

Course Title: **ICSI: Investigating Corporate Social Irresponsibility**

Area: **Public Systems Group**

PGP II, Elective Slot XI-XII

Course Instructors: Navdeep Mathur, Ankur Sarin, Rama Mohana Turaga and George Kandathil
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Course Administration

The course will have 25 classroom sessions of 75 minutes each. In some of the sessions students will be expected to present cases/readings in a debate format. The students could be required to collect some field data locally.

Class Participation: 20%

Memo: Paper/Memos 50%

Final Project: 30% (Group)

The course requires Video-Screening facilities. Expenses could be incurred by students on travel and phone calls for local fieldwork, borne by themselves.

Course Description: A Big-Box store's recent advertising campaign exhorts people to replace all their old clothes, furniture, electronic items with new ones, by explicitly labeling old as inferior, and showing images of old furniture made of durable material counter-posed with images of brand new furniture made of particle-board. This campaign seeks to make claims about the speed and direction of the consumption patterns of people. Those claims can be counter-posed with the claims made on behalf of Environmental Sustainability – of consuming less, and therefore disposing less. This exhorts people to making fuller use of existing possessions, thus reducing the demands on the fragile ecology of the earth already severely under threat with unimaginable amount of non-degradable waste, and pollution.

While this is one example of corporate responsibility falling short in the context of the wide-spread efforts to mitigate the effects of over-consumption leading to irreversible environmental degradation, there are others that concern more direct severe risks to human health and survival such as the widespread promotion of carcinogens like tobacco. On other cases, the jury is still out or has reconvened in the light of adverse impacts of highly promoted 'goods' such as microwave ovens, mobile phones and other radiation sources, processed foods, and even milk.

So why does a certain 'Big Box Store' see its profitability in making our natural environment and people's innate sense to re-use and reduce their impact on the earth seem inferior?

There may be many reasons for environmentally and socially unsustainable practices to get incentivised and perpetuated at an ever increasing scale. For example, shareholders expect maximum returns on their investments where market valuations are based on long term views

and account for the harms produced, however it is well accepted that both shareholders and markets mutually reinforce each other with short-run timeframes producing distorted values.

Likewise managers face incentives based on short-term targets producing myopic thinking and tunnel vision. Governments on their part may see short term gains of value extraction thereby transferring resources of which it is custodian to uses where it produces private profit and consumption induced growth.

Course Objectives: This course makes an in-depth investigation into business practices and market strategy that are patently harmful for our society and survival of our natural environment. **Social Irresponsibility is not about 'legal violations' but behavior that is socially and environmentally harmful and unsustainable, yet not necessarily illegal.** It therefore interrogates the nature of 'corporate social responsibility' by conducting a social-forensic analysis of the benefits of the practices widely prevalent in business corporations. It further looks at the emerging positive and constructive alternatives that connect responsible business to the cultural and social environment, and how budding managers can play a significant role in harnessing the methods of 'socio-cultural' understanding to make a positive contribution to society.

Session 1: The Social and Physical Environment and the Life Cycle of Products

Date: Tuesday 22 December 2015

Time: 10:20 am-11:35 am

Film: The Story of Stuff (20 mins). Dir. Annie Leonard. 2007

Session 2: Natural Resource Extraction

Date: Tuesday 22 December 2015

Time: 11:55 am- 1:10 pm

Film: Mine: Story of a Sacred mountain

Session 3-4: Knowledge Production

Date: Wednesday 23 December 2015

Time: 10:20 am-11:35 am; 11:55 am- 1:10 pm

The Scientific Integrity Program of the, and Union of Concerned Scientists. "Heads They Win, Tails We Lose: How Corporations Corrupt Science at the Public's Expense," February 2012. http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/legacy/assets/documents/scientific_integrity/how-corporations-corrupt-science.pdf. (E-Copy)

Session 5-6: The Business of Health Care: The Boardroom and the Surgery Room

Date: Monday 28 December 2015

Time: 10:20 am-11:35 am; 11:55 am- 1:10 pm

Kassirer, Jerome P. 2005. On the Take: How America's Complicity with Big Business Can

Endanger Your Health. Oxford University Press. Chapter 1 and 2.

