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Martin V. Smith School of Business & Economics

BUS524: SPECIAL TOPICS

Social Business

Spring 2025

Subject to Revision¹



Instructor:

Dr. Diana Lenko,
MBA, DBA

Email:

diana.lenko@csuci.edu

Semester: January 23^d to May 8th, 2025

Time/Classroom: Thursday, 6:30PM –
9:30PM. Online

Office hours: via Zoom on Thursdays, 5:30PM
- 6:30PM, or by appointment. Any time you
need help, I am one email away! Put “Help”
in the subject and “HELP!” If it’s an
emergency.

Course Description

Welcome! This course provides an interdisciplinary exploration of mission-driven business models addressing social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental challenges at both local and global levels. It emphasizes the evolving field of **social business** and its applications, particularly in **sustainability, impact investment**, and the role of technology in addressing global challenges. Students will engage with frameworks like Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategies, Benefit Corporations & Certified B-Corp, microfinance, and sustainable ventures.

¹ This syllabus is a living document and is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.

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Through a mix of lectures, case studies, and hands-on projects, students will gain the skills to design, evaluate, and implement socially and environmentally responsible business strategies.

The primary focus will be on reviewing and understanding the textbook’s subject matter and how this relates to issues and challenges faced by companies in the field.

Student paper presentations, case studies, class discussions, student participation, and guest speakers will provide additional learning.

I wish you a great learning experience this semester.

Best regards,

Dr. Diana Lenko

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completing the course successfully, you will be able to:

- Define the concept of social business and its relationship with sustainability and innovation.
- Distinguish between Yunus Social Business, traditional business models, and hybrid models, with an emphasis on CSR, ESG, and sustainability-focused enterprises.
- Analyze how social businesses address pressing global challenges, such as climate change, poverty, inequality, and access to education and healthcare.
- Critically evaluate the financial, social, and environmental impacts of social ventures.
- Demonstrate skills in teamwork, leadership, presentation, and strategic business planning

Readings

This course uses a required Textbook:

Grove, A., & Berg, G. A. (Eds.). (2014). *Social business: theory, practice, and critical perspectives*. Springer Science & Business Media. ISBN-13: 978-3662512203

Important! Please note, that this book is available as a **FREE** PDF copy published on Canvas.

Extra Readings: Will be given in class during the semester.

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Optional But Highly Recommended Readings

The Future of the Responsible Company: What We've Learned from Patagonia's First 50 Years by Vincent Stanley with Yvon Chouinard (2023)

Venture Meets Mission: Aligning People, Purpose, and Profit to Innovate and Transform Society by Arun Gupta, Gerard George, and Thomas J. Fewer (2024)

The B Corp Handbook: How to Use Business as a Force for Good by Ryan Honeyman & Tiffany Jana (2019)

Conscious Capitalism by Mackey & Sisodia (2013), HBR Press

Harvard Business Coursepack

The course includes a range of materials, such as cases, articles, and web articles, which are accessible through a Harvard Business School Publishing course pack. The course pack costs \$13.95.

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COURSE OUTLINE

Classes	Topic	Reading Material	Activities
1/23	Topic #1 – Course Introduction	Syllabus	
1/30	Topic #2 – Foreword: From Microcredit to Social Business Topic #3 – Social Business: Defining and Situating the Concept	Textbook: Foreword + Chapter 1	1/27 - Introductory Survey is due
2/6	Topic #4 – Mission, Finance, and Innovation: The Similarities and Differences Between Social Entrepreneurship and Social Business	Chapter 2	
2/13	Topic #5 - Case Study: The Holistic Social Business Movement in Caldas (HSBM), Colombia	Chapter 3	Discussion Leader
2/20	Topic #6 – Case Study: Social Business	Chapters 4	Discussion Leader

