Semester Credits:	3
Contact Hours:	45 hours
Term:	Fall 2018
Office address:	CIEE office
Office hours:	After class or by appointment

Course Description

The Netherlands is known for its excellence in sustainable business practices, boasting both national and global companies recognized for promoting and championing sustainability. This program is designed for students interested in learning more about the new, up and coming world of sustainable business, in a country of unique cultural and societal characteristics. A combination of classroom work with guest lectures, company visits/excursions, and community engagement activities will provide students with firsthand experiences that will allow them to better understand how Dutch history (e.g. fight against rising sea levels), culture (e.g. practical problem-solvers), and society have shaped the success and development of a sustainability focused business culture.

The four themes included in this course are all important determinants of the Dutch sustainable business culture. The course starts off with the exploration of the Dutch culture. This will be done from a quick view on the Dutch historical context and also from a social and cultural perspective. The second part focuses specifically on sustainability. This is a multidisciplinary analysis of topics ranging from Dutch ethics to for-profit business strategies. The third section will focus on business and sustainability and which role business takes in society. Here we will talk about leadership and how Dutch companies are changing the rules of business across the globe. The latter part of the course provides concrete examples of Dutch Business culture(s) today, and challenges the student to create their own (Dutch) business opportunity. The sequence of the themes shows the students how the various parts relate to each other and how they shaped contemporary Dutch business and society.

Themes include: the establishment of The Netherlands, Dutch tolerance, the Dutch Polder Model, Dutch norms and work values, sustainability, Public-Private-Partnerships, creating new business models and establishing a new business in The Netherlands.

Learning Objectives

Through the Business and Sustainability in the Netherlands course students have the opportunity to learn more about principles of sustainability in the Dutch business field, leading to a deeper understanding of the development of Dutch business practices.

At the end of the course student will have developed:

- Understanding how the cultural history has led to innovative models and leadership practices in the Netherlands;
- Business management skills critical to the governance of sustainability both in today's contemporary world and in the future;
- Understanding of the political framework and economic climate that encourages sustainability in the Netherlands, comparing it to the European, and US agendas;
- Critical and analytical thinking applied by discussing successful case studies, sustainability in business, across the company value chain;
- Skills to perform a market analysis, answering of market questions and think out business strategies;
- Critical and analytical thinking; and
- Scientific writing skills.

Course Prerequisites

No prerequisites

Methods of Instruction

The Business and Sustainability course runs for 14 weeks, meeting twice a week for 1.5 hours. The lectures are divided into four themes that are characteristic for contemporary Dutch sustainable business. Each theme covers +/- four weeks and will be introduced by the lecturer. After an introduction class, the other classes will be a combination of company visits, inviting experts from the field, lectures, presentations, group discussions and exercises to have the students fully emerge in the topic and to get an insider's perspective. Each theme ends with a paper assignment to lock-in the findings and conclusions of the last four weeks.

Assessment and Final Grade

The course consists of four course requirements used for assessment in addition to attendance and participation, indicating the percent of final grade below totaling 100%.

	Weight per assignment	Total
3 thematic papers:	10%	30%
Individual presentation:	30%	30%
Final paper and presentation:	30%	30%
Participation	10%	10%
Total		100%

Course Requirements

Business and Sustainability - Assignments

Note: All assignments will be assessed on Academic Standards (with regard to language, use of sources etc.) All of the papers can be written with double spacing.

Requirements: Thematic papers 1 – 3:

- 1000-1500 words
- Times New Roman, 12, spacing 1,5
- APA reference style
- At the top stating: name, email, word count

The final work will be a group assignment for which the description can be found in the Annex.

All papers need to be sent by email on Word Format at the deadlines given by the lecturer.