Vasudevan, V. Instant Noodles: A Tangled Tale

Aspartame: Sweet Misery Film

Monsanto bans GM foods in its Canteen

- <http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/gm-food-banned-in-monsanto-canteen-737948.html>

McDonalds advises employees against “Fast Food”:
<http://grist.org/list/mcdonalds-mcresource-line-employee-site-advice/>

Session 7: Biotech industry and the promotion of GM foods - I

Date: Tuesday 29 December 2015

Time: 10:20 am-11:35 am

Sowmya Misra, S., and Awasthi, K. 2009. Test Tube Brinjal. Down to Earth, 17(22), April 15, 2009

Sowmya Misra, S. 2009. How Bt Brinjal Was Cleared. The Center for Science and Environment. Accessed from <http://www.cseindia.org/node/840> on 16 December 2010

Datta, R., and Krishnan, R. (2012). BRAI Bill: A Threat to our food and farming – A legal assessment of the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India (BRAI) Bill, 2011. Greenpeace India. Available from <http://www.greenpeace.org/india/Global/india/report/BRAI-Critique-Report.pdf>

Bhargava, P.M. (2011). Unconstitutional, unethical, unscientific. The Hindu, December 28, 2011

Session 8: Biotech industry and the promotion of GM foods - II

Date: Tuesday 29 December 2015

Time: 11:55 am- 1:10 pm

Newell, P. (2007). Biotech firms, biotech politics: Negotiating GMOs in India. *The Journal of Environment Development*, 16, 183-206

Session 9: Business and War -I

Date: Wednesday 30 December 2015

Time: 10:20 am-11:35 am

Black, E. 2009. IBM and the Holocaust, The Strategic Alliance between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation. Dialog Press. Excerpts, and film clip.

New York Times: Deutsche Bank Linked to Auschwitz Funding:
<http://www.nytimes.com/1999/02/05/news/05iht-berlin.t.html>

Weisen, S. Jonathan. German Industry and the Third Reich: Fifty Years of Forgetting and Remembering. Dimensions: A Journal of Holocaust Studies. Vol. 13, No. 2:
http://archive.adl.org/braun/dim_13_2_forgetting.html#.UsFv67zRGfg

Steinberg, G. The Holocaust Did Not "Just Happen", Jerusalem Post, October 23, 1998.
<https://faculty.biu.ac.il/~steing/oped/o231098.htm>

Session 10: Business and War -II

Date: Wednesday 30 December 2015

Time: 11:55 am- 1:10 pm

Corporate Power and Profiteering 1. <http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/social/corporate>

2. <http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=6008>

3. <http://www.southernstudies.org/reports/findoutmore.pdf>

Session 11: Accountability in the Food Business

Date: Monday 4 January 2015

Time: 10:20 am-11:35 am

Moorhead, Joanna. 2007. Milking it. The Guardian.

Richter, J. 2003. Building on Quicksand: The Global Compact, Democratic Governance and Nestlé.

Film Clip: Formula for Disaster.

Session 12: Toxins Out – Toxics In

Date: Monday 4 January 2015

Time: 1:55 am- 1:10 pm

Film: Clips from “The Slow Poisoning of India.” Dir. R. Menon, 2004.

Sen Gupta, A. 2010. Food: Toxins at our Table. Chapter 9

Rawat. 2010. Endosulfan Industry's Dirty War – A Chronology of Events. Center for Science and Environment report published on 12/07/2010. Last accessed on 12/12/2011 from <http://www.cseindia.org/node/1927>

Session 13-14: The Business and the Labour: FoxConn Case

Date: Tuesday 5 January 2015

Time: 10:20 am-11:35 am; 11:55 am- 1:10 pm

Bilton, R. (2014). Apple 'failing to protect Chinese factory workers.' BBC News, 18 December 2014. Accessed on 19 December 2014 from <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-30532463>

Goel, V. (2013). Foxconn Audit Finds a Workweek Still Too Long. New York Times, 16 May 2013

