Course Overview

We live at a time characterized by (a) numerous technological advances, such as mobile information technological platforms, artificial intelligence, and big data, and (b) daunting challenges associated with deteriorating natural environment, including pollution, climate change, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and so on. Both technology and environment exert a profound influence on consumer preferences and behavior, corporate strategy and business practices, and the overall market dynamics. Take, for example, the case of artificial intelligence (AI). The growing prevalence of AI in products and services raise serious, unprecedented concerns regarding societal issues such as consumer data privacy and data security, job replacement, and exacerbated societal inequity. It forces us to think more deeply about corporate social responsibilities; specifically, how companies should tackle the challenges and risks of AI in pursuit of a symbiosis between business, technologies, and society.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is broadly defined as a business organization’s configuration of principles of social responsibility, processes of social responsiveness, and policies, programs, and observable outcomes as they relate to the company’s social and stakeholder relationships. This course will examine how technology and the natural environment influence the social responsibilities of businesses today. We will do this through academic readings, discussions, and development of research ideas on this topic.

Course Expectations

There are 4 articles for each class session. You are expected to read each article carefully and “pre-digest” it prior to class. Focus on: (1) the main ideas conveyed in the papers, (2) what they imply for various substantive domains (e.g., corporate social responsibility, corporate strategies, and consumer behavior), and (3) how you would extend these ideas (e.g., new hypotheses, follow-up studies). You can also comment on the methodologies employed by empirical papers in addressing the research objectives. Please come to class with your own ideas on each topic that we will discuss.

For each class, four students will have the responsibility to present one assigned paper. As the presenter, you will need to summarize what was done in the paper as well as your critical assessment of it. Your briefing of the paper should include (a) the research question investigated, (b) the methodology used, (c) the main findings, and (d) what these findings mean theoretically. Each student will present an approximately equal number of times.
Regardless of who is the presenter, you need to carefully read all the papers assigned for each day and contribute in meaningful ways to the discussion of each paper. **

Also importantly, for each of the three discussion sessions, you will propose at least one original hypothesis based on the set of readings assigned for that session, along with a proposed study (or set of studies) for testing the hypothesis. This hypothesis should be theoretically meaningful and empirically testable. To this end, you will submit a one-page write-up, describing a testable research question that you think is important and interesting. The write-up should briefly describe past literature, your research question, and how you would go about testing it.

**Grading**

*Class Participation (40%).*

Your ability to contribute meaningfully to class discussion.

*Research Idea Papers (25%).*

Three one-page write-ups of research ideas (one for each class session). These research ideas will be evaluated on their novelty (how interesting is the question) and importance (potential theoretical contribution to the literature).

*Research Presentation (35%).*

You will make a presentation of your research proposal in the final session of the class. In this presentation, you will take one of your research idea papers and develop it into a full-blown research proposal. Feel free to schedule a meeting with me to discuss your ideas.

The research proposal will include introduction, theoretical development, and methodology sections. More specifically, in the introduction section, you will discuss the general importance of the topic and the potential contribution of the proposed research. In the theoretical development section, you will present conceptual arguments, based on relevant literature, that support your hypotheses. The methodology section will include details about your data collection method (e.g., experimental/survey design, secondary data), measurement of variables, and statistical analysis plan.
Course Schedule and Reading List

Session 1 (October 15): Technology and Corporate Social Responsibility I


Session 2 (October 16): Technology and Corporate Social Responsibility II


Session 3 (October 17): Environment and Corporate Social Responsibility


**Session 4 (October 19): Research Presentations**

Students present their research proposals. Copy of the presentation slides due.