Graded assignments

- **Thematic paper 1: The impact of Dutch history in this modern society (10% of the final grade)**
Students will write a paper at the end of theme 1 in which they will argue about the influence of historical events on the development of the Dutch modern society. This paper will make a general point, but zooms in on a specific case study to support its point. The papers will be written individually. The literature suggested in theme 1 should be used as the basis for this paper. It is important that the student is up to date with the reading.
- **Thematic paper 2: Sustainability and Circular Economy (10% of the final grade)**
Students will write a paper at the end of theme 2 in which they will write about their understanding on sustainability and circular economy. They will argue if companies are really becoming more sustainable and why. This paper will make a general point, but zooms in on a specific case study to support its

point. The papers will be written individually. The literature suggested in theme 2 should be used as the basis for this paper. It is important that the student is up to date with the reading.

- **Thematic paper 3: Dutch Business Environment (10% of the final grade)**

Students will write a paper at the end of theme 3 in which they will argue whether the Netherlands has a sustainable business culture that focuses on stakeholders' values. This paper will make a general point, but zooms in on a specific case study to support its point. The papers will be written individually. The literature suggested in theme 3 should be used as the basis for this paper. It is important that the student is up to date with the reading.

- **Individual classroom presentation (30% of the final grade), dates spread over the course**

Students hold a presentation on a chosen topic that is related to the course topic of that week (15 minutes + 30 minutes debate or other interactive form).

The presentation should at least address three questions:

- 1) How does the topic relate to the current theme?
- 2) Is the topic typically Dutch?
- 3) Where does it come from (historical & social origins and reasons for being different from practices elsewhere)?
- 4) What lessons can we learn (either from good or bad practice)?

- **Final Paper and Presentation: (30% of the final grade) week 14**

Students will write a final paper (2000-3000 words) about their own business idea for the Dutch market. They will present their findings and suggestions for the (imaginary) company based on their market research and analysis. It should contain the relevant information of a business canvas, including a one-page business canvas, and should also answer how their idea fits into the previous three themes. The paper should be based on relevant sources, which must include literature and might include interviews and other sources. All literature used during the course should be used as a basis for this final paper. For this reason, it is important that the students read all documents suggested by the lecturers. Each student will have 10 minutes to present. More information in the Annex.

- **Class Participation (10%)**

Students who make active connections to the concepts from the reading materials in class discussions, students who actively ask questions, and students who actively reflect on out-of-class experiences in class will receive extra points for participation. Participation points will be deducted when students do not participate in class or who have not read the material before coming to class.

In general

Students are expected to do their homework and to hand in their assignments on the given deadline (by email, Word format). The syllabus will be distributed during the first class, outlining a weekly schedule of the lessons, homework and assignments.

All assigned homework is mandatory, including homework that does not have to be handed in. The lecturer will check whether students have done their homework on a regular basis.

Plagiarism is strictly forbidden. If a student is found guilty of plagiarism, he or she will automatically fail the course.

Note about all assignments: Late assignments will be marked down with 1 point off. Assignments more than 3 days (72 hours) late will not be accepted and the assignment will be marked as '1'.

Attendance and Class participation

Each student is expected to attend all sessions of the course and to participate actively in class discussion and during field trips. Attendance will be taken every week by the course instructor. Participation will be assessed according to the CIEE Amsterdam attendance policy:

1x absence = ok

2x absence = extra assignment (1 page in consultation with the lecturer)

3x absence = 1 point off final grade

4x absence = fail the course

- If a student comes in 15-30 minutes late to class, this counts as a ½ absence.
- At all times, the student needs to inform the lecturer before the start of class in case of an absence. Failure to notify the absence in advance will result in an extra assignment.

Important: please note that in case you cannot attend a graded examination or assignment (e.g. midterm exam, final exam, presentation, graded fieldtrip) because of illness, it is required to hand in a written doctor's note.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: Introduction + the Dutch Golden Age

Week 2: The Dutch Polder Model + scientific writing

Week 3: Drugs and prostitution: business models and legal approaches

Week 4: Cultural dimensions and gender issues

Week 5: Shareholder vs. stakeholder + From CSR to Shared Value Creation

Week 6: The circular economy + student presentations

Week 7: Reading week (no class)

