NUTR 278: Corporate Social Responsibility in the Food Industry  
Spring 2020

Class Meetings: Wednesday 3:15—6:15PM  
Jaharis 118

Instructors: Nicole Tichenor Blackstone | nicole.blackstone@tufts.edu | Jaharis 126  
Sean B. Cash | sean.cash@tufts.edu | Jaharis 127

Office Hours: Nicole: Mondays, 3-4 pm and Thursdays, 12:15-1:15 pm, or by appointment | Jaharis 126  
Sean: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00 – 12:50 pm, or by appointment | Jaharis 127

Teaching Asst.: Ariella Sela | ariella.sela@tufts.edu

Office Hours: TBD

Semester Hour Units: 3 SHUs

Prerequisites: Graduate standing or instructor approval.

Course Description: The role of the corporation in achieving societal goals is controversial and has evolved over time. The food industry in particular has the potential to impact human health, food access, ecological sustainability, working conditions, and community well-being. This course will provide students with an overview of prevailing theories of the social responsibilities of corporations; how CSR activities may benefit food businesses; how businesses can conduct, monitor, and measure the impacts of CSR practices; how consumers respond to these efforts; and emerging topics relevant to CSR in the food industry. We will draw upon academic research, case studies, and insights from current professionals to illustrate these concepts.

Course Goals: The overarching goal for this course is for students to understand the theory and practice of corporate social responsibility as it applies to the food industry. Students will:

1. Learn about different theories and tools of CSR, as well as their strengths and weaknesses  
2. Understand how to communicate basic business and sustainability concepts critical for CSR  
3. Understand why, how, and what food businesses commonly measure to assess the social responsibility of their activities  
4. Learn how firms in the food industry communicate CSR practices to different groups of stakeholders

Additional required readings and content will be posted to the Canvas course site (https://canvas.tufts.edu).

Academic Conduct  
Each student is responsible for upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, as specified in the Friedman School’s Policies and Procedures Handbook and Tufts University policies (http://students.tufts.edu/student-affairs/student-life-policies/academic-integrity-policy). It is the responsibility of each student to understand and comply with these standards, as violations will be sanctioned by penalties ranging from failure on an assignment and the course to dismissal from the school.
**Instructors' Philosophy on Misconduct:** The material you submit to show mastery of the course material must be your own work. We take proper academic conduct seriously, as it is unfair to other students when academic misconduct is not addressed. The policy followed here is quite simple: Any plagiarism or cheating will result in our awarding a failing grade for the assignment and the class, and all violations will be reported to the Academic Dean.

**Our Teaching-Learning Philosophy, and What That Means for You**

We are striving to take a learner-centered approach with this course (Weimer, 2013). Based on a growing body of evidence, educational theory, and our own values, we believe the following:

1. Actively engaging with content, rather than passively receiving it, is critical for learning and long-term retention. Therefore, we will use a combination of interactive lecture, discussions, and other activities as the foundation of our time in this classroom. Reading or watching the assigned materials before each class will be important for you to be able to fully participate and get the most out of our time together.

2. Our role as instructors is to guide or facilitate your learning. Being a facilitator means relinquishing some of the power traditionally held by a professor to create a more equitable, collaborative, and dynamic learning environment. It means designing structures that allow you to learn from one another- our first response to a question may not be to answer it!

3. Each of us brings different expertise, experiences, identities, and perspectives to this course. This diversity is inherently valuable and also essential to deepening our individual and collective knowledge.

4. One of the most powerful ways one can learn is by teaching others. We hope you will take advantage of that opportunity when it arises.

As we go through the semester, your suggestions on how we can better support your learning or improve the classroom environment are encouraged and appreciated.

**Assessment and Grading**

Your grade in this class will be determined by a final strategy briefing, teach back, reading responses, and your engagement and professionalism in the course. Points will be awarded for each assignment, and an overall course score will be calculated from the weights given below.

