



INSTITUTO UNIVERSITARIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN
EN ESTUDIOS NORTEAMERICANOS
"BENJAMIN FRANKLIN"

Course	BUSINESS AS A FORCE FOR GOOD
Program, semester, year	International Studies Program, Spring 2025
Credits ECTS	4.5 (3 USA)
Instructor's full name and email	CHRISTINE (CHRIS) OPATRYN-YAZELL OPATRYN@UCMO.EDU
Block dates (days and time)	Monday-Thursday, 9am-12pm
Classroom	TBA
Class hours	45
Office Hours	MON-THURS 12-1 PM
Requirements	N/A
Language of instruction	English
Type of teaching	In person

INTRODUCTION

This course is designed to explore best for the world business practices. These typically include employee benefits, organizational culture, engagement with internal & external stakeholders, social justice, the environment etc. We will consider these through the lens of the B Corporation certification in the areas B Corporations refer to as workers, customers, governance, community and environment. We will explore the practices of some of the businesses which have been called “the best for the world”, these include businesses from Spain, the EU and/or the Americas. Several guest speakers from B Corporations and/or visits to or guests from other responsible businesses will be incorporated.

This is an experiential activity-based course. Reading and assignments comprise the preparation for active learning, rather than lecture, during the course.

Increasingly, college students are both more globally aware and more interested in working for employers with whom their values align. Thus, an overarching goal of the course is to also explore one’s own values and interests via self-reflection and discussion and to think more deeply about one’s future employment search and career.

Course Outcomes

1. To cultivate and reinforce the students’ sense of personal values and corporate responsibility by understanding how social entrepreneurs, BCorps, and businesses address the following:
 - a. Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity (JEDI),
 - b. Corporate social responsibility (CSR),
 - c. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).
2. Identify appropriate intersections between environmental and societal needs, and organizational goals and strategies for action by evaluating several American European and/or Spanish Certified B Corporations.
3. Reflect on how best practices relate to the learner’s own values in their career
4. Critique opportunities for positive change relative to intended and unintended consequences of planned organizational actions.

This course will uphold THE B CORP DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE

We envision a global economy that uses business as a force for good. This economy is comprised of a new type of corporation - the B Corporation -which is purpose-driven and creates benefit for all stakeholders, not just shareholders. As B Corporations and leaders of this emerging economy, we believe:

- That we must be the change we seek in the world.
- That all business ought to be conducted as if people and place mattered.
- That, through their products, practices, and profits, businesses should aspire to do no harm and benefit all.

- To do so requires that we act with the understanding that we are each dependent upon another and thus responsible for each other and future generations.

COMPETENCES

Skills and competencies that will develop in this course

- **Problem Solving:** Apply appropriate problem solving skills
- **Communication:** Communicate effectively to achieve shared meaning
- **Teamwork:** Demonstrate the ability to work effectively in groups
- **Critical Thinking:** Apply understanding of businesses actions that contribute to improving people and planet to critique and improve their own and others' business actions and ideas through effective and useful feedback.

Topic	Learning Objective
Social Entrepreneurship & Social Issues	CE1: Explain what social issues are and how social entrepreneurs address social issues across different countries and cultures CE2: Practice self-reflective skills and habits CE3: Examine one's own core values and their connection to social issues that are important to one's self
Stakeholders, B Corps, JEDI	CE1: Distinguish between the different types of stakeholders CE2: Explain why some businesses choose to become B Corp certified CE3: Examine the many types of diversity CE4: Differentiate between equity and equality
United Nations Sustainable Development Goals	CE1: Explain, compare and contrast the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG) & their connections to each other CE2: Evaluate the impact of different forms of energy production on the UN SDGs
B Corps Workers, Community, Environment, Governance and Corporate Culture	CE1: Discuss the Certified B Corporation best practices for workers, community, environment and governance CE2: Evaluate and critique Spanish, EU and/or American B Corporations using an abridged version of the Certified B Corporation best practices
Guest Speakers and/or site visits	CE1: Research & evaluate the social impact of several businesses. CE2: Apply understanding of business actions that contribute to improving people and planet to interact with business owners, managers, etc. CE3: Communicate effectively to achieve shared meaning
Additional Topics	CE1: Apply understanding of businesses actions that contribute to improving people and planet to identify topics of interest to the class, research them with a team, provide content, lead debrief

Teamwork	CE1: Communicate effectively to achieve shared meaning CE2: Demonstrate the ability to work effectively in groups
Discussion (communication)	CE1: Communicate effectively to achieve shared meaning CE2: Practice self-reflective skills and habits

METHODOLOGY

Certified B Corporations are an interesting type of business to study. The B Impact Assessment, certification standards, are available for any business globally to use, whether certification is sought or not. More than 5000 Spanish businesses have used the B Impact Assessment and 210 Spanish businesses are B Corp Certified ([source](#)).

