

## Business Philosophy: The Exercise of Free Thinking.

UGRA\_014152

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Departments	Department of Society, Politics and Sustainability
Teaching Languages	English
ECTS	2
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### Course Goals

Business Philosophy: The Exercise of Free Thinking.

The course, rather than primarily giving practical guidance and useful tools for becoming an efficient business professional, speaks to the thinking being behind the manager. In this way, it will provide insights into the underlying meaning of private business as such, using therefore questions of the following kind: What is the idea of business? What is its etymological meaning and philosophical origin? Where does it historically come from? What underlying conditions does it need to flourish? What role does the private play and what ideologies and beliefs are there in support of it? What is a "company" for in the original sense of the word? What does "negotiation" essentially mean? What is money and what can and can it not buy? etc.

In order to answer these questions, the course will necessarily take us to further concepts such as the different forms of economic systems (which includes the idea of capitalism with its homo oeconomicus), the private sphere within a community, the idea of economy within the philosophical tradition and ultimately to the very meaning of the Greek "oikos", the philosophical origin of the science of "economics". Therefore, the main goal of the course is to reflect on the conceptual origins and main elements of "business" and to understand its wider scope within the philosophical tradition of economic thought - and in this way, to view the business world through the lens of philosophy.

In sum, the main learning objective is to become familiar with philosophical reasoning in order to understand the fundamentals of the business profession.

### Previous knowledge

no previous knowledge required.

### Prerequisites

no pre-requisites.

### Teaching methodology

The methodology of the course will be the exercise of free thinking. Students will have to read some preparations materials in the form of texts, articles, book chapters, documentaries, etc. These materials, however, should not conduce students to their excessive memorization and hinder a free and open approach towards the in-class discussion, but stimulate them for a real dialogue.

The methodology in class will be in the form of a common discussion within an atmosphere of unconditioned and unprejudiced reflection. As such, no pre-established patterns of thought should be applied to the common reflection, but it will take place within the spirit of instantenous openness and freedom of thought. In this way, a true dialogue becomes possible, in which we will commonly practice the exercise of philosophical thinking at the very moment of the in-class discussions.

Thus, apart from having received thought incentives through the given materials, students should come to class with the appropriate attitude, which means being open for the exercise of free thinking.

The sessions of the course will therefore be structured as following:

- dialogical reflection as one group,
- exercises on philosophical thinking within smaller groups,
- exercises on dialogical thinking as one group as well as within smaller groups,
- individual reflection exercises.

The content of our reflections will always be on the principles and intellectual roots of the idea of business.

## Description

### Course contribution to program

The course "Business Philosophy: The Exercise of Free Thinking will intent to guide students towards the dimension of philosophical reasoning and more specifically, towards reflecting on the principles of business. In this way, they will be able to understand their profession within a wider scope of societal and philosophical context.

With philosophical insights into the origin of the business world and its economic activity, students will gain intellectual confidence and fully comprehend the essence of what they will be doing as future managers.

As such, they will have the possibility to acquire a reinforced attitude towards their profession and therefore become responsible and thoughtful business men/women.

### Short description

The title of the course indicates a special and unaccustomed manner of approaching the topic of business. Unaccustomed because the course will not give practical guidance and useful tools for becoming an efficient business professional, but speaks to the thinking being behind the manager. In this way, it will provide insights into the underlying meaning of private business as such, using therefore questions of the following kind: What is the idea of business? What is its etymological meaning and philosophical origin? Where does it historically come from? What underlying conditions does it need to flourish? What role does the private play and what ideologies and beliefs are there in support of it? What is a "company" for in the original sense of the word? What does "negotiation" essentially mean? How can we explain the contemporary phenomenon of mass consumption? etc.

In order to answer these questions, the course will necessarily take us to further concepts such as the different forms of economic systems (which includes the idea of capitalism with its homo oeconomicus), the private sphere within a community, the idea of economy within the philosophical tradition and ultimately to the very meaning of the Greek "oikos", the philosophical origin of the science of "economics".

Therefore, the main goal of the course is to reflect on the conceptual origins and main elements of "business" and to understand its wider scope within the philosophical tradition of economic thought - and in this way, to view the business world through the lens of philosophy.

## Bibliography

- Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a young poet (Book)
- Martin Heidegger, What is called thinking? (Book)
- Erich Fromm, To have or to be? (Book)
- Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Book)
- Charles Handy, What is a company for? (Article)
- Jürgen Gedinat, The importance of philosophy in cultural diplomacy (Article)
- Michael Sandel, What money can't buy (Book)

## Activities

### Teamwork

Final Team Work reflecting on the whole course.

### Readings

Students will receive preparatory readings and video material off-class and in-class.

## Content

#	Topic
1	On the methodology of the course: the exercise of free thinking.
2	on business through "com-panis": What is a company (for)?
3	on business through "neg-otium": What does negotiation mean and what is its opposite? What is the banality of evil and what does it have to do with it?
4	On the idea of value (Value Theories): on what money can and cannot buy and on the difference between value and worth.
5	on the free market: is the invisible hand theory sound? Is the free market a perfect model for organizing a society?
6	on the idea of development: development theories, traditional versus ideal understanding.

## Assessment

Tool	Assessment tool	Category	Weight %
In-class analysis and discussion of issues	attendance and participation (in-class dialogue, in-class exercises and online forum)	Retake and ordinary round	40.00%
Group project	continuous group work off-class.	Ordinary round	30.00%
Final individual project	1 off-class individual reflection paper on question(s) posed by professor.	Retake and ordinary round	30.00%
Learning report analysis	individual work off-class.	Retake	30.00%

### PROGRAMS

BBA20-Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (Undergraduates: Business)  
BBA20 Year 1 (Optative)

BBA23-Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (Undergraduates: Business)  
BBA23 Year 1 (Optative)

DBAI23-Double Degree in Business Administration and Artificial Intelligence for Business (Undergraduates: Business)  
DBAI23 Year 1 (Optative)

GBL24-Double Degree in Business Administration and Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Business)  
GBL24 Year 1 (Optative)