Grading for the course will be based on the distribution below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading responses (5)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach back</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One pager</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final CSR strategy briefing</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement and professionalism:</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSR in the News</td>
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**Reading responses:** 40% of your grade will be based on five responses to course readings. Three of these will be analyses of assigned case studies, and two of these will be reflective essays in response to the week’s assigned readings. The specific due dates are listed in the “at a glance” course outline below. All other weeks, students will submit brief bullet-point responses to assigned discussion prompt questions. The responses to these questions will be used by your instructors to guide that week’s discussion. These responses are not graded, but will count as contribution toward engagement and professionalism (described further below).

**Teach-back:** 25% of your grade will be based on your preparing and presenting a 12-minute “teach-back” in which you apply the tools and concepts learned in the previous section of the course to a current CSR issue in the food sector; 15% of the semester grade will be based on the presentation itself, and an additional 10% will be based on a one-page
briefing to be distributed to your classmates. Each student will be assigned a slot in which to present. Additional details will be discussed the first day of class.

**Final strategy briefing 25%:** You will be developing a CSR strategy recommendation for a food business that we engage with in the course, either through case studies or guest lectures. Your strategy briefing will be a slide stack and voice memo making a recommendation to the company's Board of Directors. This assignment will be due at end of the semester.

**Engagement and professionalism:** Regular attendance in class is a necessary (but not sufficient!) condition for mastering this material. 10% of your grade will be based on your engagement in class discussion, preparation of responses to reading prompts as described in “reading responses” above; use of appropriate terminology when discussing the material (talk the talk!); being an active listener; and being on-time and prepared for class. A detailed rubric for how these points are assessed is available on Canvas.

**CSR in the News:** The field of CSR is everchanging. As such, each class period we will take 10-15 minutes to discuss current events in the CSR world. Contributing during this segment of class will be part of your in class discussion grade.

**Grading Range**
Your course score will then be mapped into a letter grade on the basis of “natural breaks” in the distribution of class grades. Please note that these breaks may be used to raise, but never lower, grades from a standard grade distribution (e.g., 90% will always be at least an A-).

**Instructions for Submission of Assignments**
All assignments are due on Canvas at 11:59 pm on the Thursday before each class, unless otherwise noted in the schedule below.

**Penalties for late or incomplete assignments:** No late assignments will be accepted and a zero grade will be recorded for missing work. If you think you may have difficulty completing a problem set on time, please ask us for an extension as early as possible. No extensions will be granted fewer than 48 hours before an assignment is due; in case of an emergency, please notify us as soon as possible. We will try to accommodate busy schedules, but not poor planning.

**Grading Questions:** If you believe that an assignment or exam question was graded incorrectly, you are welcome to raise the issue with us. If you simply don’t like your grade and come to argue with us for more points, you will probably find that there are better uses of your time. In any case, we will follow a simple rule: We will not discuss any grade during the first day after the assignment has been returned.

**Accommodation of Disabilities**
Tufts University is committed to providing equal access and support to all students through the provision of reasonable accommodations so that each student may access their curricula and achieve their personal and academic potential. If you have a disability that requires reasonable accommodations please contact Matthew Hast, the Friedman School Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at 617-636-6719 to make arrangements for determination of appropriate accommodations. Please be aware that accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect for their provision.

**Tufts WebEx**
Friedman’s on-campus courses may be offered by Tufts WebEx (https://it.tufts.edu/webex) on days when the Boston campus is closed due to weather or a temporary cancellation issue. Students should expect to be notified by email in the event that class is cancelled and will be provided with the WebEx link for students to use for any remote class sessions. Also, any relevant course slides or materials will be made available on Canvas. The WebEx will be recorded and posted on Canvas when completed. If an on-campus Examination/Presentation was scheduled on a day when the Boston
campus is closed due to weather or a temporary cancellation issue, the exam/presentation will be rescheduled for an alternate on-campus class session date.

