# Syllabus

## Course description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course title</th>
<th>Introduction to Family Business Management</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course code</td>
<td>27202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific sector</td>
<td>SECS-P/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Bachelor in Economics and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester and academic year</td>
<td>2nd semester 2018/2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>free choice course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
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<td>Modular</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total lecturing hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total lab hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total exercise hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prerequisites</td>
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<td>Course page</td>
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## Specific educational objectives

The course refers to the complementary educational activities chosen by the student and belongs to the scientific area of Business Administration and Strategic Management. However, the study of family business is naturally multidisciplinary, drawing on a wide range of management disciplines.

Family businesses are the most ubiquitous form of business organization globally and the enduring influence of families on business and society is an essential part of the backbone of any world economy. In Italy and Germany, more than 90% of the businesses are family-owned or -managed, including many of the largest publicly listed firms. Family enterprising is particularly important in South Tyrol, and, more in general, North-Eastern Italy, where family businesses and business families traditionally drive entrepreneurial activity and provide local communities with employment and stability playing a leading role in the social and economic wealth creation of the region.

While family businesses make up the overwhelming majority of all business enterprises, business schools have largely overlooked the unique and complex challenges associated with their management. Family businesses are different from other profit-seeking organizations due to the family's influence on the firm's strategic goals,
governance structures and competitive resources. Sometimes, the distinctive traits of family businesses correspond to unique strengths and competitive advantages, but they can also cause severe organizational dysfunctions that may ultimately lead to poor firm performance. What is more, international figures show that only a minimal number of family firms survive generational transitions.

This course provides students with fundamental knowledge and basic tools to build an enlightened understanding of how to work entrepreneurially and professionally, in and with family firms, and manage the unique challenges and dilemmas faced by family businesses effectively. Topics covered include fundamentals of management and economics in the context of family firms, family business governance, innovation, growth and entrepreneurial management, introduction to succession and generational transitions, family-centered goals and goal setting processes, strategic management and decision making in family firms, internationalization, stakeholder management and fundamentals of family business branding.

This course will be beneficial to those students who are members of a family with established business interests, will likely find themselves working for a family-owned firm, and/or might be associated with such organizations in a professional capacity through such roles as consultant, accountant, lawyer, banker or even researcher.

Course lectures include guest lectures from local, national and international family business leaders, consultants and experts, consistent with the practice-oriented nature of this course and the goal of the Unibz Centre for Family Business Management to foster interactions and connections between the students and the surrounding business and entrepreneurial community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Alfredo De Massis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>E512 b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:alfredo_demassis@unibz.it">alfredo_demassis@unibz.it</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tel.</td>
<td>0471 013301</td>
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<th>Scientific sector of the lecturer</th>
<th>SECS-P/08</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching language</td>
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<td>Office hours</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching assistant</td>
<td>Not foreseen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Office hours</strong></td>
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| **List of topics covered** | Definitions and distinctive traits of family firms  
Circles, stages, theories and models  
Fundamentals of business administration and decision making in family firms  
Governance in family firms  
Power and succession in family business  
Managing family and business strategies  
Managing innovation and technological change in family firms  
Collaborative and open innovation in family firms  
Sustainability in family firms  
Goals and goal setting in family business  
Guest lectures from family business leaders, consultants and experts |
| **Teaching format** | Frontal lectures, discussions, workshops, case studies, and project assignments (optional) |

**Learning outcomes**

- Knowledge and understanding
  - Understand basic principles behind the management and administration of family firms
  - Understand the distinctive strategic and managerial challenges to effectively manage family firms
  - Appreciate and understand the role of families in business organizations

Applying knowledge and understanding
- Assess the role of families for creating and sustaining competitive advantage and disadvantages
- Understand key dimensions of family influence and their implications for business administration and organizational outcomes
- Critically evaluate strengths and weaknesses of family firms in context

Making judgments
- Make judgements about the distinctive organisational and managerial implications of family influence on business organizations
- Critically appraise alternative approaches to managing family firms for longevity
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of family firms

Communication skills
- Develop communication skills for presenting and discussing family business cases or other project
### Learning skills
- Detect critical issues in family business management and identify organizational solutions
- Systematically make decisions between different routes of action in the family business
- Develop and evaluate concepts related to family firms

### Assessment
- Written exam and a mid-term assignment (optional): written exam with review questions to test knowledge of theory and application skills.
- Written group assignment (optional) is a project work carried in groups in the mid-term in a form of a presentation or report.
- Non-attending students, if they decide to do the optional project work, will prepare it individually.

*NOTE: Written group assignments are valid for 1 academic year and cannot be carried over beyond that time-frame.*

<table>
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### Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks
- 100% Written exam for students who do not submit an assignment (group project)
- Additional 0 to 3 points for the optional project work

The written exam consists of review questions or written critical assessments of topics related to management and economics of family business. The mid-term assignments (project works), in the form of a .ppt presentation, consist in the analysis and discussion of management challenges and issues in the context of family firms. Project works will be assigned by the lecturer and delivered before the end of the course. The presentations are expected to be based on theoretical concepts covered in class and the extant literature.

It is relevant for written exam: clarity of answers based on the knowledge provided in readings, textbooks, slides and verbal information (including the practitioners’ workshops), ability to summarize, evaluate, and establish relationships between topics, ability to critically analyse family business issues.

It is relevant for project work: ability to work in a team, creativity, skills in critical thinking, ability to summarize in one's own words and presentation skills.

### Required readings
Recommended texts and notes will be provided at the end of each lecture, and included in the lecture slides. Before each lecture, the slides and required readings will be uploaded on Reserve Collections. Moreover, a list of
selected resources for family business education in the form of books, movies, magazines, and teaching cases will be made available in the initial lecture. Below is a list of some of the most recommended readings, which serves as a general guide.


**Supplementary readings**

Supplementary readings will be distributed and recommended to the students. The suggested reading will be regularly updated on [Reserve Collections](#).