Chan, J., Pun, N., & Selden, M. (2013). The politics of global production: Apple, Foxconn and China's new working class. New Technology, Work and Employment 28:2, 100-115

Session 15: Blurring Boundaries: States, Markets and Media

Date: Wednesday 6 January 2015

Time: 10:20 am-11:35 am

Case: The Raadia Tapes (<http://outlookindia.com/article.aspx?268214>)

Session 16: Idea of Markets and how Corporations subvert them

Date: Wednesday 6 January 2015

Time: 1:55 am- 1:10 pm

Case: Novartis [TBD]

Session 17: Oil Industry and Climate Denial

Date: Monday 11 January 2015

Time: 10:20 am-11:35 am

PBS. (2012). Steve Coll: How Exxon Shaped the Climate Debate. Accessed on 18 December 2014 from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/environment/climate-of-doubt/steve-coll-how-exxon-shaped-the-climate-debate/>

Oreskes, N., & Conway, E. (2010). Merchants of Doubt, Chapter 6, New York: Bloomsbury Press

Session 18: Business and the Public - The Plachimada Story

Date: Monday 11 January 2015

Time: 11:55 am- 1:10 pm

Case Study: The Plachimada Story

Wrammer, E. 2004. Fighting Cocacolonisation in India: Water, Soft Drinks, and the Tragedy of Commons in an Indian Village. Human Ecology Division, Lund University. Appendix 2. Accessed from <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/plachimada.pdf> on 16 December 2010

Devi, K.R.L. 2006. Multinational Corporations, Development Discontent, and Civil Society: The Pathology of People's Movement Against Coca Cola in India. World Society Focus Paper Series. Pages: 13-20. Accessed from http://www.uzh.ch/wsf/WSFocus_Devi.pdf on 16 December 2010

Session 19-20: Corporate Social Responsibility and Its Crisis

Date: Tuesday 12 January 2015

Time: 10:20 am-11:35 am; 11:55 am- 1:10 pm

Sukhdev, P. (2012). Corporation 2020. New Delhi: Penguin. Chapter 1 and Chapter 3

Turaga, R.M., & Kandathil, G. (2014). Defining the social responsibility of business: whose business is it? Economic and Political Weekly, Vol - XLIX No. 7, February 15, 2014

Sessions 21-22: Alternatives forms of Organizations

Date: Wednesday 13 January 2015

Time: 10:20 am-11:35 am; 11:55 am- 1:10 pm

Guest speakers

Sessions 23, 24, and 25: Case Study Presentations & Concluding Reflections

Date: Monday 18 January 2015

Time: 8:45 am-10:00 am; 10:20 am-11:35 am; 11:55 am- 1:10 pm

Additional Bibliography

Barber, Benjamin. 2007. *How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole*. Norton.

Klein, Naomi. 2000. *No Logo*. Random House.

Klein, Naomi. 2007. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Allen Lane.

Nayar, Pramod K. 2009. *Packaging Life: Cultures of the Everyday*. Sage.
Hochschild, A.R. & Ehrenreich, B. (Eds.) 2003. *Global Woman: Nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
Korten, David 1998. *When Corporations Rule the World*. Goa: Other India Press.
Litvin, Daniel 2004. *Empires of Profit*. Thomson.
Perkins, John. 2004. *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*. NY: Plume.
The Lavaca Collective 2004. *Sin Patron: Stories from Argentina's worker run factories*. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books.
Sen Gupta Annirudhha. 2010. Our Toxic World: A Guide to Hazardous Substances in our Everyday Lives. Chapter 6. 'Electronic Waste: System Failure Imminent'.

Final Project:

Study life-cycle of product or service using the framework given in the Story of Stuff

Relationship of course with overall program objectives and related courses

Consistent with the program objectives, the course seeks to provide students with knowledge and awareness of practice of sustainability and a new framework for evaluating social responsibility. Thereby, it aims to facilitate their appreciation for challenges in becoming effective change agents.

The course will build on the exposure they have received via Socio-Cultural Environment of Business, Business Ethics, Micro-economics and Economic Environment and Policy, Public Policy, Social Entrepreneurship, Power and Politics in Organization, and Participatory Theatre for Development.