UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA

# BUSINESS AND SOCIETY

## BENJAMIN SELWYN

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| Anno accademico | 2023/24 |
| CdS | ECONOMICS |
| Codice | 332PP |
| CFU | 6 |

| Moduli | Settore/i | Tipo | Ore | Docente/i |
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| BUSINESS AND SOCIETY | SECS-P/11 | LEZIONI | 42 | BENJAMIN SELWYN |

Obiettivi di apprendimento

*Conoscenze*

**BUSINESS AND SOCIETY**
**BENJAMIN SELWYN**
***nno accademico***2023/24
***CdS***ECONOMICS
***Codice***332PP
***CFU***6
***Periodo*** Primo semestre
***Lingua*** Inglese

***Moduli***
***Settore/i***
***Tipo***
***Ore***
***Docente/i***
BUSINESS AND SOCIETY
SECS-P/11
LEZIONI
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**Learning outcomes**
**Knowledge**

**Business and Society (BS)**
**BENJAMIN SELWYN**
Semester I - 2023-2024

**Course Name and Number:**
332PP: Business and Society. BS

*Modalità di verifica delle conoscenze*

**General course idea:**
Since we are facing unprecedented sustainability challenges, several calls have been made to rethink or re-imagine capitalism. Contemporary world complexities include climate change, persisting poverty, pandemics, pollution, modern slavery, economic and social inequalities, sustainability challenges at large. This course's key aim is to constitute a "wakening call" for students on the need to address grand sustainability challenges in their future jobs as regulators, policy makers, analysts, managers etc.

The teaching style is topic-based, case-based, participatory and project oriented. Students taking this course should not see themselves as mere "absorbers" of codified concepts, but as living and thinking individuals, who will have to take complex business decisions and who are expected to learn, discuss and face the paradoxes and tensions that are inherent when business decisions have to be taken in highly uncertain and risky environments like the ones we are currently living in.

**Required Readings:**

**All materials will be available on the E-learning course website**.
Participants will be expected to keep abreast of contemporary developments in corporate social and environmental responsibilities, business and human rights, sustainability challenges by reading the relevant press (e.g. The Financial Times, The Guardian, *The Economist, Forbes, Fortune, Business Week, Foreign Affairs)* and other newspapers or journals.

## *Capacità*

**Course Description:**
***Core topics***

- Theory
- Global Value Chains and Development
- Green Transitions in Agriculture, Industry and Services
- Class, Race and Gender Dynamics of Global Capitalism
- Shareholder value maximization vs. stakeholder theory
- Corporate wrongdoing and corporate social responsibility
- New business models for a more responsible capitalism
- Business and human rights

***Special topics***

- Economic inequality and tax evasion
- Finance and climate change/Responsible Investing
- Migrants and modern slavery
- Food waste
- Responsible innovation and circular economy
- EU Green Deal for a toxic free environment
- Global value chains and responsible/sustainable sourcing (e.g. in connection with conflict minerals in the ICT industry, agro-food value chains, textile and footwear).

## *Modalità di verifica delle capacità*

**Instructional Method:**
The lectures combine a multiplicity of teaching methods ranging from frontal teaching to invited speakers' seminars and group work. Selected students are expected to take an active role in leading discussion and providing critical commentary. Each class will involve discussion and dialogue as major elements in the learning strategy. Students may be asked to prepare for the class, by reading assigned materials in advance. Occasionally, the course will host invited speakers from the academia or the practitioners' world.

**Timetable and organization of lectures:**
Please check Elearning.

For more info check here: https://www.ec.unipi.it/didattica/orario-lezioni/
**Office Hours:Write me an email.**

**Learning Assessments:**
The course includes a combination of assessments, which are weighted to give a final mark. Normally that includes:
1 ***Reading response presentation***
*Students individually or in pairs will be assigned a reading and will have the task of preparing a presentation on it. Presentations are not meant to repeat exactly the contents of the reading but rather offer a critical synthesis in which the student: 1) highlights the main points and examples in an organized manner, 2) clarifies key terms/concepts/ideas, and 3) formulates interesting points for debate. Presentations will take place during the synchronized class, should not exceed 30 minutes, and should be accompanied by a power point presentation or a handout. Each student will be graded individually.*
***2 Class participation:***
*Students are required to participate verbally in class, and in completing tasks set in class, as the topics lend themselves to class discussions. Students will be graded on overall class participation (verbal contributions in class, and written contributions to online discussions and other tasks set in class) during the semester, but not on the accuracy of expressed views. The point is to engage, even if your information proves to be in error or if your views meet opposition in the discussion.*
***3 Essay****
*This is an individual assessment. Each student will be given a question/topic to answer/elaborate based on the course content and additional materials made available through E-learning.**

## *Comportamenti*

*Other assessment methods may apply.*
***ADDENDUM ON ESSAYS (*)***
Once a week students will receive training about how to write their essays and, also, they are expected to discuss progress on their assigned topic with the other students during class hours (see schedule below). All students are expected to provide feedback. A "critical friend" is assigned to each essay: a critical friend is a selected student (one for each essay) that will provide qualified feedback on the essay as it

develops. More info on Elearning.

**Final drafts of the essays can be submitted prior to each exam date**. It is **highly recommended to take the exam within a solar year since the end of the lectures**. No exceptions in exam modalities for exchange students or students from other degree courses who are expected to align with the course schedule and rules. Students not attending class regularly, should write to elisa.giuliani@unipi.it to explain the reasons for their absence and agree on an ad hoc exam modality.

