



CIEE Amsterdam, Netherlands

Course title:	Business and Sustainability in the Netherlands
Course code:	BUSI 3004 AMNT
Programs offering course:	Business and Culture, Social Sciences and Humanities
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. semester credits:	3.00
Contact hours:	45.00
Term:	Fall 2023

Course Description

The Netherlands is known for its excellence in sustainable business practices, boasting both national and global companies recognized for promoting and championing sustainability. This program is designed for students interested in learning more about the new, up and coming world of sustainable business, in a country of unique cultural and societal characteristics. A combination of classroom work with guest lectures and company visits/excursions will provide students with firsthand experiences that will allow them to better understand how Dutch history (e.g. the fight against rising sea levels), culture (e.g. the Dutch as practical problem-solvers), and society have shaped the development of a sustainability-focused business culture. The four themes included in this course are all important determinants of the Dutch sustainable business culture. The course starts off with the exploration of Dutch culture. This will be done from a quick view on the Dutch historical context and also from a social and cultural perspective. The second part focuses specifically on sustainability. This is a multidisciplinary analysis of topics ranging from Dutch ethics to for-profit business strategies. The third section will provide concrete examples of profitable sustainable businesses and the Dutch Business culture and leadership. The fourth part of the course will focus on responsible investment and future sustainable business trends. Themes include: the establishment of the Netherlands, Dutch tolerance, the Dutch Polder Model, sustainability, circular economy, Public-Private-Partnerships, creating new supply chains, sustainable business in the Netherlands and responsible investment strategies.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Demonstrate a deeper understanding of how Dutch cultural history has informed the development of innovative models and leadership practices in the Netherlands;
- Be able to identify and critically evaluate those business management skills that are critical to Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance both in today's and tomorrow's global business landscape;
- Be able to analyze the diverging political frameworks and economic climates that encourage sustainability in the Netherlands, while simultaneously comparing these to their European and US-American counterparts;
- Test their critical and analytical thinking skills by selecting and parsing successful case studies that integrate sustainability across specific companies' value chains;
- Be able to speak authoritatively and think strategically about the evolving relationship between businesses and sustainable business practices.

Course Prerequisites

None

Methods of Instruction

This course runs for 14 weeks, meeting twice a week for 2 hours. The lectures are divided into four themes. Each theme covers more or less four weeks and will be introduced by the lecturer. After an introductory class, the other classes will be a combination of company visits, experts' presentations, lectures, group discussions and exercises to have the students fully emerge in the topic and to get an insider's perspective. Each theme ends with a paper assignment, a test or a presentation to lock-in the findings and conclusions of each topic.

Assessment and Final Grade

1.	2 Thematic Papers	20%
2.	Test	25%

3.	Final Presentation	20%
4.	Final Paper	20%
5.	Class Participation	15%
	TOTAL	100%

Course Requirements

2 Thematic Papers

Thematic Paper 1: Dutch Business and Society (10% of the final grade)

Students will write a paper at the end of theme 1 in which they will argue about the influence of historical events on the development of Dutch modern society. This paper will make a general assessment and will focus on a specific theme to support its point. The literature suggested in theme 1 should be used as the basis for this paper, other literature will also be allowed as reference. It is important that the student is up to date with the reading. The paper must be 1,000 words in length. This paper has to be written individually and uploaded to Canvas as a Word document.

Thematic Paper 2: Sustainability and Profitability (10% of the final grade)

Students will write a paper at the end of theme 2 in which they will write about their understanding on sustainability. They will argue if Dutch and multinational companies are really becoming more sustainable and if they are remaining competitive. This paper will make a general assessment and will focus on a specific theme to support its point. The literature suggested in themes 1 and 2 should be used as the basis for this paper, other literature will also be allowed as reference. It is important that the student is up to date with the reading. The paper must be 1,000 words in length. This paper has to be written individually and uploaded to Canvas as a Word document.

Test

Students will need to answer 20 questions (4 open and 16 multiple choice) based on the readings from Themes 1 to 3. It is important to be up to date with the readings to be able to answer all the questions successfully.

Final Presentation

Students will be asked to prepare a presentation based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals showing the future they wish to live in, 10 years from now. The students will be invited to explain their visions, make direct links with present events and their future perspectives, and reflect on what they can do to get there, taking into consideration the discussions and topics covered by the course. Instructions on content and format will be given in class. For more information, consult the Annex.

Final Paper

Based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), students will present a plan to achieve a project goal related to the future they want to live in and the business they want to work for or create. The students will use different tools to write this final assignment.

