Corporate Sustainability Policy and Accounting

Lecturer: Prof. Dr. Michael Stich, University of Cologne, Germany
Semester: Fall 2018
Extent: 2 SWS Lecture and Case Studies
Credits: 3

Content:
This course introduces students to the concept of corporate sustainability and highlights the role of non-financial information on sustainability stocks and flows for managerial and stakeholders’ decision making. Specifically, students become familiar with the key elements of corporate sustainability management for operating, investment, and financing decisions, learn the principles of internationally applied sustainability reporting standards (e.g., Framework of the Global Reporting Initiative), and critically reflect current trends in non-financial reporting. Further, students train and discuss the contemporary practical challenges of carbon accounting, mandatory sustainability reporting requirements, assurance of non-financial information, and incorporation of non-financial information in firm valuation.

Learning Outcomes:

After participating this course, students are able:

- to understand the purpose of accounting for sustainability-related items for managerial and stakeholders’ decision making,
- to discuss corporate sustainability policies against the background of global challenges (e.g., global warming) and in the light of ethical considerations,
- to critically evaluate contemporary trends in sustainability accounting,
- to use clear and concise tools to communicate non-financial firm characteristics within a firm (e.g., reporting to managers) and to outside stakeholders (e.g., banks and suppliers),
- to apply internationally accepted sustainability reporting standards to real-life situations,
- to identify material characteristics that are critical for the corporate value creation,
to systemize, aggregate, and simplify non-financial information to be decision useful,

- to practice fundamental non-financial accounting approaches to analyze the effect of corporate sustainability policies on financial and sustainability performance, and

- to use analytical and research tools to monitor contemporary challenges of non-financial reporting and to maintain professional skills in a changing business environment.

Date and place:
The course (incl. lecture, case studies, and exam preparation) is scheduled for the following **five days** in November 2018.

- Date 1: November 13th (Tuesday), 2018; from 10:15 to 16:00 (incl. lunch break)
- Date 2: November 14th (Wednesday), 2018; from 9:15 to 16:00 (incl. lunch break)
- Date 3: November 19th (Monday), 2018; from 9:15 to 16:00 (incl. lunch break)
- Date 4: November 20th (Tuesday), 2018; from 10:15 to 16:00 (incl. lunch break)
- Date 5: November 21st (Wednesday), 2018; from 9:15 to 12:00

The place for the course will be announced in KSL.

The exam will take place in the **first week of December 2018**. Please see KSL for further details.

Admission requirements:
Participants should have a **sound baseline understanding** of corporate management, financial reporting, and quantitative methods (e.g., descriptive statistics and correlations). Advanced competences in sustainability management, non-financial reporting, and assurance are conductive, however such skills are **not required**. Students who want to participate the course **must register in KSL no later than October 19, 2018, 23:59**.

Preparation:
**Prior** to the five course dates, all participants have to work through a concise set of exercises to recall several fundamental tasks of firm valuation, corporate reporting, and capital market mechanisms. These recall-exercises are **not** included in the evaluation/grading of the course.

Evaluation/Grading:
The final evaluation results from a **90 minutes written exam** at the end of the semester (100%). For the exam of the course, students **must register in KSL** – please see dates in KSL!