The Certified B Corp standards are written such that they span national borders, culture and governments. Their framework will be utilized as the theoretical basis for this class. We will then apply this framework to several global businesses. Certified B Corporations have been studied during the nearly 20 years in which the certification has been available. One such study was recently in the Harvard Business Review, "[The Paradox of Growing as a Values-Driven Company](#)". B Lab, the organization that manages the standards and certification notes the following. Their full theory of change is available on their [website](#):

The B Global Network's Theory of Change guides our mission to transform the economic system into a more inclusive, equitable, and regenerative global economy... The current economic system, driven by business as one of its key actors, is failing to meet its potential and promise to create positive impact. In fact, it creates significant negative impacts for people, communities, and the planet. We've identified three key aspects that reinforce the problematic role of business: the design of legal systems; business behavior and operations; and corporate culture and the dominant narratives around business and success.... This theory of change works toward a world where business is a force for good, and plays a leading role in positively impacting and transforming the global economy into a more inclusive, equitable, and regenerative system.

It is not enough to simply study a global theory of change. Learners will then apply the framework to analyze and critique real business actions through daily experiential activities in the classroom, via assignments and through interactions with business leaders.

Lastly, I've found that there is a book published in Spanish "Being a B Corp in Spain". Which was created by B Lab for Spanish companies that are or would like to be B Corps. I am currently trying to locate a PDF of the book which is [advertised online](#). It contains case studies specific to Certified Spanish B Corporations and I believe using it as part of the course content would be particularly helpful to our students.

PREPARATION FOR CLASS

- Because this course is not lecture-based, students must prepare before each day's class
- Students are expected to read, watch and/or listen to the next day's assignment each night to prepare for the next day's class. This assures that all students arrive for class prepared to actively engage with the content, exercises/activities, their peers and the instructor.
- A typical class meeting of 3 hours will involve
 - A short quiz typically at the beginning or end of class
 - Approximately 20-30 minutes of content provided by the instructor. This content will add to the content students prepare for class rather than simply review.
 - One or two in-depth exercises/activities, discussions, interactions with guest speakers, site visits, etc. to use the content and apply it.
 - A significant debrief/discussion where students reflect on what they learned and/or experienced during that day's class session.
 - Most classes will conclude with a short written reflection (e.g., what resonated with you most today, or what questions remain after today's class, or what did you not understand or agree with in the assigned reading for the previous night or in the class today)
- Students are expected to be active participants in class exercises and activities.
- Students must also be active contributors to the debrief discussions.
- **Textbook:**
 - The BCorp Handbook – how you can use business as a force for good - Second Edition
 - A pdf of the e-book, The BCorp Handbook, 2nd Ed, is available to students from the instructor at no cost. The pdf of the book is also available to UCM students on the JCKL Library website. The instructor will provide a pdf of the textbook to all students within the learning management system (e.g., Blackboard) or the Google drive.
 - Other resources – the instructor will provide pdf documents, hyperlinks, etc. for all other assigned Reading, as appropriate.

EVALUATION

PREPARATION FOR AND PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES OUT OF THE CLASSROOM & GUEST SPEAKERS

20%

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS, HOMEWORK, IN-CLASS QUIZZES AND IN-CLASS WORK	35%
TEAMWORK, PRESENTATIONS AND PEER EVALUATIONS	15%
PARTICIPATION (opportunity for extra credit, see below)	10%
FINAL EXAM	20%

EVALUATION (continued)

- **Activities out of the classroom, guest speakers: preparation and participation. Total 20%.**
- **Final Exam. Total 20%**
This course has an essay-based final exam. It is due on the last day of class.

If the teacher finds out that the student has copied, plagiarized or utilized AI without proper attribution for any assignment, which includes exams, quizzes, and other written work and homework, the grade will be 0, without the possibility of making up the work.

- **In-class quizzes, application exercises/activities, assignments, homework Total 35%**
 - Quizzes: You will be required to take a short quiz (called RATs or readiness assurance tests) at the beginning of nearly every class period. These RATs will typically be taken both individually and as a team. This is designed to 1) further develop your teamwork and communication skills, 2) demonstrate your ability to apply course content, and 3) hold you accountable to your peers for course material. We do not have any large exams in this course; RATs are designed to test your knowledge of course concepts.
 - Application Exercises/Activities During class we will usually engage in exercises/activities meant to delve deeper into the content and the real-world application of the content. These will be completed in teams during class. A debrief will follow each exercise/activity.
 - Missed/Late Homework, Quizzes and Assignments:
 - Any work that must be completed before class is posted in advance of the due date. On-time completion is expected. The content is then used as part of the content, activities, and discussion for the day's class.

- You may complete work early, and you are encouraged to do so.
- Due dates will not be extended

- **Teamwork, presentations and peer evaluations. Total 15%**
 - Teams will apply understanding of businesses actions that contribute to improving people and planet to identify topics of interest to the class, research them with a team and provide a brief lesson and debrief for the class on that topic.
 - Topics must be multinational and/or mult-cultural in nature. For example, a comparison of how two businesses in different countries prioritize employee benefits and the effect those have on organizational expectations and culture. This is only an example for illustration purposes. Students will develop the topics via a series of short brainstorming sessions to determine topics which are viable and interesting to the majority of the class.

