

**National University of Singapore  
NUS Business School  
Department of Management and Organisation**

**MNO3714: Business with a Social Conscience**

**Session: Semester 2, 2025/2026**

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**Course Description**

Business is of the community and by the community. What effect can and should businesses have on the communities in which they operate? This module is designed around four inter-related themes/questions.

***1. What is a business for?***

We start by surveying the evolution of thinking about the relation between business and social conscience. We examine the assumptions that have underpinned different models of business.

***2. What is a social conscience and why does it matter in business?***

Our purpose is to identify and improve our understanding of the elements of conscience, including ethics, responsibility, and values. The social nature of business is also explored.

***3. Is it enough to have a social conscience?***

We shall learn how to integrate social conscience into business systems, processes, functions, and outcomes.

***4. New forms of business***

We trace the recently evolved forms of business in which conscience is at the nucleus – social businesses, social-purpose organisations and social investors.

**Learning outcomes**

By the end of this module, you should:

- Have a deeper understanding of the purpose of business and the social dimensions of business.
- Be able to suggest how social conscience can be integrated into business processes and functions.
- Be more aware of changing stakeholder and societal expectations of business.
- Know about the new business forms that have evolved to meet the demands for a social conscience in business.

### **Modes of learning and learners' responsibilities**

Classes will be conducted in a seminar format. The course will be learner-centered. I will set norms of openness, participation, and preparedness because much of the learning in this course will be through peer- and self-learning. Before each class, you will be given a set of questions to think about. To gain the most from each class, you should:

- Be prepared for all classes, having completed the readings and assignments.
- Be responsible for participating actively in class
- Be willing to question, think critically, and learn from others.

Most classes will be held face-to-face, in person. Some will be online and self-directed. More details will be provided in class.

You will learn from the variety of readings and resources that we will examine throughout the course. Learning activities will include analyses of cases (local/regional and foreign), debates, critiques of papers, simulation/role-play and talks by invited speakers.

Outside of classes, my main mode of communication with the class will be via Canvas and e-mail. It is your responsibility to check your NUS mailbox regularly, and to read the announcements, updates and other materials uploaded to Canvas.

Some sessions will include group exercises as part of the learning process. You have a responsibility to the class to be prepared for the exercise and to show up for the class to play your part.

### **Learning resources**

To gain different perspectives, you will read journal articles, book chapters/books and published cases. The readings present ways of thinking, illustrative cases, and experience-based reflections. They will be made available in Canvas.

### **Academic honesty**

Please acknowledge all references and sources that you use in your work.

### **Assessment**

Participation 30%

Individual responses and discussion at relevant group session 35%

Group project (report and presentation) 35%

## Schedule

This is an **indicative** schedule. It may be adjusted, when necessary, e.g., to accommodate guest speakers and take advantage of other opportunities for learning. Please note that three classes will consist of online learning.

Session	Topic
1 16 Jan In-person	What is the purpose of business? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the course</li> <li>• What is conscience? Why does it matter?</li> <li>• The changing landscape of business</li> <li>• Evolution of business models and social conscience</li> </ul>
2 23 Jan In-person	Embedding and measuring Social Conscience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dimensions of Social Conscience</li> <li>• Operationalizing conscience: Conscience in practice or action</li> <li>• Conscience through the value chain</li> </ul>
3 30 Jan In-person	Business and the Natural Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manufacturing with a conscience</li> <li>• Harms, benefits and constraints</li> <li>• Case study TBA</li> </ul>
4 6 Feb Online learning	Sustainable development – personal and business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Global Goals</li> <li>• The reality — SDG dashboard</li> <li>• Adopt a Goal — for yourself</li> <li>• Young SDG leaders — for business</li> </ul>
5 13 Feb In-person	Marketing with a conscience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing &amp; consumption</li> <li>• Consumer Culture</li> <li>• Creation of desire</li> <li>• Activity: Bazaar</li> </ul>
6 20 Feb In-person	Conscience in Employment: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dimensions of diversity</li> <li>• The tyranny of merit</li> <li>• What does it mean to be inclusive?</li> <li>• Case study: On Cheong's HR legacy</li> </ul>
	RECESS
7 6 March In-person	How can organisational conscience be cultivated or eroded? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders' role in setting the tone</li> <li>• The acceptance and perpetuation of corruption in organisations</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case study: Good Intentions Gone Awry</li> </ul>
8 13 March Online learning	<p>Treating Employees with Conscience: Health at work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why does health matter?</li> <li>• Safety, Health, Wellness at work</li> <li>• Towards a healthier workplace</li> <li>• Activity: Design your healthy workplace</li> </ul>
9 20 March Online learning	<p>Working with stakeholders &amp; community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From CSR to social change</li> <li>• Collaborating with stakeholders for good</li> <li>• Stakeholder analysis &amp; Stakeholder management</li> <li>• Case: The Zuellig Family Foundation</li> </ul>
10 27 March In-person	<p>Blending business with social purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socially innovative businesses</li> <li>• Case: World Toilet Organisation</li> <li>• Guest Speaker: Jack Sim, Founder of WTO and BOP Hub</li> </ul>
11 3 April In-person	<p>Ecosystems for business with conscience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New forms of organization with social conscience</li> <li>• Funding businesses with conscience</li> <li>• Cases</li> </ul>
12 10 April In-person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration &amp; Project presentations</li> </ul>
13 17 April In-person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration &amp; Project presentations</li> </ul>