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	and Student Financial Aid		
2/27	Topic #7: - Case Study: Disease: Social Business for a Malaria-Free World – BASF Grameen Limited	Chapter 5	Discussion Leader
3/6	Topic #8 – Case Study: Grameen Shakti Social Business: A Vanguard Model for Rural Energy Service	Chapter 6	Discussion Leader
3/13	Topic #9 – Case Study: Information Technology: Marriage Between IT and Social Business – Grameen Intel Social Business Ltd	Chapters 7	Discussion Leader
3/20	Spring Recess		
3/27	Movie		
4/3	Topic #10 – Case Study: Social Business City: Lessons from Wiesbaden	Chapter 8	4/3 - Film case assignment is due Discussion Leader
4/10	Topic #11 – Case Study: The Mystery of Small Social Business Ownership by the Poor: Creative Solutions Based on the Poor’s Potential	Chapter 9	Discussion Leader
4/17	Topic #12 – Social Business Planning: Management and Financial Issues	Chapter 10	Discussion Leader
4/24	Topic #13 – Social Business Marketing	Chapters 11 &	

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	Mix Topic #14 – Social Business and Poverty Alleviation: Lessons from Grameen Danone and Grameen Veolia	12	Discussion Leader
5/1	Group Presentations		Social Venture Project
5/8	Topic #16 - Looking Forward	Chapter 14	

Grading Method

Activity	% from Final Grade
Class Participation & Activities / Introductory Survey (individual)	20%
Discussion Leader (individual, throughout the semester)	25%
Social Venture "In the Wild" Exploration (group)	35%
Guest Speaker Reflection (individual)	10%
Film Case Analysis (pairs) Due April 3rd	10%

Class Participation and Attendance

You are expected to come to class with the assigned readings completed and fully prepared to participate in the discussion. As you will experience, a lot of the learning will take place during class time, so attendance becomes even more critical to achieving your learning goals.

Grading for this section will be based on attendance, punctuality, preparedness, your contributions toward advancing class discussion, and generally fostering learning among peers.

What matters, of course, is the quality of one's contributions to the class discussion, not the number of times one speaks.

Your presence is necessary for everyone's success in this course. More than one absence and or

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one lateness or early leaving may impact your engagement with content and ideas shared in class, so I encourage you to remember this. Please be proactive in situations where you will be absent, if you experience an emergency, or anticipate a prolonged absence for any reason. I expect you to attend class regularly and arrive on time, be always well prepared, participate in class and small group discussions, play a leadership role, and make it easier for others to participate.

If you are to be absent, please send me an email with full details and supporting documentation to report your absence in advance. When you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining any notes, handouts, additional reading materials, or assignment changes from your classmates or CI Learn. Please check first with them.

For absences with extenuating circumstances related to a medical condition or disability for which you may require reasonable accommodation, please refer to the Disability Statement.

The following criteria will be used to assign participation grades:

A

Attends class regularly and arrives on time, is always well prepared, participates in class and small group discussions, plays a leadership role and makes it easier for others to participate, is thoughtful and respectful in interacting with other students

B+ or B or B-

Attends class regularly and arrives on time, is usually well prepared, participates in class and small group discussions, is thoughtful and respectful in interacting with other students.

C+ or C or C-

Attends most classes, arrives on time, and is sometimes well prepared. Participates when called on.

D or lower

Does not attend class regularly or is late to class. Is often not prepared. Makes participation difficult for other students.

Discussions Etiquette

I expect you to participate in class discussions by sharing your own insights and experiences, providing feedback on other students' ideas, and sometimes providing alternative approaches

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to presented problems. You are expected to remain respectful and kind in your responses to one another.

What constitutes “good participation”?

- Good participation is when you ask another student to elaborate on something they’ve already said.
- Good participation is when you ask another student to explain or give an example of something that they’re talking about.
- Good participation is asking a question that opens up a new area of exploration for us.

Grades

Grades	Grade Scale %
A	94.0 - 100
A-	90.0 - 93.9
B+	87.0 - 89.9
B	83.0 - 86.9
B-	80.0 - 82.9
C+	77.0 - 79.9
C	70.0 - 76.9
D	58.0 - 69.9
F	0 – 57.9

Course Method

This course will use a variety of methods. There will be lectures when topics are introduced. Both written and film cases will be used to help students apply concepts from the reading. Additional learnings will come from student paper presentations, class discussions, business simulations, student participation, and guest speakers.

