

Syllabus

Course description

Course title	Family Business Management
Course code	25564/27196
Scientific sector	ECON-07/A (former SECS-P/08)
Degree	Master Entrepreneurship and Innovation
Semester and academic year	2nd semester 2025/2026
Year	1
Credits	6
Modular	No

Total lecturing hours	36
Total lab hours	-
Total exercise hours	6
Attendance	Suggested, but not required
Prerequisites	Not foreseen
Course page	Course Offering - Enrolled from 2025 / Free University of Bozen-Bolzano

Specific educational objectives	<p>The course refers to the typical educational activities and belongs to the scientific area of Entrepreneurship and Innovation.</p> <p>Family firms are the most prevalent form of business organization globally. The family involvement in the business causes family firms to have unique dynamics, goals, structures, and resources that eventually create distinctive management challenges for owners and managers. While potentially being a source of competitive advantage, the family may thus also cause serious dysfunctions in the firm. For these reasons, family firms require distinctive management approaches to achieve success and survive across generations.</p> <p>This course provides students with theoretical frameworks and practical tools to fully understand family firms' dynamics and manage the unique challenges triggered by the family involvement in the firm. The course thus provides students with a knowledge base to work professionally in and with family firms in the future.</p> <p>This course is beneficial to those students who might work in a family firms in the future (e.g., because they are members of a family owning a business or because they intend to establish their own family firm) or who might be associated with such organizations in a professional capacity through roles such as consultant, accountant, lawyer, banker, or researcher.</p>
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Lecturer	Paola Rovelli Office NOI Techpark / unibz E5.10B Paola.Rovelli@unibz.it tel. 0471 013022
Scientific sector of the lecturer	ECON-07/A (former SECS-P/08)
Teaching language	English
Office hours	From Monday to Friday on request, upon pre-arrangement by email.
Lecturing assistant	Not foreseen
Teaching assistant	Not foreseen
Office hours	18
List of topics covered	The course is divided in 5 modules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TM1. Introduction to family business ▪ TM2. Dynamics of family business ▪ TM3. Governance in family business ▪ TM4. Management in family business ▪ TM5. Succession in family business
Teaching format	Frontal lectures, group discussions, case study analysis

Learning outcomes	<p><u>Knowledge and understanding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appreciate and understand the role of families in firms ▪ Understand the unique challenges of family firms ▪ Understand the key aspects of family business management <p><u>Applying knowledge and understanding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess the role of families for creating and sustaining firms' competitive advantage and disadvantages ▪ Critically evaluate strengths and weaknesses of family firms ▪ Understand key dimensions of family influence and their implications for firms' dynamics, governance, management, and succession <p><u>Making judgments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acquire knowledge to be able to make judgements about family business management ▪ Critically evaluate alternative approaches to family business management ▪ Evaluate family firms' advantages and disadvantages <p><u>Communication skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop communication skills for presenting and discussing family business case studies ▪ Be able to work in group and take part in discussions related to family business management <p><u>Learning skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop the ability to establish links among relevant
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	<p>topics independently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify critical aspects of family business management and find organizational solutions ▪ Develop the ability to think, plan and act strategically when managing family firms
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Individual written exam</u>: it consists of open and closed questions based on the theory. ▪ <u>In-class active participation</u>: during the theoretical lectures, students are invited to participate in group activities (e.g., discussions, role play, brief case study analyses). ▪ <u>Group case study analysis</u>: students participate in the Ulysses Contest (https://www.ulysses-contest.eu/); during dedicated lectures, groups of students analyze a family business case study based on assigned questions and by applying the theoretical concepts previously illustrated during the theoretical lectures. <p>Non-attending students have to write to the lecturer at the beginning of the course. These students are evaluated based on an individual written exam. The written exam consists of open and closed questions, as in the case of attending students, but goes deeper in testing non-attending students' knowledge.</p>
Assessment language	English
Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks	<p>Attending students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>60% Individual written exam</u> It is relevant: quality and clarity of answers based on the knowledge provided during lectures, ability to summarize, evaluate, and establish relationships between topics, and ability to critically analyze family business management. ▪ <u>40% Group case study analysis</u> It is relevant: quality and clarity of answers, ability to apply theoretical concepts to analyze case studies, participation in group work, and quality and clarity of presentations. ▪ <u>0-3 extra-points In-class active participation</u> It is relevant: participation in in-class discussions, proactiveness during discussions, and quality and clarity of answers. <p>Non-attending students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>100% Individual written exam</u>
Required readings	Readings will be provided in the lecture slides and on the TEAMS page of the course.
Supplementary readings	Supplementary readings will eventually be recommended to the students on the TEAMS page of the course.



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