The paper will be 2,500 words long and will consist of two parts:

1. The vision of the world they want to live in and the business they want to work for or create. This vision should be linked with events in the present, showing a correlation with their future perspectives;
2. Explaining the choice of the IMPACT to be created and the SDG's that they will focus on.

The working tools and the SDG's will be explained in class and a concrete case will be discussed. The final assignment has to be written individually and uploaded to Canvas as a Word document. For more information, consult the Annex.

Class Participation

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Students who make active connections to the concepts from the reading materials in class discussions, students who actively ask questions, and students who actively reflect on out-of-class experiences in class will receive extra points for participation. Participation points will be deducted when students do not participate in class or have not read the assigned reading materials before coming to class.

Since we will be discussing culturally sensitive issues in class, the classroom must be a safe space in which students are able to express their opinions openly. Discriminatory comments or language of any kind will not be tolerated.

Attendance

To encourage engaged learning, regular class attendance is required throughout the program. This includes any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as internship, service-learning, or other required field placement.

An excused absence in a CIEE course will only be considered if approved by a CIEE Center Director/Academic Director (not the Instructor), and:

- it is a self-certified absence for illness (only once per course, requires formal request before or within 24 hours, cannot miss assessment worth more than 5% of final course grade)
- a doctor's note from a local medical professional is provided
- evidence of a family emergency is provided
- it is a pre-approved observance of religious holiday

Unexcused absences include personal travel and/or travel delays, as well as missing more than 25% of a single class period (including tardiness and early departure). Assessments missed due to unexcused absences will be marked as zero. Students with over 10% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff. Students with over 20% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff, receive a formal warning letter (shared with their home institution) and lose 10% of the final course point total (e.g., a final A grade of 93% will be lowered to a B grade of 83%).

For more detail, please consult your CIEE Academic Manual.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to a positive and inclusive teaching and learning environment. All students are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness, respect, and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in grade penalties or disciplinary action. See the CIEE Student Academic Manual for further information on academic integrity.

N.B. Course schedule and co-curriculars are subject to change. The final duration and distribution of content and assignments will be determined and presented to students at the onset of the course.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class: 1.1 Dutch History

Introduction to the course: students will introduce themselves and will share their expectations and learning goals. Simone will explain to the students how the course will develop and the course main objectives. We will check the Canvas and the syllabus together to make sure everything is well understood.

Class: 1.2 Dutch History (continued)

Dutch history and trade: the students will learn about the Dutch Golden Age. We will discuss Dutch history, the power of Dutch trade, the Tulip Mania (first economic bubble in the world) and cultural aspects of Dutch society.

Read: de Jong, Joop, "The Dutch Golden Age and Globalization: History and Heritage, Legacies and Contestations", Maastricht University, December 2011

Week 2

Class: 2.1 Dutch Traits and Hofstede Model

Dutch Traits: students will learn about the way of doing business in the Netherlands and about the "Dutch Miracle" from the 1980's based on the Dutch Polder Model. Students will learn about Dutch policies and the legal system. We will also discuss themes regarding drugs, euthanasia and prostitution.

Read: van Zanden, J., "The Economy of the Polder", chapter 2 from the book Discovering the Dutch, Amsterdam University Press, 2010.

Class: 2.2 Dutch Traits and Hofstede Model (continued)

The Hofstede Model: students will learn the Hofstede Model and aspects of the Dutch working life (e.g. part-time work, gender issues, religious diversity). A comparison between Dutch and US American work and life-balance will be drawn.

Read: Hofstede, G., "Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context", International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology, Universities of Maastricht and Tilburg, The Netherlands, 2011.

Week 3

Class: 3.1 The New Economic Model and Scientific Writing

New Economic Model: students will learn about Dutch Competitiveness (based on the Global Competitiveness Index). Here we will analyze how a country with a strong welfare state can still be a competitive nation business-wise and be economically resilient.

Read: Schwab, Klaus, "The Global Competitiveness Report 2017–2018", World Economic Forum, 2018.

Class: 3.2 The New Economic Model and Scientific Writing (continued)

Scientific Writing: students will learn how to write a scientific paper and do some class exercises. This class is important for students to understand how to write their grading papers, including their final work.

Check website: <http://www.apastyle.org>

Week 4

Class: 4.1 Transition Management Theory and Visit B.1

Transition management: is a governance approach that aims to facilitate and accelerate sustainability transitions through a participatory process of visioning, learning and experimenting. Students will learn how applied transition management is changing business reality in the Netherlands.

Read: Loorbach, D. and Rotmans, J., "The practice of transition management: examples and lessons from four distinct cases", Elsevier, 2009.