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Assignments

All assignments should be submitted at the beginning of class on the day they are due. If you cannot attend class you may email your assignment before the start of class and receive credit. In addition, students are asked to submit their assignments through turnitin.com. A detailed instruction for each assignment will be given in class.

Note: all assignments are to be typed and follow the APA Style which includes double-spaced, 12 pt type, one margin on each side.

Late Submission

Late submission of any assignment will not be accepted unless you make arrangements with me in advance of the due date or have an emergency reason that includes documentation.

Group Participation

Student teams will develop written "expectations for team members" at the beginning of the course. Based on their expectations, each team will develop an evaluation form to evaluate member performance. At the mid-point of the semester, team members will evaluate each other for informational purposes only. At the end of the semester, each team member will evaluate each other team members and themselves and submit the results to the instructor. Group participation grades will be based on team member evaluation. Listed [here](#) is a good example of a Team Evaluation Rubric². I also encourage you to consider these examples of a Team contract: [Sample 1](#), [Sample 2](#) to identify expectations, goals and behaviors that will help you collaborate and lay the foundation to succeed in group activities.

Participation via Canvas Discussions

Participation in the forum discussions or Hypothesis-enabled articles in Canvas improves the chance of a final grade increase.

I expect you to participate in online class discussions by sharing your own insights and experiences, providing feedback on other students' ideas, and sometimes providing alternative approaches to presented problems. You are expected to remain respectful and kind in your responses to one another.

² Design by Tavis Boise, Jonathan Fregoso, Marilyn Peake, Tyler Salzberg

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Important Policies

Cheating & Plagiarism

The student is responsible for knowing the University’s regulations regarding cheating, plagiarism, and academic misconduct (see your course catalog). This is a very serious matter! There will be zero tolerance for any violation of this code.

As an institution of higher learning, CSUCI values academic integrity and will not tolerate acts of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to such things as cheating, inventing false information or citations, plagiarism, and helping someone else commit an act of academic dishonesty. If a student is found responsible for committing an act of academic dishonesty in this course, an appropriate academic penalty will be assigned, and the incident will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. For additional information, please refer to CSUCI’s [Academic Dishonesty Policy](#).

I will screen all written assignments through Turnitin, a plagiarism detection service that compares the work against a large database of past work and flags the use of AI-written text. Don’t let cheating destroy your hard-earned opportunity to learn.

A ChatGPT Policy

- AI is a tool, but one that you need to acknowledge using. Please include a paragraph at the end of any assignment that uses AI explaining what you used the AI for and what prompts you used to get the results. Failure to do so is in violation of academic honesty policies.
- Be aware of the limits of ChatGPT. If it gives you a number or fact, or statement, assume it’s wrong unless you either know the answer or can check with another source. You will be responsible for any errors or omissions provided by the tool. It works best for topics you understand.
- Be thoughtful about when this tool is useful. Don’t use it if it isn’t appropriate for the case or circumstance.

Use of Camera during Zoom Meetings

It is always lovely to actually see your face during class, but I know that is not always possible or wanted. But it does help you connect better with me and with your colleagues. But it is ultimately your choice. But be mindful, if your camera is off, and you don't speak, I have no way

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of knowing if you are actually present. This makes assigning participation points impossible for you. Make sure you communicate via Chat, and speak regularly.

Attire

Please make sure you are properly dressed where the camera hits you.

Zoom Session Recording

Zoom meetings may be recorded and will be available to students enrolled in this course as a study aid. Students who do not want their likeness during class participation included in the recorded class session may elect to turn off the camera and change their name in the Zoom window. Recordings will be available for viewing subject to the following:

- Only students enrolled in the BUS522 class may view the recording.
- Students may not post or use the recordings in any other setting (e.g., social media) for any purpose.
- Federal and California law as well as University policies protecting intellectual property rights and use of instructional materials apply.
- If faculty have any plan to use the recording for a different class in the future, the faculty member will need written FERPA consent from those students in the current class who are identifiable in any of the recordings. A FERPA consent form signed by all students in the course will also be needed if the recordings are made available to others beyond the classroom.