 - 360-degree peer evaluations are utilized in this class. Peer evaluations may affect individual earned and team scores. Peer evaluations give you the opportunity to give and receive meaningful feedback.

- **Participation Total 10%**
 - Each class session will provide the opportunity to earn participation points. Students are expected to contribute to each day's class via participation, discussion, etc. It is important to be attentive in class, ask relevant questions, make comments and answer questions posed by the teacher and other students. This attitude shows interest and reflection. It would also be noted that participation and contribution involve ensuring that one's classmates are also actively engaged and feel encouraged and comfortable making contributions.

 - A student must be an active class participant. Active class participation includes active, voluntary involvement in class exercises and contributing thoughts and ideas to class discussions. Simply stating your agreement or disagreement is not actively participating and contributing to class discussions. Extra credit may be assigned for significant and meaningful participation. At most, students may earn 2 extra credit points per class period. Additionally, the total maximum extra credit participation points are limited to 20 points.

 - It is an expectation that low participation will not be exhibited by any student in the class. Low participation is when students seem bored or uninterested, don't ask questions, don't make comments and almost never participate in debates, discussions or answer questions from the teacher and other students.

*This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Other readings, assignments, quizzes, papers, exams, team assignments, site visits, guest speakers and cases may be added, modified or substituted at the instructor's discretion. **Additional policies or procedures may be posted at any time during the semester at the discretion of the instructor.***

OTHER EXPECTATIONS

Written work, plagiarism, and AI

- Each assignment, quiz, etc. indicates clearly the format expected (e.g., typed or handwritten, single space, hyperlinks or other source attribution, etc.).
- Students are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy. All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and/or unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else's work, is plagiarism.
- Plagiarism is a violation of academic norms and as such it can result in a failed course. In extreme cases it can include the expulsion from the program.
- Content generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) or other third-party service, or site (AI-generated content) without proper attribution or authorization is another form of plagiarism. [This website shows how to cite AI generated content.](#)
- If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or another form of academic dishonesty, please reach out to the instructor as soon as possible.
- Students found responsible for academic dishonesty will have a grade penalty applied.

ATTENDANCE (Instituto Franklin-UAH Policy)

Attendance is mandatory. Students are not permitted to miss any classes of the program without proper justification (i.e. emergencies, health problems, in this case students have to show a medical note). The following types of excuses are not justified: family visits, illnesses without a medical note, personal trips, etc. Each unjustified absence will result in a grade deduction of 5% from the final earned course grade. Students will not be allowed, in the classroom or field trips, to arrive 10 minutes late or more. If a student has continual delays, he/she will be penalized with an absence and the instructor may not allow them into class or the visit.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (Instituto Franklin-UAH Policy)

Students with special needs should contact Antonio Fernández: antonio.fernandezm@uah.es Instituto Franklin-UAH can accommodate these students who show through a medical note or a note from their academic advisor that require help in order to fulfill the program.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN CLASS

The use of technology is essential today in education, but if used inappropriately it can be harmful for students.

Computers or Tablets:

- Content will be provided via Blackboard or a Google course, depending on the technology available to the instructor.
- Students will need to bring a computer or tablet to each class session.
- Course activities and exercises rely on in-class research and/or information gathering which is best suited to a computer or tablet rather than a smart phone.

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 - Other resources – the instructor will provide pdf documents, hyperlinks, etc. for all other assigned Reading, as appropriate.

INSTRUCTOR



Christine Opatrny-Yazell PhD. CPIM OPATRNY@UCMO.EDU

- Doctor of Philosophy (Operations Management, minor in Applied Statistics). Kent State University, Kent, OH
- Master of Business Administration, Quinnipiac University, Hamden, CT
- Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (Majors: International Business and Management, German minor) Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA
- C.P.I.M. Lifetime certification. Association for Supply Chain Management (ACSM, formerly APICS)

As a Professor of Management, Dr. Opatrny-Yazell has published 25 peer-review articles during her career focusing on supply chain management, responsible practices & societal impact of business, as well as pedagogical research. Passion for social and environmental issues is evident in both the Supply Chain & Operations Management course in the business core and the Business as a Force for Good course in the management major which she teaches. Previous to earning a doctorate, she had five years of professional experience in various roles for a Fortune 500 company the last of which was Master Production Scheduler. She also worked in retail distribution management for two years.

Chris has received teaching and advising awards and nominations at UCM. She also served as Chair of the Department of Management for 15 years as well as Program Coordinator for an additional 4 years.

Chris also recently co-founded a non-profit theatre company, [Cyclopedic Ensemble](#), and personally completed all of the state and federal paperwork to achieve non-profit status. She serves as secretary and treasurer to the board. She is also the costume designer.