### Course Topics and Assignment Schedule at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE OF CLASS</th>
<th>COURSE TOPIC</th>
<th>INSTRUCTOR</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS DUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 15</td>
<td>Introduction to course and CSR, Key concepts and definitions</td>
<td>Blackstone &amp; Cash</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 22</td>
<td>Theories of CSR</td>
<td>Blackstone &amp; Cash; Tai Ullmann, Cargill</td>
<td>Reading Response #1: Reflective essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 29</td>
<td>The business case for CSR</td>
<td>Blackstone &amp; Cash; Guest speaker: TBD</td>
<td>Reading prompt responses (ungraded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 5</td>
<td>CSR in practice: the good, the bad, the (potentially) ugly</td>
<td>Blackstone &amp; Cash; Guest speakers: Siobhan Collins &amp; Ana Orians, Ceres</td>
<td>Reading Response #2: Case study analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 12</td>
<td>Student Teach-backs</td>
<td>Student block A</td>
<td>Teach-back slides and one-pager (presenting groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>Introduction to sustainability metrics, measurement, and reporting</td>
<td>Blackstone; Guest speakers: Lisa Drake, Stonyfield</td>
<td>Reading prompt responses (ungraded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 26</td>
<td>Life cycle assessment (LCA) and footprinting</td>
<td>Blackstone; Guest speaker: TBD</td>
<td>Reading Response #3: Reflective essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>Social LCA and human rights due diligence in supply chains</td>
<td>Guest speaker: Catherine Benoit Norris, New Earth</td>
<td>Reading prompt responses (ungraded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 11</td>
<td>Student Teach-backs</td>
<td>Student block B</td>
<td>Teach-back slides and one-pager (presenting groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>Certifications, Verifications, and Labeling</td>
<td>Blackstone &amp; Cash; Guest speaker: TBD</td>
<td>Reading Response #4: Case study analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Consumer behavior and CSR</td>
<td>Cash; Guest speaker: Anna McAlister, Endicott College</td>
<td>Reading prompt responses (ungraded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>Student Teach-backs</td>
<td>Student block C</td>
<td>Teach-back slides and one-pager (presenting groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Tufts Food and Nutrition Entrepreneurship Competition in lieu of regular class</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading prompt responses (ungraded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Marketing sustainability; Course wrap up</td>
<td>Cash (lecture); Blackstone &amp; Cash (wrap-up)</td>
<td>Reading Response #5: Case study analysis Final Strategy Briefing due April 30, 11:59 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*This schedule is subject to modification at the instructors’ discretion.*

### Detailed Course Schedule

*Note: Please refer to Canvas for the most up to date list of readings, topics and due dates.*

#### Week 1: Introduction to Course and CSR; Key Concepts and Definitions

**Learning Objectives:**
1. Define corporate social responsibility and sustainability in a business context
2. Describe common arguments for CSR

Required Reading/Assignments:
- Chandler Chapter 1: What is CSR?
- Chandler Newsletter: Strategic CSR Economics, November 19, 2019

Assignments Due:
- Reading prompt responses (ungraded)

Week 2: Theories of CSR

Learning Objectives:
1. Describe competing conceptualizations of the function of CSR (diversity of starting points/motivations)
2. Describe common critiques of CSR
3. Describe which stakeholders are prioritized according to different views on the role of business in society

Required Readings/Assignments:
- Chandler Chapter 3: Stakeholder theory
- Chandler Chapter 6: Who owns the firm?
- Jigsaw reading assignment

Recommended Readings:

Assignments Due:
- Reading Response #1: Reflective essay

Week 3: The Business Case for CSR

Learning Objectives:
1. Describe the business case for CSR
2. Define mission, vision, tactics, and strategy
3. Define and critique the concept of “shared value”

Required Readings/Assignments:
- Chandler Chapter 9: Strategy + CSR (p. 220-222 only)
- Chandler Chapter 10: Strategic CSR

Recommended Readings:
• Chandler Chapter 12: Sustainable Value Creation

Assignments Due:
• Reading prompt responses (ungraded)

Week 4: CSR in Practice: the Good, the Bad, the (Potentially Ugly)

Learning Objectives:
1. Describe how CSR fits in to different operations of a food enterprise
2. Identify common “pain points” for implementation of CSR within a firm
3. Identify the role of investors in initiating and supporting CSR initiatives

Required Readings/Assignments:
• Jigsaw reading assignment
  o Group 1: HBR Case, Frito Lay Net Zero Chip
  o Group 2: HBR Case, Green Mountain Coffee
  o Group 3: HBR Case, Nestle’s Creating Shared Value Strategy
  o Group 4: HBR Case, Starbucks and Conservation International

Recommended Readings:

