Course: Sociology II  
Code: 10BBA00805

Type: Required  Year: 2  Semester: 2  
ECTS Credits: 3  
Language: Spanish  
Coordination:

Faculty:  
Josep Miralles Massanés  
David Murillo Bonvehí

Workload distribution:  
Lectures: 15 hours  
Participatory sessions: 17.5 hours  
Independent study (Weekly study plus exam preparation): 54.5 hours  
Tutorials: 3 hours

Course contribution to the programme:  
The aim of Sociology II is to provide the student – the future professional – with a perspective which is simultaneously local and universal, so that any future analysis of a question, whether professional, economic, social or human can be immediately placed within a local and global framework.

To achieve this, the course uses an analysis of globalisation that sees it not as a simple economic process, but more as a huge social transformation involving economic, social, political and cultural elements. This social transformation process is not predetermined, and any results may come through a variety of decisions.

The course’s perspective is chiefly cultural. Values are dealt with on the course because, firstly, they guide decision-making at both an individual and a collective level and secondly because they are the criteria by which to judge the consequences of choices that direct the history of any society.

Sociology II poses the questions that are at the bottom of Corporate Social Responsibility. CSR is very often seen these days as a set of management practices, but it has its basis in the relationships that exist between business and society; that is to say, in the responsibility that companies must take for the effect their decisions have on society.

Course learning objectives:  
By the end of the course, students should be able to:
- Recognise and analyse, using the appropriate methodology, the basic elements of the techno-economic, social and political environment of organisations (companies, public bodies and charities).
- Understand the impact that organisations can have on their environment.

This will form the basis on which students will assimilate a global/local view of reality, which can create a professional and civic commitment to society.

**Skills developed:**
- The ability to communicate information and/or knowledge (4)
- The ability to understand the context’s complexity, in its global and local dimensions (7)
- The ability to contribute to organisations taking on corporate citizenship. (8)

**Contents and methodology:**

**a) Activities and methodology**

The course is divided into 6 thematic blocks, each lasting two weeks. Each block will consist of the following elements:

- Lectures: 2.5 hours.
- Group participatory sessions: 2.5 hours.
- Going over the content of the lectures and reading lists.
- Presentation of readings connected to the lecture.
- Clarification of concepts and debate on questions that come up on the subject.
- Individual work over the two weeks: studying the readings and texts set in the Reading File or on the course website.

There will be a system of tutorials, either class-based or via the web.

**b) Materials.**

Students will be given a reading file containing all the texts for required study.

On the course webpage, there will also be further recommended reading and other materials (videos and films).

**c) Contents**

Block 1. The technological side of Globalisation, and its impact.
- Objectives:

- To understand the nature of the contemporary technological revolution.
- To be able to analyse its consequences on business, the labour market, social structure and culture.
- To discuss the values at stake in these transformations.

- Contents

1. The technological revolution

- The economic and cultural context of technological change.
- The new information and communication technologies.

2. The emergence of the knowledge society: from post-industrialism to informational capitalism.

- The information economy, or new economy.
- The company: from pyramid to network.
- The risk society.

3. The new culture of work: the information economy’s impact on labour structures.

- New invoices in the labour market: knowledge workers and general workers
- Flexibility and ‘corrosion of character’.
- Flexibility and insecurity.

4. Changes in social structure

- The digital gap
- Dualisation: a reversible structural trend
- Increase in risk zones and exclusion
- Wealth distribution in information societies

5. Change in the cultural structure: new emerging values

- Risk and flexibility vs. security
- Inclusion vs. exclusion
Block 2. Economic Globalisation

- Objectives:
  - To understand the nature of economic Globalisation.
  - To be able to analyse its consequences, from the point of view of redistribution of power and income at a global level.
  - To discuss the values involved in economic globalisation, its consequences and possible transformation.

- Contents

1. Globalisation: a first approach

- Globalisation as a fundamentally techno-economic phenomenon?
- Globalisation as the integration of national economies into one single global capitalism.
- The political impact and cultural impact of globalisation.

2. The causes of economic globalisation.

- Technological causes: the world markets as the natural space for the knowledge economy.
- Cultural causes: communication and information flow in global mass media.
- Ideological and legal causes: neoliberalism and the ‘Washington Consensus’.
- Political causes: the end of the cold war and the disappearance of the Eastern Bloc.

3. The promises of economic Globalisation.

- Global markets as a guarantee of sustained growth: free circulation of capital, knowledge, goods and services.
- The IMF, the WTO and the WB as the main influences in the globalisation process.

4. The reality of economic globalisation.

- Globalisation of the financial markets
  a) institutional investors
  b) speculative activity and the global casino
  c) systemic crises
- Business globalisation

a) asymmetry: Barriers in the North to products from the South
b) the power of the multinationals
c) the new international work division: consequences facing us of global inequality
d) consequences of international business in other social spheres: health, education, culture, agriculture and the environment.

Block 3. The financial size of Globalisation

- Objectives

- To understand the meaning of the financial system within the economic system
- To understand the evolution of relationships between the economic system and the financial system within Globalisation
- To understand the relationship between the values governing the financial system and certain aspects of the current financial crisis.

