Corporate Social Responsibility: Defining Models and Understanding Partnerships in Social Finance (PADM-GP 2127)

Instructor: Neil Britto (neil.britto@nyu.edu)

Class Date and Time: Tuesdays, 6:45pm – 8:25pm

Course Duration: 01/23/2017 – 05/08/2017

Office Hours: 6:00pm – 6:30pm, 8:30pm – 9:00pm in WAVE 369 on Tuesdays or by appointment

Course Location: Building: WAVE Room:369 Location: Washington Square

Course Description: Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an evolving practice of organizations of varying size and purpose to integrate business activities with models that produce social and environmental outcomes. The course will rigorously explore the evolution and modalities of corporate social responsibility, with particular attention to cross-sector collaboration, the utility of social finance and financial institutions relationship with corporate responsibility, impact measurement, and other relevant emergent trends. This course looks specifically at how CSR is practiced today with particular attention to how models of cross-sector partnerships have advanced the field.

Through selected academic, practitioner and current news articles, lectures, case studies, guest presentations, written assignments, and facilitated discussion students engage with relevant theory, practice, challenges, opportunities, and other trends relevant to business’ role in addressing public problems.

Course Learning Objectives: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Understand the evolution and modalities of CSR
- Identify and analyze key components of a CSR strategy
- Understand and explain the role of cross-sector collaboration in CSR, particularly in the financial services industry
- Critically and carefully discuss emergent trends and practices (e.g. cross-sector partnerships, social finance) relevant to the modalities of corporate social responsibility
- Identify strategies and techniques to navigate typical management challenges and opportunities relevant to a broad range of CSR issues relevant to government, business and the non-profit sector

Course Outline: Classes will include a lecture component, facilitated discussion, a brief break, and an occasional guest speaker. Active, consistent class participation is expected throughout the course and there will be many opportunities in every class for students to participate. If students do not feel like they are able to participate in a class, please provide advance notice. A review of session preparatory materials is expected for each class. These materials will reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the topic and diverse interests; including academic and practitioner-friendly publications, public and private manager resources, and exposure to current and historically significant developments.
Course Requirements: Class will begin promptly at 6:45pm. Regular attendance is expected with the understanding that occasional absences may occur. Students are expected to actively and thoughtfully participate in each session’s discussion questions. The syllabus includes a list of required preparatory reading to be completed prior to class. Assignments must be completed on time as late submissions will not be accepted.

Grading and Assessment: This course will abide by the Wagner School’s general policy guidelines on incomplete grades, academic honesty, and plagiarism. It is the student’s responsibility to become familiar with these policies. All students are expected to pursue and meet the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Grading for the course will consist of:

- Attendance, Informed Participation and Class Contribution: (20 percent of grade)
  - There are two components to the grade:
    - Classroom Engagement (15 percent of grade)
      - Consistent participation in class is expected of all students. Contributions to the class should reflect a strong understanding of the readings and thoughtful participation.
      - Attendance is a necessary, but insufficient contribution for a high class engagement grade.
      - It’s understandable that on occasion students may not complete the readings or be able to attend class. Students should notify the instructor when they are expected to be late or miss class.
    - Reflective Presentation (5 percent of grade)
      - Each student will deliver a 4-5 minute presentation that demonstrates knowledge gained through the class by answering one of three questions:
        - What is next for social finance in the U.S?
        - What is next for cross-sector partnerships in the U.S?
        - What is next for CSR in the U.S?
      - This could include highlighting counterintuitive insights, posing key questions relevant to advancing thinking and practice, commenting on an important debate relevant to the topic, summarizing key recommendations in their final report, or providing other commentary that reflects an increased knowledge of the topic.
      - Additional information and guidance will be provided in class.

