

Syllabus

Creating the New in an International Context (SSE Intensive Course 7000)

Purpose

Based on theoretical foundations in international business, strategic and multinational management, innovation and entrepreneurship, and change management, the course aims at offering participants "knowledge by immersion" about how internationally active firms based in a small, open European economy deal with novelty creation. Important aspects are how they conceive of and innovatively approach challenges in today's semi-globalized business environment. The importance of underlying societal structures, socioeconomic factors, human interaction and culture for innovative activity will be analyzed.

Introduction and Course Context

Innovation is today happening in centers of excellence around the world faster than ever before. This contrasts with the trouble-ahead warnings that business and government leaders are currently facing, as important "engine economies" of the world economy are expected to grow only about 1 percent this year, and one-time dynamos like Brazil, China, and Russia are losing speed.

The best antidote to stagnation is innovation, the creation of products and services that make life better—whether it's air conditioning, vaccines, or text messaging. Every country wants to foster a culture of innovation, but it's not easy to do. The magic and love for entrepreneurship and experimentation must be there.

The limited home market for Swedish firms has always required an international outlook both when establishing, growing and developing businesses. After a relatively long period of stable 'rules of the game' for business since 1945, the template of continuously increased openness, international trade, and globalization is today challenged on a number of accounts. Multinational (and domestically active) corporations, as well as startups therefore face changing conditions and have to respond in novel, innovative ways. Bloomberg's ranking of the world's 50 most innovative countries focuses on six tangible activities that contribute to innovation, and Sweden fortunately still consistently ranks in the top ten. The purpose of the intensive course is to study if a broad formula for innovation can in fact be identified, and what companies, and governments, need to do to reproduce it.

The Program is given in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. Sweden is a member of the EU and an especially suitable location for this type of program, as the country is a small open economy forced to respond to changes in the political and business environment. The country is also home to a disproportionate number of large, successful multinational corporations and startups according to the OECD (Calvino, Crisuolo & Menon, 2016).

Stockholm produces the second-highest number of billion-dollar tech companies per capita, after Silicon Valley. The links with the USA have, especially in the post-war era, been strong and many prominent Swedish engineers, founders of corporations, managers, and scholars have been educated in and inspired by the US. The limited home market for Swedish firms has also required an international outlook both when establishing, growing and developing businesses.

This Program will, with the help of scholars at the research frontier and study visits to successful startups and leading established multinational corporations, be given the opportunity to reach deeper insight into contemporarily pressing issues like:

- Innovative business models, strategic management and organization in a changing geopolitical situation and a semi-globalized world (Ghemawat, P. (2007), where asymmetries are still generated by nation states, regions, culture and income levels
- The effects of digitalization and the emergence and activities of “Matchmaking Multisided Platform fFirms” and their effects on established firms and business models.
- The effects of the imminent shift in the world’s energy supply from fossil fuels to renewable sources on society and businesses.
- The challenges and opportunities of increased customer concern with sustainability along an increasing number of dimensions, and a growing cynicism among the young regarding the intentions, practices and legitimacy of large multinational corporations, not seen since the 1970s.
- The promises and challenges of increased migration: how are nations and multinational corporations able to integrate, benefit from, and leverage “competence that votes with their feet”?

Course Content

Major themes introduced during the Intensive Course include:

- The international context - semi-globalization and game-park capitalism
- The national context: Sweden as a small, open economy
- Swedish society, culture, industrial history, and multinational companies
- Migration and cultural heterogeneity as an asset or liability

With the above themes as a basis for learning, a second set of themes that will be exemplified by practitioner guest lectures and study visits to Sweden’s engines of innovation include:

- Entrepreneurship and creative destruction
- Sustainable competitive advantage and multisided platforms
- Novelty creation and change management
- Sustainability as a driver of innovation, and sustainable innovations

Intended Learning Outcomes

- An understanding of how what makes countries innovative and how firms based in a small open economy perceive and innovatively address the contemporary challenges of operating in a semi-globalized business environment
- A basic understanding of the Swedish business, cultural, and political environments and their foundations
- Increased intercultural awareness and communication

Admittance, Format, Attendance Policy, Group Work and Grading

The course is only open for MSc and MBA Students from SSE's Partner Universities, MBA students are given priority. Participants should normally have basic knowledge of economics, international business and strategic management

The Program teaching philosophy is using a mix of lectures, case studies, interactive seminars, study visits, team projects, and networking with SSE students. Literature, lectures, case discussions, and company visits together provide the basic building blocks for acquiring the knowledge students will need in the short term for your team assignments, and in the long term for working with or within organizations. SSE faculty will be involved as lecturers, as well as practitioners from innovative Swedish firms.

Attendance is mandatory and active class participation is expected throughout the Program. The basic tenet of the course is to take advantage of the 'collective wisdom' and the varying backgrounds of the participants. Interaction in groups and in the classroom will take center stage. We strongly encourage students to come to the Program with an open mind and a willingness to engage in discussions together with peers and faculty.

In addition to class participation, a Team Assignment will underlie the evaluation of student performance for the final grade. The assignment is used to test students' analytical, synthesizing, and evaluative skills and their ability to critically discuss the topics, lectures and literature. When evaluating student performance, we will be using Bloom's taxonomy. SSE uses a scale with four passing grades: Excellent, Very Good, Good and Pass. Participants will be graded on class participation and individual written assignments analyzing and synthesizing the literature and study visits (55%). The remaining 45% of a participants grade will be determined on the basis of a group project, investigating one of the major themes in the course. The individual assignments are due during the course, and the finalized team assignment should be submitted two weeks after the course ends.

The course gives 4.5 ECTS, and contains around 50 contact hours. The language of instruction is English.

Career Relevance

The Intensive Course offers an opportunity to penetrate "on site" how innovation and other contemporary business issues are perceived and dealt with, in the context of a small open economy home to many successful multinational firms and innovative SMEs. The theoretical foundations include international business, strategic and multinational management, innovation and entrepreneurship, and change management.

Instructors and Program Coordination

- Professor Udo Zander (Academic Program Coordinator and Teacher)

Udo is Professor of Business Administration, esp. International Business, at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE) in Sweden. He is a Fellow of the Academy of International Business and the European International Business Academy, an elected Member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences, as well as the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences (responsible for selecting Nobel laureates). He recently received an Honorary Doctorate (doctor honoris causa) from Aalto University in Finland.

- Mrs. Anna Gyllström (Program Coordinator)

Anna is working at the Program Office with international collaborations and new initiatives. Throughout the years, she has e.g. been responsible for the student exchange program, been coordinating program marketing activities and in 2016 she was the event manager for an international event where SSE hosted 2,700 international guests (CEMS Annual Events and Graduation Ceremony 2016).

Teachers:

- Associate Professor Mattia Bianchi
- Professor David Domeij
- Associate Professor Peter Hagström
- Dr. Claire Ingram
- Professor Sarah Jack
- Professor Alexander Ljungkvist
- Professor Mette Morsing
- Professor Magnus Mähring
- Associate Professor Andy Schenkel
- Professor Örjan Sjöberg
- Professor Per Strömberg
- Professor Udo Zander

Reading Material

See separate reading list.