Week 8: Value chains + student presentations

Week 9: Sustainable supply chains + student presentations

Week 10: Incorporating sustainability into business

Week 11: Roundtable sessions

Week 12: Business model generation + student presentations

Week 13: Writing and working on a business plan

Week 14: Final presentations

Readings

- 1a.** Book: Discovering the Dutch: On Culture and Society of the Netherlands, Emmeline Besamusca & Jaap Verheul, 2010: Chapter 20
- 1b.** The Dutch Golden Age and Globalization: History and Heritage, Legacies and Contestations, December 2011, Maastricht University, Joop de Jong
- 2a.** Book: Discovering the Dutch: On Culture and Society of the Netherlands (Emmeline Besamusca & Jaap Verheul, 2010): Chapter 2
- 2b.** APA Style Central website: <http://www.apastyle.org/>
- 3a.** The Illegal economy in the Netherlands, Marret Smekens and Marleen Verbruggen, CBS, Statistics Netherlands, August 2005
- 4a.** Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context, Geert Hofstede, Universities of Maastricht and Tilburg, The Netherlands, 2011, International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology.
- 4b.** Labour market flexibility in the Netherlands: looking for winners and losers, Chantal Remery, Anneke van Doorne-Huiskes, Joop Schippers, Utrecht University, September 2002.
- 5a.** Milton Friedman: The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits AND, Freeman Stakeholder Theory and "The Corporate Objective Revisited"
- 5b.** Creating Shared Value: How to reinvent capitalism—and unleash a wave of innovation and growth, Harvard Business Review, Michael E. Porter and Mark R. Kramer.
- 6b.** Towards the Circular Economy, chapter 2: From linear to Circular, by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.
- 8a.** How information gives you competitive advantage, Harvard Business Review, 1985, Michael Porter and Victor Millar
- 9a.** Film Fast Food Nation: the dark side of the all-American meal
- 10a.** Building Green Global Value Chains, OECD Green Growth Papers
- 10b.** Unilever Annual Report (pages 6 to 22)
- 11a.** The Dutch Diamond Dynamic: doing business in the context of the new sustainable development goals (pages 7 – 23)
- 13a.** "Business Model Generation" (from page 14 to 44) by Alexander Osterwalder & Yves Pigneur
- 13b.** "Supporting Business Model Modelling: a Compromise between Creativity and Constraints" by Boris Fritscher and Yves Pigneur

Annex: Final Assignment and presentation Business and Sustainability

Design your own business model and pitch it

Write a final paper about your own business plan for the Dutch market. It should contain the relevant information of a business canvas, but should also answer how your idea fits into the previous three themes. The paper should be based on relevant sources, which must include literature and might include interviews and other sources.

- The assignment should be performed in groups of 2 or 3
- The length of the written part of the assignment will be 3000-5000 words
- All parts of the business canvas should be cover
- A one-page business canvas should be included
- On the presentation day, you will present your ideas to your classmates to receive feedback

Think of a new business or use an existing idea

For the business plan, you can use your own creative idea for a new business or use an existing idea for which you can perform background research. You have to be able to explain why your approach fits the Dutch market.

How does the company operate?

Think how the company creates value and what is the cost structure that should make you profit. Do you provide a product or a service? Think of what you've learned from examples using the Business Model Canvas.

- Fill in all the aspects of the Business model canvas
- Explain your business model canvas in 1500-2500 words

Dutch vs other markets

Think of what you've learned during classes, from your daily experiences and what you have been reading about. Maybe there is a company from back home which could be tailored to fit in the Dutch business culture. Argue why you made adjustments to the existing business model; why would you be able to bring it to the Dutch market.

- Write an essay using sources from class or additional sources to explain the Dutch market. This will be your market research.
- This part should take up 1500-2500 words

Pitch your company - Presentation

In order to sell your new company, you should be able to transfer your idea to others. This can help you to re-think some aspects and make it market-fit.

- On week 14 you will present your company in a presentation
- After your presentation, the other students will feedback your ideas

Requirements

- Times New Roman, 12, spacing 1,5
- Scientific referencing (APA reference style)
- At the front page stating: names, emails, word count