

BUS 440

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Fall 2023

Time: MW 1:00-2:50PM **Place:** Wheeler 110

1 Instructor information

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2 Course information

Course description: Students examine the relationship between corporate governance and corporate social responsibility, critically assessing the assumptions that underlie theories of corporate governance and the expected outcomes of various board compositions and structures. The course focuses on how corporate actions serve the interests of various stakeholders, demonstrate support for social causes, and explores the issue of accountability. Emphasis is placed on balancing economic, social, individual, and communal goals.

This is a three credit course that meets for two, 110-minute class periods each week during the 15-week semester.

Prerequisites: BUS 232, ECN 263, and junior standing

Readings: This course will refer to two textbooks, both of which are open access. We will also rely on supplementary information for case studies and information on CSR history and governance. The first supplementary reading on the history of CSR is listed below, and other readings will be announced in class as the semester progresses. Lecture slides will be posted to eLearning 1-2 days after class. All reading materials will be publicly available for free online, and links to PDFs are available by clicking on the title highlighted in orange.

- Jimenez, G. C., & Pulos, E. (2016). [Good corporation, bad corporation: Corporate social responsibility in the global economy](#). Open SUNY Textbooks.
- Latapí Agudelo, M. A., Jóhannsdóttir, L., & Davídsdóttir, B. (2019). [A literature review of the history and evolution of corporate social responsibility](#). International Journal of Corporate Social Responsibility, 4(1), 1-23.

- Weder, F., & Erikson, M. B. (2023). **CSR Communication and Cultures of Sustainability**.
- Additional readings for case studies and supplementary information will be assigned throughout the semester.
- Lecture slides.

Learning objectives:

- Become familiar with general concepts and principles of sustainability and CSR
- Compare and contrast different approaches and implementations of CSR
- Learn to critically assess CSR strategies
- Practice the implementation of CSR strategies

Course expectations

- Complete assigned readings before class
- Turn in assignments on time
- Actively and respectfully participate in class

Grading Policy: Students will be assessed by pop quizzes, a presentation, and a final project that requires a presentation as well as a written component. In lieu of an attendance policy, 7 pop quizzes will be given as both a method of assessing participation, and to test the progress of the students throughout the semester. Of the 7 quizzes given, the **lowest two scores** will be dropped from the final grade.

The first presentation is a CSR case study, where students (in teams) will choose an existing CSR business plan for a firm of their choice. Students are expected to provide an overview of the plan, as well as discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the plan. More details and a structured grading rubric will be given when teams are selected at the end of October.

In the final project, students will create a CSR plan for a business of their own interest. This topic will remain open to the students, but should be personalized in a way that prepares them for future careers. Examples include a family business that they plan to enter, an industry that they would like to have a career in, a planned startup, etc. More details and a structured grading rubric will be given during the introduction to the final project (10.23).

The following table presents the grading criteria for the quizzes and projects. Please note the final column of the table that specifies who is assigning the points. In addition to the points awarded by me, a smaller portion

of the points will be granted through team member assessments. At the end of each project, students will grade their team members based on factors such as attendance and participation, contributions to the team, and quality of the work performed. Students will receive a structured guideline for grading team members.

Format	Topic(s)	Total points	Assigned by instructor / peer
Pop quizzes	Various topics	4 pts each \times 5 = 20	20 / 0
Presentation	CSR case study	30	20 / 10
Final project	CSR mock business plan	50	40 / 10

The final grade is an aggregation of the quizzes and presentations. Letter grades are given using the following scale:

Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A	93–100	C	73–76
A–	90–92	C–	70–72
B+	87–89	D+	67–69
B	83–86	D	63–66
B–	80–82	D–	60–62
C+	77–79	F	0–59

Policy on use of artificial intelligence (AI): Please refer to the following restrictions on the use of academic work produced by AI (e.g. ChatGPT) for this course:

- **No Direct AI submissions:** Students are prohibited from submitting assignments that are solely generated by AI. This includes using AI to create entire essays, reports, or presentations without significant human input. Doing so constitutes a violation of Northland’s academic integrity policy (see Section 3).
- **Guided AI Assistance:** Students may use AI for assistance and guidance in generating ideas, refining language, or addressing specific questions. However, the primary content and intellectual contributions of the assignment must be the student’s own work.
- **Transparency and Citation:** If AI is used for any part of an assignment, students must clearly disclose this within their work. Any AI-generated content must be properly cited, and students should include a brief explanation of how AI was used in the writing process. Please see the following as an example for citing a ChatGPT conversation:

ChatGPT. (2023, September 1). [Title of the ChatGPT conversation]. Retrieved from <https://chat.openai.com>

3 General policies

Academic integrity policy: The Northland College faculty value academic integrity as a guiding principle for the fair and respectful intellectual inquiry and communication that are central to the academic program of the college. When faculty and students participate in these scholarly activities, they are expected to act with honesty and integrity by acknowledging when they have incorporated the work of others. The faculty serve as mentors and coaches to guide students in understanding these scholarly conventions. Students are expected to learn and follow these conventions and to remain accountable for their work.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, fabricating information, assisting others in acts of academic misconduct, and actions indicating a general disregard of institutional policies regarding scholarly activities. Depending on the severity and number of offenses, the penalties for academic misconduct range from a warning up to expulsion. For a complete explanation of definitions, consequences, and procedures for academic misconduct, please see the Northland website [here](#).

Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct, Title IX Statement: In accordance with Title IX and other local, state, and federal laws, Northland College is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination, including sex and gender-based discrimination. This includes, but is not limited to sexual violence, sexual harassment, dating violence, and stalking. If you or someone you know has been affected or is currently being affected by these types of behaviors that are limiting their ability to participate in this course or any other Northland College sponsored program or activity, please know that there are options, and resources are available. I am not a confidential resource. As a faculty member, I am considered a mandatory reporter and am required to report incidents of sex and gender-based discrimination and sexual misconduct to the [Title IX coordinator](#), as we want to ensure that you are connected with the campus support resources offered by the College. You can also make a report by contacting the Title IX coordinator directly. To learn more, please visit the Northland College [Title IX page](#).

College Accommodations Statement: Northland College is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please contact me to discuss your concerns and possible solutions. If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, I encourage you to meet with the College's Academic Accommodations & Success Specialist, who may be reached at djonesilsley@northland.edu or 715-682-1280. The Accommodations Specialist can help you determine if you should request official accommodations for this course and guide you through the process.

The Academic Accommodations & Success Specialist ensures that support for students with disabilities is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, with the amendments of 2008, with sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and with other applicable laws. You may find additional information about the College's accommodations services on My Northland via [this link](#).

Tutoring and Academic Coaching Services Statement: Peer tutoring is available in the Center for Science and the Environment (CSE). The Tutoring and Writing Center is located on the CSE 2nd floor, near the top of the stairs. See My Northland for the current tutoring schedule or email tutoring@northland.edu to make an appointment with a tutor. Professional, academic coaches can connect you with campus resources and help with motivation, time management, study skills, reading comprehension, and communicating with professors. To make an appointment with an academic coach, email djonesilsely@northland.edu.

4 Tentative course schedule

The following provides an overview of the planned schedule for the semester. After a brief introduction in the first two weeks, the first main section involves discussion on current CSR strategies and business plans. The section ends with team presentations on a case study of their choice. The second section involves discussion on different topics, and the final section after Thanksgiving contains lectures on CSR communication and allows time for students to work on their final projects.

This schedule may change depending on time availability and student interests. For a list of other important dates (e.g. deadlines for registering/dropping, holidays, etc.), please find Northland's academic calendar [here](#).

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Comments
1	W	09.06	Course introduction	
2	M	09.11	CSR, sustainability, and culture	Reading: Weder and Erikson, Part 1
	W	09.13	History of CSR	Reading: Latapí Agudelo et al.
3	M	09.18	CSR governance	Readings as assigned
	W	09.20	Intro to CSR case studies	
4	M	09.25	CSR case studies	Readings as assigned
	W	09.27		Team selections
5	M	10.02		
	W	10.04		
6	M	10.09		
	W	10.11		Presentation prep (no lecture)
7	M	10.16	Mid-Session Reading Day (no classes)	
	W	10.18	Case study presentations	<i>Note: Mid-term grades due 10.20</i>
8	M	10.23	Introduction to final project	
	W	10.25	Debating CSR: methods and strategies	Reading: Jimenez & Pulos, Chapter 2
9	M	10.30	CSR discussion: climate change	Reading: Jimenez and Pulos, Chapter 3
	W	11.01	CSR discussion: GMOs	Reading: Jimenez and Pulos, Chapter 4
10	M	11.06	CSR discussion: marketing ethics	Reading: Jimenez and Pulos, Chapter 6
	W	11.08	CSR discussion: organic food	Reading: Jimenez and Pulos, Chapter 7

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Comments
11	M	11.13	CSR discussion: fair trade	Reading: Jimenez and Pulos, Chapter 8
	W	11.15	Corporations and politics	Reading: Jimenez an Pulos, Chapter 11
11.18 - 11.26: Thanksgiving break				
13	M	11.27	Project work	
	W	11.29	Project work	
14	M	12.04	CSR and sustainability communication	Reading: Weder and Erikson, Part 3
	W	12.06	CSR and sustainability communication	Written project due Friday, 12.08
15	M	12.11	Final project presentations	
	W	12.13	Final project presentations	