Withdrawal Policy

It is your responsibility to withdraw from classes. Instructors have no obligation to withdraw students who do not attend courses. Withdrawal from a course after the withdrawal deadline requires the signature of the instructor and the department chair and a “W” will appear on the student’s transcript.

Students with Disabilities

Cal State Channel Islands is committed to equal educational opportunities for qualified students with disabilities in compliance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. If you have a disability and need accommodations, please register with the Disability Accommodations and Support Services (DASS) by calling (805) 437-3331 or visiting <https://www.csuci.edu/dass/>. Students must arrange for services through DASS – they should not be approaching faculty with special needs and special accommodations are not to be provided without direction from DASS. All requests

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for accommodations need appropriate advance notice by the student to avoid a delay in services. Faculty, students and DASS will work together regarding classroom accommodations.

Technology

If you encounter problems using web-based applications for our class, follow these steps:

1. [Clear your browser’s cache](#)
2. Try a different browser (Chrome, Firefox, Safari)
3. Shutdown and restart your computer
4. If you have questions about Canvas, use the built-in 24/7 help resources. Just click on “Help” in the left hand global navigation menu in Canvas. The Chat resource is wonderful!!
5. If your problems are not Canvas specific, contact the CSU Channel Islands Help Desk at helpdesk@csuci.edu or 805-437-8552

Additional Resources

Writing & Multiliteracy Center

The Writing and Multiliteracy Center (WMC) provides all CI students with FREE online support services and programs that help them become more effective writers and communicators. WMC *peer consultants* help students at any stage of the composition process in any discipline for writing or speaking (such as online slideshow presentations). Students are also welcome to bring in other types of non-academic or creative work. WMC *professional consultants* are CI faculty who can help students working on graduate-level writing or personal and research statements required for graduate school applications. WMC tutors can also help those who want to talk about or wish to learn new skills in speaking in academic or online contexts. Students can drop in for a 30 min tutorial session or ask for one-hour sessions for longer projects. Make an appointment by visiting <http://www.csuci.edu/wmc>.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS is pleased to provide a wide range of services to assist students in achieving their academic and personal goals. Services include confidential short-term counseling, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and 24/7 phone and text support. CAPS is located in Bell

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Tower East, 1867, and can be reached at 805-437-2088 (select option 2 on voicemail for 24/7 crisis support); you can also email us at caps@csuci.edu or visit our [website](#).

Emergency Intervention and Basic Needs

If you or someone you know is experiencing unforeseen or catastrophic financial issues, skipping meals, or experiencing homelessness/housing insecurity (e.g., sleeping in a car, couch surfing, staying with friends), please know that you are not alone. There are resources on campus that may assist you during this time. The Dolphin Pantry is currently located in Arroyo Hall and offers free food, toiletries and basic necessities for current CI students. For additional assistance, please contact the Dean of Students Office at (805) 437-8512 or visit Bell Tower 2565. Please visit the website for the most up-to-date information on the [Basic Needs Program](#).

Title IX and Inclusion

Title IX & Inclusion manages the University’s equal opportunity compliance, including the areas of affirmative action and Title IX. Title IX & Inclusion also oversees the campus’ response to the University’s nondiscrimination policies. CSUCI prohibits discrimination and harassment of any kind on the basis of a protected status (i.e., age, disability, gender, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, medical condition, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion or religious creed, sexual orientation, and Veteran or Military Status). This prohibition on harassment includes sexual harassment, as well as sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, and stalking. For more information regarding CSU Channel Islands’ commitment to diversity and inclusion or to report a potential violation, please contact Title IX & Inclusion at 805.437.2077 or visit the [Title IX webpage](#).

Preferred Pronouns

I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate/preferred name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. You may also update your pronouns or preferred name in myCI Student Center. Visit the [Registrar’s Gender Identity and Pronouns](#) page for instructions.