Class: 4.2 Transition Management Theory and Visit B.1 (continued)

At B.1 students will learn about a unique start-up culture that is booming in Amsterdam. Students will also visit a start-up company established at B.1 (Moovs), talk to the CEO and learn about differences between Dutch and US business cultures.

Check both websites: <http://b-buildingbusiness.com/amsterdam/b-1/>

<https://www.moovs.nl/en/>

Deadline: Thematic Paper 1

Submit thematic paper 1 before 9:00 via Canvas (Word)

Week 5

Class: 5.1 Shareholder vs. Stakeholder Theories

Shareholder vs. Stakeholder: the students will learn about the differences between the Shareholder and Stakeholder theories. How different styles of capitalism forms have been implemented worldwide, their successes and short-comings.

Read: Friedman, M. "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits" and Freeman, "Stakeholder Theory and The Corporate Objective Revisited".

Class: 5.2 Shareholder vs. Stakeholder Theories (continued)

Stakeholder's power and transparency: the teacher will recall the stakeholders concept explained before, discuss the importance of engaging with them in the digital era and show a case where stakeholders have changed the way the company reports on financial risks.

Read: Mitchell, R., Agle, B. Wood, D. "Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Saliency: defining the principles of who and what really counts", *Academy of Management Review*, October 1997, vol. 22, pp. 853-886.

Week 6

Class: 6.1 Shared Value Creation and Value Chains

From CSR to Shared Value Creation: students will take a journey through the evolution of sustainability concepts applied to business, from CSR to Shared Value Creation.

Read: Porter, M. and Kramer, M., "Creating Shared Value: How to reinvent capitalism and unleash a wave of innovation and growth", *Harvard Business Review*, 2011

Class: 6.2 Shared Value Creation and Value Chains (continued)

Thu 14 Mar (09:00 – 11:00)

Value Chains: based on the work of Michael Porter, we will discuss value chains and how to create competitive advantage in different activities.

Read: Value Chain summary of Michael Porter's book "Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance", 1985.

Week 7

Class: 7.1 Sustainable Supply Chains and Circular Economy

Sustainable Supply Chains: students will learn about Value Chains and how companies are now focusing on more Sustainable Supply Chains. The importance of traceability and fair-trade schemes for a resilient supply chain.

Read: Building Green Global Value Chains, OECD Green Growth Papers, April 2013

Class: 7.2 Sustainable Supply Chains and Circular Economy (continued)

Circular Economy: the students will have an introduction to Circular Economy based on the Ellen McArthur Foundation. We will also discuss Dutch Circular Business examples in class.

Read: chapter 2 "From Linear to Circular" from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation book *Towards the Circular Economy*, 2013.

Deadline: Thematic Paper 2

Submit thematic paper 2 before 9:00 via Canvas (Word)

Week 8

Class: Reading Week - No class

Week 9

Class: 9.1 Circular Economy in the Netherlands

Guest lecture: Marjolein Brasz (Amsterdam Economic Board) (tbc)

Marjolein will talk to the students about the circular initiatives in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area and about the circular and marketing/communications program of the Amsterdam Economic Board.

Read: Cramer, J. "Key Drivers for High-Grade Recycling under Constrained Conditions", Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development, Utrecht University, The Netherlands,

28 April 2018

Class: 9.2 Circular Economy in the Netherlands (continued)

The Dutch Sustainable Growth Coalition and the implications on policy making in the European Union: the students will learn about the DSGC and how the big 8 Dutch multinational corporations are working together with the Dutch government to create sustainable policies across the globe.

Read: Dutch Sustainable Growth Coalition, "Circular Economy: DSGC companies on their journey of implementing circular business models", The Netherlands, 2015

Week 10

Class: 10.1 Visit AkzoNobel

Visit AkzoNobel Center

Address: Christian Neefestraat 2, 1077 WW Amsterdam

André Veneman, the Director of Sustainability at AkzoNobel, will talk to the students about the company, its sustainable strategies and about the relationship with the Dutch Sustainable Growth Coalition.

Check: <https://www.akzonobel.com/en/about-us/what-we-do/sustainability>

Class: 10.2 The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

UN SDG's and the OECD guidelines: we will discuss in class the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations and how they are influencing Dutch businesses and decision making.

Check the UN website: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals> and read through all 17 SDG's.

In this class we will also talk about the guidelines that are influencing businesses across Europe, in particular the OECD guidelines, and how this is influencing companies to write and present their reports.

Read: OECD guideline for multinational enterprises, 2011 - from page 13 to 30

Week 11

Class: 11.2 Test

Week 12

Class: 12.1 Responsible Investment

Guest Lecture: Lucian Peppelenbos

We will talk about Dutch responsible investment. Lucian Peppelenbos will talk to the students about APG, a Dutch financial service provider, and how the institution is shaping Dutch companies' perception towards sustainability.