- Mid-term assignment: Strategy Identification and Justification (30 percent of grade)
  - By session seven, students are exposed to several primary modalities of CSR and various approaches to the design of CSR programs. In a 5-6 page double spaced essay, students will explore the following question: What are the best strategies for public-problem solving via the modalities of corporate social responsibility? Essays should thoughtfully justify their answers, consider and evaluate counterpoints, comment on the role of partnerships, reference examples, highlight conditions that may influence the conclusion, and comment on how the strategy supports the management of organizational risks and value creation.
  - Additional information and guidance will be provided in class.
• **Final assignment: Strategy Analysis and Recommendation Paper** (50 percent of grade)
  - Students will select a publicly traded corporation, analyze their existing CSR strategy and make recommendations for improvement in the form of a properly cited memo. The analysis should reflect knowledge of lecture content, class discussions, and readings. The paper should identify key strategies, articulate challenges and opportunities, demonstrate comprehension of company’s approach, and recommend improvements and refinements to the strategy.
  - Students must submit the company they wish to evaluate between March 21st and 28th. No more than two students can choose the same company.
  - The 7-10 double-spaced submission must meet the standards expected of thoughtful graduate students: a well-reasoned analysis, systematically organized, methodologically sophisticated, and concisely well written. “Laundry lists” of the many lessons learned and papers lacking lucid, well-ordered, reader-friendly structure are strongly discouraged.
  - Additional information will be provided in class.

**Academic Integrity:** As permitted under New York University by-laws and disciplinary procedures, the faculty of the Wagner Graduate School of Public Service adopts procedures for informal resolution of complaints and for cases of formal student discipline. The procedures described in the [Academic Oath](#).

**Students with Disabilities:** New York University is committed to providing equal educational opportunity and participation for students with disabilities. It is the University’s policy that no qualified student with a disability be excluded from participating in any University program or activity, denied the benefits of any University program or activity, or otherwise subjected to discrimination with regard to any University program or activity. More on the Disability Policy can be found [here](#).
## Course Overview:

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<td>January 31(^{st}) 2017</td>
<td><em>The Current Landscape: An Introduction to Key Modalities, Strategies, and Value Propositions</em></td>
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<td>February 7(^{th}) 2017</td>
<td><em>Industry, Geographic, and Political Considerations for Practice</em></td>
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<td><em>The Financial Services Industry, Foundations, and CSR: From Traditional Philanthropy to Social Finance</em></td>
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<td><em>The Concept, Practice and Proliferation of Social Finance</em></td>
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Detailed Class Descriptions: The following section describes each session’s core components and the materials required to prepare for class discussion.

Class 1: January 24th 2017
The Evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

- Detailed review of course syllabus and assignments
- Discuss learning objectives and expectations for the course
- Review corporate social responsibility’s recent history, evolution, and related concepts

Class Preparation Materials:


Class 2: January 31st 2017
The Current Landscape: An Introduction to Key Modalities, Strategies, and Value Propositions

- Analyze and identify the case for CSR for different types of organizations
- Understand the spectrum of programming and strategies relevant to corporate social responsibility
- Engage with relevant frameworks and apply them to case examples and common organizational problem relevant to CSR.

Class Preparation Materials:


Class 3: February 7th 2017
Industry, Geographic, and Political Considerations for Practice

- Investigate how CSR programming differs across issue areas and industries
- Review relevant factors for CSR in local, state, regional, national and international contexts and assess the implications for management
- Explore how public policy and international agreements influence key modalities of CSR

Class Preparation Materials:


- Chaklader, B. & Gautam, N. “Efficient Water Management through Public-Private Partnership model: An experiment in CSR by Coca Cola India” Vikalpa, December 2013

  
  ○ NOTE: The Methodological: Technical Aspects section is not necessary to review.

