

## SC578 - Corporate Social Responsibility

Spring 2006 - Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.; McGuinn 415

Ritchie Lowry

This is a small, working and sharing seminar that will consider the recent evolution of three interrelated social movements: socially responsible investing (SRI), socially responsible consuming (SRC), and corporate social responsibility (CSR). They all share one thing in common --- the belief that in order to survive a capitalist economy must operate on the basis of what has been called "the double bottom line." Traditional economics argues that the only business of business is to maximize return to shareholders. The problem with this view is that it overlooks the fact that companies have other constituencies in addition to shareholders and owners (employees, suppliers, customers, residents of communities in which the company operates), and if they do not meet the many needs of these other constituencies, needs that go far beyond profit alone, the consequences for the company and the larger economy and society can be serious, if not fatal. However, combining social with economic judgments raises a number of important questions (see Examples of Possible Topics for Papers below). We will be considering these questions in detail.

We will begin the semester's first several weeks reading and reacting to the shared assigned readings. During that time, everyone should select a topic for research and analysis during the semester. Rather than asking seminar participants to write a 30-page term paper by the end of the course, you will be asked to write three shorter, sequential papers during the semester. About a third of the way through the course, the first 10-page, double-spaced paper will be due which discusses the significance and nature of the selected topic. This will be followed by a second paper which analyzes the selected topic. At the end of the semester, a final paper will draw conclusions from each of the first two papers. We will be sharing each of these papers in class with one another in order to get the widest possible input.

Since this is a small class that depends upon the widest possible involvement of all, please let me know if you have to miss a meeting for health or other reasons.

### Shared Readings

Camejo, *The SRI Advantage* (New Society Publishers, 2002). Derber, *Corporation Nation* (St. Martins Press, 1998). Swibel & Klein, *Iraq Inc.: A Profitable War* (Seven Stories, 2004).

### Office Hours

Mondays 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m., and Wednesdays 10:30-11:30 a.m. Or by arrangement in 422 McGuinn (X23346)

## Examples of Possible Topics for Papers

Automation & Technology - The Human Impact  
Can a Corporate Conscience Pay Off in the Bottom Line?  
Case Studies of Corporate Responsibility  
Codes of Corporate Conduct - Types & Implementation  
Community-Based Banking & Revolving Loan Funds  
Contract, Part-Time & Temporary Labor  
Does SRI and CSR Enhance Return to Investors and Shareholders?  
Does SRI and SRC Make a Difference in Corporate Behavior?

Ecotravel & Environmental Tourism: Pros & Cons (see my wife's web page at my web site  
(<http://www.goodmoney.com/ecotravl.htm>)

Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) and Stock Options  
Family-Friendly Companies  
Holding Corporations Accountable  
Land Trusts  
Outsourcing  
Shareholder Action  
Social Audits for Corporations

Special Problem Areas in SRI & SRC: for example Animal Rights, Energy & the Environment,  
Defense Contractors & War Work (Reconversion), Minority Issues  
What Makes a Corporation Socially Responsible?

Take a look at my GOOD MONEY Page on the Web (listed below) for these and other ideas. Be sure to check out the many links to other web pages.

## Important Dates

January 19 – Introduction to Course. Begin reading Derber.  
January 26 – Discuss possible Term Projects. Tentative title & description due.  
February 2 – Discuss Derber. Begin reading Swibel & Klein.  
February 9 – Spring Vacation.  
February 23 – First paper due. Discuss Swibel & Klein. Begin reading Camejo.  
February 30 – Discuss first papers.  
March 9 – Spring Vacation.  
April 6 – Second paper due. Discuss Camejo.  
April 16 – Discuss second papers.  
May 8 - Last Class. Last paper due.

## Grading of Term Projects

The term projects will be graded on three things:

- (1) The way in which concepts and theories from the class and shared readings can be used to analyze the problem/issue you have selected to study.
- (2) The quality and originality of your paper(s).
- (3) The relevance of the issues discussed to the larger field of corporate social responsibility.

Staying in Touch: If you want to send Ritchie Lowry e-mail - GOODMONEY1@aol.com with a copy to lowry@bc.edu. If you have access to the World Wide Web, check out Professor Lowry's Home Page for Socially Concerned Investors, Consumers and Businesspeople - <http://www.goodmoney.com/> He also has a Personal Web Page through the B.C. server @ <http://www2.bc.edu/~lowry>