Read: ABP responsible investment report 2016

Check: <https://www.apg.nl/en/who-is-apg>

Class: 12.2 Responsible Investment (continued)

Drivers for Responsible investment and history: students will learn about investors' drivers for sustainable investment criteria and the increase of importance of intangible values of companies (listed in the US stock exchange). They will also learn main stream private investors' reflections on long term value creation (Black Rock).

Week 13

Class: 13.1 Dutch Food Sector and Sustainable Business Trends

Dutch Agribusiness and food sector: the students will learn about the Dutch food and agribusiness sector. We will talk about the food sector and intelligent agriculture in the Netherlands, particularly about the energy positive greenhouses and related integrated systems. We will also discuss sustainable issues related to Dutch supermarkets.

Read: Berkhout, P. "Food Economic Report 2017 of the Netherlands", Wageningen University and Research, 2018.

Class: 13.2 Dutch Food Sector and Sustainable Business Trends (continued)

Sustainable Business Trends: students will learn about global trends for the next 3-10 years and will learn about how trends can affect different industries.

Read: Global Forces, Mckinsey & Company, 2017 number 2. From page 12 to 21.

Week 14

Class: 14.1 Final Presentations

Envisioning the Future: students will be invited to prepare a collage with the elements representing the future they wish to live in, 10 years from now. We will discuss in class the final presentation and final paper. We will also work together.

Envisioning the Future: individual presentations

Deadline: submit the final presentations via Canvas

Class: 14.2 Dutch Food Sector and Sustainable Business Trends (continued)

Envisioning the Future: individual presentations

Deadline: submit the final presentations via Canvas

Deadline: submit final paper before 9:00 via Canvas (Word)

Course Materials

Readings

- ABP responsible investment report 2016
- Berkhout, P. "Food Economic Report 2017 of the Netherlands", Wageningen University and Research, 2018
- Besamusca, E. and Verheul, J. "Discovering the Dutch: on culture and society of the Netherlands", Amsterdam University Press, 2010.
- CSR Asia Strategic Partners, "Materiality Assessment: the what, why and how", 2015.
- Cramer, J. "Key Drivers for High-Grade Recycling under Constrained Conditions", Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development, Utrecht University, The Netherlands, 28 April 2018
- de Jong, Joop, "The Dutch Golden Age and Globalization: History and Heritage, Legacies and Contestations", Maastricht University, December 2011
- Ellen MacArthur Foundation, "Towards the Circular Economy", 2013
- Freeman, E., Wicks, A. and Parmar, B., "Stakeholder Theory and The Corporate Objective Revisited", Organizational Science, vol. 15, n.3, May-June 2004, pp. 364-369
- Friedman, Milton, "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits", The New York Times Magazine, September 13, 1970
- Global Sustainable Investment Review, Global Sustainable Investment Alliance 2016
- Hofstede, Geert, "Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context", International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology, Universities of Maastricht and Tilburg, The Netherlands, 2011
- Loorbach, Derk and Rotmans, Jan, "The practice of transition management: Examples and lessons from four distinct cases", Elsevier, 2009.
- Mckinsey & Company, "Global Forces" report, 2017 number 2
- Mitchell, R., Agle, B. Wood, D. "Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience: defining the principles of who and what really counts", Academy of Management Review, October 1997, vol. 22, pp. 853-886.

- Nylander, J. and Colvert, K. "Integrated Reporting – the DIY approach", the journal of the Hong Kong Institute of Chartered Secretaries, published by Ninehills Media Ltd, October 2015.
- OECD Green Growth Papers, "Building Green Global Value Chains", April 2013
- OECD guideline for multinational enterprises, 2011
- Porter, Michael "Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance", New York Free Press, 1985
- Porter, Michael and Kramer, Mark, "Creating Shared Value: How to reinvent capitalism and unleash a wave of innovation and growth", Harvard Business Review, 2011
- Schwab, Klaus, "The Global Competitiveness Report 2017–2018", World Economic Forum, 2018.
- Smekens, Marret and Verbruggen, Marleen, "The Illegal economy in the Netherlands", CBS Statistics Netherlands, August 2005

Online Resources

- APG website: <https://www.apg.nl/en/who-is-apg>
- AkzoNobel website: <https://www.akzonobel.com/en/about-us/what-we-do/sustainability>
- American Psychological Association Style Central: <http://www.apastyle.org/>
- B. website: <http://b-buildingbusiness.com/amsterdam/b-1/>
- Moovs website: <https://www.moovs.nl/en/>
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>