Sustainability & Corporate Social Responsibility in Scandinavia
Copenhagen Business School “Short Course”
March 2018

Instructor:  Dr. Robert Strand
Contact: rstrand@berkeley.edu

- Executive Director & Lecturer, Center for Responsible Business at the University of California-Berkeley Haas School of Business
- Associate Professor of Leadership & Sustainability, Copenhagen Business School

Overview:

Scandinavia represents a uniquely stimulating region of the world in which to explore sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Scandinavian-based firms are disproportionately well represented atop the major sustainability and CSR performance indicators and the Scandinavian region as a whole has demonstrated strong and balanced country-level economic, social, and environmental performances. Scandinavia is increasingly recognized as home to globally recognized sustainability movements and Scandinavian governments have taken a global lead in the advancement of the sustainability and CSR agendas. Most recently, this includes significant embracement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the Nordic Council of Ministers. In this program we explore sustainability and CSR in Scandinavia firsthand through multiple perspectives of focus that include:

- **Scandinavian companies.** We explore sustainability and CSR activities at a selection of major Scandinavian firms.
- **Cooperation.** We explore how cooperation serves as a basis for business activities in a Scandinavian context and the effects of a more cooperative (vis-à-vis competitive) approach.
- **Cultural & societal norms.** We explore norms related to what has been described as a typically Scandinavian... and “Scandinavian management”... and consider the role this may have in sustainability and CSR activities and performances.
- **Company structures:** Scandinavian companies exhibit unique structural characteristics that include ownership structures as ‘industrial foundations’ and a heightened level of cooperatives in comparison to other contexts (eg. U.S. context). We consider corporate governance and ownership structures across Scandinavia the effects this may have on sustainability and CSR.
- **Creating Shared Value.** We consider the recent strategic offering by Michael Porter and Mark Kramer and consider whether creating shared value is, in fact, a concept of Scandinavian origins.
Course Materials:

You will be expected to have read all materials in advance of our time together in Copenhagen. The majority of these articles are quite short. Particular readings will be called out as ‘in-focus’ for a particular day as will be announced throughout the course.

Exploring sustainability and CSR in a Scandinavian context is a rapidly burgeoning field. As part of these readings, I share with you two working papers I am currently editing as a glimpse into the most current research in this domain and also as invitation for you to engage and help to shape this growing field.

Introduction to yours truly
- Watch “Sustainable Vikings: Exploring sustainability & CSR in Scandinavia - My personal journey” at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAGHty7TuQ.
  - 5 minute segment that is part of the “Sustainable Vikings” MOOC (available on Coursera) in which I offer personal reflections regarding my evolving interests in Scandinavia.

Scandinavia... a *very quick* introduction to current discussions & debates
- World Economic Forum (2017). You're more likely to achieve the American dream if you live in Denmark.

Mainstream management thinking... & CSR: from Milton Friedman to Michael Porter

Business & Strategy in Scandinavia

New frontiers in Sustainability: Open Innovation
Course work:

Students can expect individual and group work throughout the duration of the course oftentimes in the form of short exercises and rapid presentations. After the course conclusion, students are assigned a personal reflection assignment that will take the form of a 600-1000 word blog post on the LinkedIn blog platform. All students are expected to have an active LinkedIn account in advance of the course beginning and have reviewed the Publishing on LinkedIn Guide available at https://students.linkedin.com/student-publishing.

Assessment:

60%   Class participation & contributions to overall collective learning
40%   Personal reflections.... Posted on LinkedIn blog

- Include #StudentVoices  #SustainableVikings @robertgstrand @CBScph at the bottom of your blog post.

Instructor Bio:

Dr. Robert Strand is the Executive Director of the Center for Responsible Business and member of the faculty at the University of California-Berkeley Haas School of Business. He is also Associate Professor of Leadership & Sustainability with the Copenhagen Business School. Prior to joining academia, Robert spent a decade in industry with IBM and Boston Scientific in a range of roles in manufacturing, supply chain, marketing, strategy, and investor relations. He holds a Ph.D. in corporate social responsibility from the Copenhagen Business School, an MBA in international business from the University of Minnesota completed at HEC-Paris, and a B.S. in industrial engineering from the University of Wisconsin. He was a United States Fulbright scholar to Norway. With his wife Sarah, Robert is the proud parent of two wonderful boys, Mikkel (4 years) and Jonas (2 year).

Robert Strand
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