Corporate Sustainability Policy and Accounting

Lecturer: Prof. Dr. Michael Stich, University of Cologne, Germany
Semester: Fall 2019
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 days:

- Wednesday, September 25, 2019  09:15 - 17:00 (incl. lunch break)
- Thursday, September 26, 2019  10:15 - 18:00 (incl. lunch break)
- Friday, September 27, 2019  09:15 - 17:00 (incl. lunch break)
- Friday, October 11, 2019  09:15 - 17:00 (incl. lunch break)

The place for the courses will be announced in KSL.
The exam will take place during the term.

**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 September 13, 2019, 23:59.

**Preparation:**
**Prior** to the 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** (100%) which will take place in November/December 2019. Date is not yet defined.

For this exam, students must register in KSL – please see KSL!