FU/BEST Program

Name: Heike Mewes

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Course title: Green Business: German and European Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Course number: FU-BEST 33

Language of instruction: English

Contact hours: 45

ECTS-Credits: 5 U.S. semester credits: 3

Course description

This course provides an introduction to recent developments in Germany and the EU with regard to a green and sustainable economy. It offers theoretical as well as practical insights based on conceptual discussions, case studies, a field trip, and group work to develop a green business case.

The acute awareness of environmental challenges has permeated German and European society, politics and business for decades. The relationship between business and social-environmental issues has, however, changed drastically over the years and has continuously been impacted by the interaction between the German and European Union political levels. Historically, business’ environmental impact has been viewed more negatively as “market failure”. This view is increasingly becoming more differentiated. Nowadays, positive environmental impacts, which might be achievable through sustainable entrepreneurship and sustainable core business activities, are increasingly being acknowledged.

This course begins by exploring key concepts for a green and sustainable economy in the German, European and International policy contexts and then looks at the development that has taken place both at the political level and in the economy in recent time. We then focus on the micro-level, i.e. the businesses themselves: What are the motivating forces behind entrepreneurs’ and businesses’ decision to make a strategic commitment to social and environmental sustainability? What are the roles and strategies of different types of companies? Why and how do incumbents and start-ups engage in environmental protection in different ways? We will also look at the strong connection between politics and business in the European context and the
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inclination of many sustainable entrepreneurs to engage in policy making in a manner that also turns them into “institutional” entrepreneurs, acting at a meso-level. Finally, in this more theoretical part of the course, we will look at how sustainable entrepreneurs may encounter market and regulatory barriers related to environmental externalities, path dependencies and lobbying activities by incumbent companies. We will also look at (partial) solutions to such barriers provided by e.g. incubators, business competitions, universities, investors and public funding programs.

In the more practical part of the course, we will engage with good practice examples directly from the entrepreneurs themselves. As Berlin has a special reputation for hosting a vibrant start-up scene, we will learn about several cases. The students will also be encouraged to creatively develop their own business ideas and plan the initial steps using the Sustainable Business Canvas. Their business model will then be presented and discussed in the group providing tips for future improvement and possible realization of the ideas.

The goal of the course is to provide the students with a theoretical foundation in the development of green and sustainable solutions within the economic context of Germany and Europe and to develop an understanding of how sustainable entrepreneurship is unfolding creative potential and opportunities for environmental improvements using core business activities. It is also to equip the students with more practical tools and processes for developing their own business ideas for the green economy.

**Student profile**
Second-semester sophomore or above; any experiences and knowledge in the field of economy or management recommended.

**Prerequisites**
None

**Course Requirements**
- Midterm exam: 25 %
- Final exam: 25 %
- Term-Paper: 25 %
- Classroom Participation: 25 %
  (includes 1 report (independent project), 1 presentation (required texts), 1 group work (business idea), presence and participation in the class room)

**Required texts:**
Course reader including the following publications (reading order)

**Session 1**
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Session 2


Session 3


Session 4

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**Session 5**


**Session 7ff.**


**Session 8ff.**


**Session 9**
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Session 12


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#### Course schedule

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<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Session 1</strong></td>
<td>Sustainability perspectives on our world: The UN Sustainable Development Goals and the concepts of planetary and social boundaries.</td>
<td>UN (2015); Steffen et al. (2015); Raworth (2012)</td>
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<td><strong>Session 2</strong></td>
<td>Sustainability perspectives on our economies: The diversity of conceptions of social-ecological transformations, from Green Economy through to Degrowth.</td>
<td>UNEP (2011); Brand (2016); Jackson (2011); Demaria et al (2013)</td>
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<td><strong>Session 3</strong></td>
<td>Sustainability perspectives on our businesses: The changing approaches of business with regard to environmental and social responsibilities, from CSR through to SE.</td>
<td>Dyllick &amp; Muff (2016); Gond &amp; Moon (2011), Gibbs (2009), Schaltegger &amp; Wagner (2011)</td>
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<td><strong>Session 4</strong></td>
<td>Business models and innovations for sustainability: how to create value to all stakeholders and the environment.</td>
<td>Peric et al. (2017); Schaltegger et al. (2016); Boons &amp; Lüdeke-Freund (2013); Upward &amp; Jones (2016)</td>
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<td><strong>Session 5</strong></td>
<td>The different roles of start-ups and established companies: different approaches and possibilities – and ways of collaborating.</td>
<td>Hockerts &amp; Wüstenhagen (2010); Schaltegger et al. (2016); Stappmanns (2015); Wells (2016)</td>
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<td><strong>Session 6</strong></td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td><strong>Session 7</strong></td>
<td>Planting a Green Business I – Introduction into the process and impact of sustainable entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Pascual et al. (2011); Belz &amp; Binder (2015)</td>
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<td><strong>Session 8</strong></td>
<td>Planting a Green Business II – Project development using the Sustainable Business Canvas</td>
<td>Breuer et al. (2017); Fichter &amp; Tiemann (2016); Gebauer (2014)</td>
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<td><strong>Session 9</strong></td>
<td>Planting a Green Business III – Dealing with barriers and challenges</td>
<td>Bocken (2015); Dobson et al. (2018); Siegner et al. (2018); Schick et al. (2002)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Session 10</strong></td>
<td>Planting a Green Business IV – Learning from others (field trip)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 11</th>
<th>Topic: Planting a Green Business V – Collaborative competition: peer reviews and pitches (project discussions and presentations using the Sustainable Business Canvas)</th>
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</table>
| Session 12 | Topic: Reflections and conclusions: Motivation and Education for Sustainable Entrepreneurship  
Reading: Patzelt & Shepherd (2011); Smith et al. (2012); Fichter et al. (2016) |
| Session 13 | Final Exam |

**Reading:** tbd