- Contents

1. The global culture of financial investment
2. Macroeconometric figures and international capital flows
3. Banking and global regulating agents
4. The financial crisis of 2008: causes and mechanisms


- Objective

- To understand and discuss how to fit the major current cultural debates in with business life and people’s everyday lives.

- Contents

a) Part One: the post-modern era and consumerism

1. Consumerism as capitalist culture

- Consumption as a mechanism of social inclusion
- Consumption as a model for living
- Advertising as an agent for spreading values
- The role of the media

b) Part Two: From the End of History to the Clash of Civilisations

1. The End of History (F. Fukuyama)
   - Capitalism as humanity’s natural destiny
   - The link between democracy and capitalism

2. The Clash of Civilisations (S. Huntington)
   - Cultural differences as a major source of political conflict: the West against other civilisations
   - The relationship between modernisation and Westernisation
   - The identification between democratic values and Western civilisation

3. McWorld versus Jihad (B. Barber)
   - The dialectic between capitalist consumerist culture and fundamentalism (nationalist or religious)
   - Democracy as the common victim of both fundamentalisms.

Block 5. The political players in the Globalisation era.

- Objective

- To understand the importance of the political system to economic and social life.
- To understand the need for a new political structure encompassing the new challenges presented by Globalisation

- Contents

1. The Nation-State in crisis
   - The contradiction between political spaces (national) and economic spaces (global): the State’s difficulty in regulating global markets
   - Fiscal weakness of the Welfare State
2. International organisations: between a lack of legitimacy and a lack of power

- The need to govern interdependence democratically
- The classic multilateral economic organisations and their lack of legitimacy: the IMF, WB and WTO
- The United nations system, and its shortfall in governability of globalisation
- The International Criminal Tribunal: the consolidation of global democratic regulatory structures

3. From economic regionalisation to political regionalisation

- The European Union: from the Euro to political union.
- Other regions in the integration process: Mercosur, South-East Asia, etc.
- “Open regionalism” as a project to create global geopolitical balance.

4. International civil society as a pro-active player

- The constitution and components of a global political player
- The World Social Forum in Porto Alegre
- World public opinion and the global peace movement

5. Global terrorism as a new reactive player

- 11th September 2001
- Cultural, geopolitical and economic determining factors of terrorism

6. The USA’s neo-imperialist unilateralism

- New threats to peace and world security
- Unilateralism vs. multilateralism: military superiority vs. cooperative governability
- The role of the UN and Europe

7. Appendix: Some open subjects in the debate on democratic government of the global economy

- The need for new tools to govern the new global flows.
- New international financial architecture: tax havens, control of speculative movements, instability of financial markets
- Foreign debt waiver for developing countries
- Opening up OECD markets to products from developing countries
- Regulating world trade: social and environmental rights, protecting cultural diversity, food sovereignty.
- Technology transfer: Pharmaceutical patents case study
- Reforming the WTO, the FMI and the World Bank
- Reforming the United Nations: Reforming the Security Council, creating an Economic and Social Security Council
- The increase in Official Development Aid (0.7) and the creation of global redistribution mechanisms

Block 6. Current business culture

- Objective
  - To understand the role of companies in the construction of an economic, social, political and cultural order in the Globalisation era.
  - Prepare the bases of a clear understanding of the debate on Social Corporate Responsibility

- Contents

1. The relationship between environment changes and companies. Findings and challenges.

2. From initial capitalism to CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility). What has happened over the past twenty years?

3. New responsibilities for the company? Some proposals and some questions

**Evaluation:**
The Assessment System for the aforementioned course objectives includes the tests which take place at the end of each content block, attendance at teacher-led classes and participatory sessions, attendance at programmed lectures, completion of any written work set, the student’s attitude and involvement, progress in the aforementioned skills, and the final exam.

In all cases, evaluation is seen not simply as a summative tool, but also as an educational one; this is why the faculty will be focusing on evaluation of the students’ progress as a process to be measured continuously.

Joint evaluation of the activities carried out during the course will make up 50% of the final grade as long as it is 5 or over. If this is not the case, the course is failed and the student will not be permitted to sit the final exam.

The final exam will be worth 50% of the final grade. It is supposed that the preparation for the final exam is when the student assimilates the various course elements in an individual way.

In order to get the average between the mark for the course activities and the final exam
grade, both marks must be 5 or over. If this is not the case, the final course grade will be the lower of the two.

To pass the course in the retakes, there will be an exam in which the student must get 5 or over. In this case, the final grade will be the grade achieved in this exam. Marks for activities carried out during the course will not be kept.

Core bibliography:
The complete bibliography can be found in the Reading File given to each student at the start of the course.

Complementary Bibliography or reading material:
- Held, D., McGrew, A. Globalización/Antiglobalización, Barcelona, Paidós, 2003
- Reich, R..B. El trabajo de las naciones, Madrid, Vergara, 1993
- Stiglitz, J. Cómo hacer que funcione la globalización Madrid, Taurus, 2006
- Sen, A. Identidad y violencia Barcelona, La Campana, 2009
- Camacho, I. Fernández, J.L., Miralles, J. Ética de la empresa, Bilbao, Desclée, 2006
- Sebastián, L. Razones para la esperanza Barcelona, Icaria, 2003