Class 4: February 14th 2017
Challenges and Limitations to Corporate Social Responsibility

- Review and discuss critiques of corporate social responsibility
- Review the types of organization problems and challenges commonly addressed via CSR programming
- Identify and discuss micro and macro factors that influence an organization’s ability to design and implement a CSR program

Class Preparation Materials:


Class 5: Date February 21st 2017
An Introduction to Cross-sector Partnerships

- Review taxonomies and typologies of government, business, non-profit sector partnerships
- Discuss management practices relevant to cross-sector partnership
- Review opportunities and challenges for cross-sector collaboration
- Case Study: P-TECH

Class Preparation Materials:

  - NOTE: A review of Chapter 2 and 3 is adequate


  - NOTE: A review of the appendix (page 17) is adequate


- Kamenetz, A. (2016). *Turmoil behind the scenes at a nationally lauded high school.* NPR

Class 6: Date February 28th, 2017
The Financial Services Industry, Foundations, and CSR: From Traditional Philanthropy to Responsible Investing to Social Finance

- Review historical practices and current trends of major foundations and the financial services industry relevant to CSR
- Discuss how cross-sector partnerships have been used through social finance strategies
- Introduction to specific applications of social finance relevant to corporate social responsibility.
- Case study: Citigroup’s CSR

Class Preparation Materials:

  - Note: Please prioritize pages 16-40 of the report.


  - NOTE: Familiarity with the key structure and components of the CSR report is essential.
Class 7: March 7th 2017
The Concept, Practice and Proliferation of Responsible Investment and Social Finance

- Class evaluation
- Introduction to the role of social finance and its connection to financial institutions and CSR.
- Explore examples and applications of social finance
- An overview of models, metrics, strategies and management practices relevant to social finance.
- Case Study: Preparing for a Pay for Success Opportunity

Class Preparation Materials:


  
  o NOTE: Please prioritize familiarizing yourself with the “How it Works” section.


Class 8: March 21st 2017
Indicating Impact I: Metrics, Evaluation and Quantification Efforts

- Midterm assignment submitted at the start of class
- Engage in discourse relevant to the financial significance of CSR programming
- Explore the spectrum of CSR measure what CSR measurement entails, and discussing existing opportunities and challenges

Class Preparation Materials:


**Class 9: March 28th 2017**

**Indicating Impact II: Rankings and Reporting Non-Financial Performance**

- An introduction to relevant measurement and reporting initiatives
- Review reputable and frequently used methods and tools
- Discuss the limitations and the next frontier for measurement methodology
- Case Study: *The Sustainability Account Standards Board*

**Class Preparation Materials:**

  - NOTE: A review of pages 2-37 is sufficient.


- RobecoSAM. (2016). *DJSI 2016 review results* [PowerPoint Slides]

**Class 10: April 4th 2017**

**Management Experiences in Corporate Social Responsibility and Cross-sector Partnerships**

- Submit company name for final assignment
- Discuss typical processes, protocols, opportunities and challenges
- Discuss the design, implementation and evaluation of CSR programs
- Review common managerial and leadership problems relevant to CSR
- Guest Presentation

**Class Preparation Materials:**

  - NOTE: A review of pages 74-86 is adequate
Class 11: April 11th 2017
Public Sector Perspectives and Engagement

- Explore the different mechanisms influential on public sector involvement in corporate social responsibility.
- Explore how public policy and international agreements influence key modalities of CSR
- Case Study: Parks and Partnership in New York City: The Spectrum of Engagement (B)

Class Preparation Materials:

  - NOTE: A review of pages 16-40 is adequate

Class 12: April 18th 2017
Non-Profit Sector Perspectives and Engagement

- Explore the different mechanisms influential on non-profit sector involvement in corporate social responsibility
- Discuss the implications of cross-sector partnerships, particularly business NGO relationships for the future of the non-profit sector
- Case Study: TBD

Class Preparation Materials:


Class 13: Date April 25th 2017
The Future of Corporate Responsibility and Cross-sector Partnerships

- Explore the role of thought leadership and convening in influencing the CSR agenda for public and private organizations
- Discuss the benefits and challenges of initiatives that assemble public and private interests.
- Identify and analyze local, state, national, and international initiatives to advance CSR
- Explore the next frontier for social finance, cross-sector partnerships, and corporate responsibility
- Guest presentation

**Class Preparation Materials:**


  - A review of pages 5-38 is adequate.

**Class 14: May 2nd 2017**

**Advance Thinking and Practice: Next Steps for the Field**

- Final assignment due at the beginning of class
- Reflective presentations
- Discuss the prospects and perils for cross-sector partnerships in public problem solving