Assignments Due:
• Reading Response #2: Case study analysis

Week 5: Student Teach-backs

Required Readings/Assignments:
• None

Assignments Due:
• Teach-back slides and one-pager (presenting groups)

Week 6: Introduction to Sustainability Metrics, Measurement, and Reporting

Learning Objectives:
1. Describe commonly applied CSR metrics, indicators, and targets
2. Describe why and how a company might prioritize particular sustainability metrics, using the concept of materiality
3. Identify reporting frameworks commonly used in the food industry to document CSR practices and outcomes

Required Readings/Assignments:
• Chandler Chapter 8: Compliance and Accountability (p. 186-194 only)
• The GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards: The Future of Reporting (approx. 3 minutes): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGqE4OO0_7g&list=PLqkvnJU0Llik4puL0KPqlc4flcecUtsao
• The Ten Principles: UN Global Compact. Retrieved from https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles
  o Materiality (p. 4-6)
  o GRI Index (p. 66-70)
  o UNGC Index (p. 71)
  o UN SDG Index (p. 7)
  o SASB Index (p. 72)

Recommended Readings:
• HBR Case: Danone: Adopting Integrated Reporting or Not?
Assignments Due:
  - Reading prompt responses (ungraded)

Week 7: Measuring Sustainability: Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) and Footprinting

Learning Objectives:
1. Define life cycle thinking, life cycle assessment, and life cycle management
2. Compare and contrast the concept of a life cycle with the footprinting scopes (1,2,3) of the GHG Protocol
3. Describe how LCA can be used by companies to improve sustainability and make external claims

Required Readings/Assignments:
- UNEP-SETAC. (2009). Life Cycle Management: How business uses it to decrease footprint, create opportunities and make value chains more sustainable.

Recommended Reading:
- WRI and WBSCD. (nd). GHG Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard.
- WRI and WBSCD. (nd). Corporate Value Chain (Scope 3) Accounting and Reporting Standard.

Assignments Due:
  - Reading Response #3: Reflective essay

Week 8: Social LCA and Human Rights Due Diligence in Supply Chains

Learning Objectives:
1. Describe social life cycle assessment
2. Identify key human rights and other social issues in food supply chains
3. Describe the challenges of identifying, measuring, and reporting on social issues in supply chains

Required Readings/Assignments:

Recommended Readings:


Assignments Due:
• Reading prompt responses (ungraded)

**Week 9: Student Teach-backs**

**Required Readings/Assignments:**
• None

**Assignments Due:**
• Teach-back slides and one-pager (presenting groups)

**Week 10: Certifications, Verifications, Labeling, Ratings & Rankings**

**Learning Objectives:**
1. Describe the problem that certification schemes are designed to overcome
2. Identify key aspects of successful certification and verification schemes

**Required Readings/Assignments:**
• Chandler Chapter 9: Accountability (p. 194-201 only)
• Case: New Belgium Brewing and B Company Certification

**Recommended Readings:**
• EcoLabel Index. Retrieved from: http://www.ecolabelindex.com/ecolabels/?st=country,us

**Assignments Due:**
• Reading Response #4: Case study analysis

**Week 11: Consumer Behavior and CSR**

**Learning Objectives:**
1. Understand the basic theories and principles of consumer psychology used to market food products to consumers, including models of market segmentation, consumer perception, and consumer decision-making
2. Apply these models and principles of consumer psychology to understand how food companies market socially responsible food products to consumers

Required Readings/Assignments:

Recommended Readings:

Assignments Due:
- Reading prompt responses (ungraded)

Week 12: Student Teach-backs

Required Readings/Assignments:
- None

Assignments Due:
- Teach-back slides and one-pager (presenting groups)

Week 13: Marketing Sustainability, Greenwashing, and Puffery

Learning Objectives:
1. Describe key concepts in consumer and producer behavior as they relate to the potential for success of market-based approaches
2. Explain how efforts to market socially responsible products can backfire on producers
3. Describe examples of how unscrupulous producers have used false or overstated claims to promote their products

Required Readings/Assignments:

Recommended Readings:
Assignments Due:
  • Reading Response #5: Case study analysis

Final Strategy Briefing due April 30, 11:59 pm