**Additional instructions on Essays:**
Essays should be written in Times New Roman 12, single space and submitted in PDF. Margins can be standard. Each essay should follow the guidelines given during the course, but at minimum they should include:
**A frontpage** including: TITLE, NAME OF STUDENT and MATRICOLA, ACADEMIC YEAR, EMAIL. An introduction (called **Introduction**), a theoretical section (called **Theory** or **Conceptual Framework**), a methodological/data section (called **Methodology**) and an empirical evidence section (called **Empirical Results**), a conclusive/discussion section (called **Conclusions**), followed by a list of references in alphabetical order (**References**) and, if necessary, an **Appendix**. Tables and Figures can be embedded in the main text and numbered sequentially. Pages MUST be numbered. Essays' length is expected to be between 6,000 and 8,000 words including tables, figures and references (but excluding Appendixes).

## *Modalità di verifica dei comportamenti*

**Citations to the relevant sources:**
**All sources must be cited**, including not only print books and scholarly articles, but anything you borrow to craft your assignment. This includes primary sources, such as letters, diaries, documents, music, and films. It includes online sources, secondary sources, such as online books, online articles, websites, instructor's lectures, and open source websites with no identifiable author, like Wikipedia. If you didn't write it (or create it), cite it.
You can choose your citation style (APA is the recommended one), the one important point is that once you have chosen your style you should be consistent and do not mix styles. To know more about citation styles consult here: https://pitt.libguides.com/citationhelp
See also this standard approach for citations as an example.
For more insights about how to avoid plagiarism see here: https://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources/avoiding-plagiarism

## Prerequisiti (conoscenze iniziali)

**Academic Integrity:**
The Code of Ethics of the University of Pisa addresses cheating, fabrication of submitted work, plagiarism, handing in work completed for another course without the instructor's approval, and other forms of dishonesty. Students are advised that all their submitted essays or reports will be checked for plagiarism through a dedicated software.

## Programma (contenuti dell'insegnamento)

**Business and Society – Master of Science in Economics**
**Benjamin Selwyn**
2022-23
This course provides a critical look at the relationship between business, society and nature. It is structured in 3 complementary sections – a theoretical section to frame subsequent analysis, followed by two sections: on global food and agriculture and on global industry. The theoretical sections provide the intellectual foundations to interpret different perspectives on the intersection between business society and the environment in world food and industrial sectors, to enable students to understand why there are rival perspectives on the costs and benefits to the environment and society of business in these two sectors, and to facilitate thinking about how these sectors can be restructured to enable more socially and environmentally sustainable futures. The theoretical debates are structured around an intersectional political economy/political ecology perspective, highlighting the specificity of costs and benefits to nature and society – along lines of class, race and gender – of the formation, reproduction and expansion of world agricultural and industrial sectors.

**Assessment by a 3,500 word essay (submission dates to be announced)**

1. **INTRODUCTION – CAPITALISM AND THE CORPORATION AND COURSE OUTLINE**

**THEORISING BUSINESS AND SOCIETY**

1. LIBERALISM
1. STATISM
1. MARXISM
1. FEMINISM
1. ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVES
1. CRITICAL RACE THEORY

**GREEN TRANSITIONS**

1. FOSSIL FUELS AND INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM
1. RISE OF AGRO-INDUSTRY
1. CORPORATIONS AND ECOCIDE
1. GREEN GROWTH vs DEGROWTH?
1. GREEN NEW DEAL FOR INDUSTRY
1. GREEN NEW DEAL FOR AGRICULTURE

**GLOBAL INDUSTRY AND GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS**

1. 1970S CRISIS AND EMERGENCE OF GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS
1. THE PROMISE: MAINSTREAM GVC, UPGRADING AND DEVELOPMENT
1. GVCS AND THE ENVIRONMENT
1. GVCS, LABOUR AND POVERTY
1. GVCS AND GENDER
1. GVCS, 'RESILIENCE' AND GEO-POLITICS

**20) ESSAY PREPARATION**

## Bibliografia e materiale didattico

see e-learing website (link below)
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**20) ESSAY PREPARATION**

## Indicazioni per non frequentanti
Keep up with readings, make sure you submit your essay on the due date.

## Modalità d'esame
1 essay to be submitted on a specified exam date (see e-learning)

**Essay Questions**
**EITHER selection one of the questions below as your essay title, OR devise your own essay question. If you do the latter be sure to discuss it with Prof Selwyn.**

1. 'Which Theoretical perspective do you find most Illuminating about the relationship between Business and Society?' In your answer Explain why, critique other literatures and use empirical examples.
1. What is the relationship between fossil fuel use and industrial capitalist development?
1. Is agro-industry the best agricultural system we have to feed the world's population and mitigate climate change?
1. Do you agree that corporations are entities that accelerate ecocide? Why, Why not?
1. Is Green economic growth possible and desirable?
1. Is a Green new deal for industry possible? What would it look like?
1. Is a Green new deal for agriculture possible? What would it look like?
1. What gave rise to the system of Global Value Chains?

1. What does upgrading in Global Value Chains entail? Does it represent a general development strategy?

1. How do global value chains impact upon the environment? Is Green upgrading possible?

1. Is the concept of global poverty chains useful for explaining the unequal dynamics of capitalist development?

1. Do global value chains rest upon unequal gender relations?

1. What is the relationship between contemporary geo-political tensions and the concept of value chain ‘resilience’?

## Stage e tirocini
none

## Pagina web del corso
https://elearning.ec.unipi.it/course/view.php?id=273

## Note
All relevant information is available on the e-learing website, including;
exam (essay submission) dates
reading list
key readings (available to download)
essay questions

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