

THE CHANGING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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OVERVIEW

This class is designed to provide participants with a toolbox that can help them navigate an increasingly hotter, crowded, polarized and unstable global environment – and to help them surf on the political, economic, business, social and environmental transformations of the next decade.

The premise of this class is simple: you never make a business decision in a vacuum – be it political, geopolitical, social, environmental or technological. The better you understand your business environment, the better placed you are to formulate the business problem you're trying to solve. And the better positioned you are to identify the type of transformation you, your business or your activity, or even your industry (or the industry you are advising) needs to go through in order to meet its objectives. This class is designed to help you develop the appropriate toolbox and the appropriate change-making skills to rebuild and reinvent obsolete business models in a wide range of industries. Even in a world that is deeply changing, you can still have impact so long as you give yourself the means to harness and even influence global and business dynamics, as impressive as they might look on paper.

In fact, no matter where you are coming from, this is likely to matter for you, even in the very near future. If you are a **consultant**, this can help you determine what is likely to make some business models more successful than others, and what approaches are likely to be disrupted in this business environment. This is especially true for a consultant advising industries that are ripe for change because the traditional way they function may not be sustainable anymore.

If you are working in a **big company**, this can help you transform the way the business and the industry operate so as to create more value not only for shareholders and consumers, but for society as a whole as well. Focusing more on shared value as a game-change will not mean forgoing profit, but fundamentally changing the equation you rely on to maximize profits.

If you are a **banker**, this can help you identify the relevant trends shaping the most meaningful risks and opportunities in tomorrow's markets. In fact, many finance experts point to the fact that a new world means new rules, especially in terms of risk assessment. In the banking industry, relying on a non-conformist view of a sector can empower you to better uncover opportunities that more conventional and traditional approaches may overlook.

And if you are an **entrepreneur**, this can help you identify opportunities in areas that are ripe for disruption. You may in particular be able to create new business opportunities by fixing broken systems that have become unsustainable for a wide range of political, social and environmental reasons.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

- **Identify** key global dynamics shaping your business environment;
- **Anticipate** future dynamics shaping the business environment in a wide range of areas;
- **Rethink** and **reinvent** your business model accordingly;
- **Reconcile** business strategy with ever-more pressing global challenges;
- **Determine** what this means for you as a business leader;
- **Develop** a long-term, consistent strategy and vision, beyond mere day-to-day tactics.

KEY TOPICS

1 – The World We Live In

We'll explore six forces shaping the global business environment: geopolitical rivalries, cooperation, identity, inequalities, technology and the environment. We'll consider how these forces are shaping the business landscape and how successful businesses could surf on these coming transformations in order to thrive.

2 – The manager-leader of the future

What will it take to survive in this landscape? Relying on a group exercise, we'll try to come up with the portrait of the impactful leader of tomorrow. What will that person look like? What will that person be doing? And we will also discuss how far we might all be from being that person – who is likely to be analytical, able to anticipate future dynamics and equipped with a lot of imagination.

3 – The power of analysis

We live in one of the most dogmatic times of history. The resulting polarization is not just political, but also social in nature. It is even affecting business. Getting your facts straight might sound like a trivial task – in yesterday's world. We will discuss how this might not be as trivial as it sounds and how being analytical can help you become more strategic in your choices.

4 – The significance of anticipation

In this session, we'll develop the analytical toolbox to better anticipate and understand what the future is made up of, through scenario-analysis in particular. We'll think about how to deploy a strategy to remain relevant no matter what happens in the future (in particular by stress-testing your current strategy in the wake of possible future turbulences). We'll look to identify opportunities to transform and to reinvent the business you work for or you are advising in a meaningful way, that goes beyond the obsolete business as usual.

5 – A game.

A surprise session online. Come with a good night sleep.

6 – The purpose of imagination

In this concluding session, we'll identify processes, jobs, businesses and industries that are ripe for disruption, as well as the possible forces of disruption. We'll learn how to spot the potential

weak points in today's models that could become irrelevant tomorrow. We'll imagine future models and approaches that go beyond the status quo and business as usual in way that meaningfully (re)invent what is obsolete today. This session is designed to help you develop your creativity and your imagination, and think about what this means about the skills you still need to acquire – and the type of profiles you need in your team and network to complement your know-how.

TEACHING METHODS

This course relies on a combination of classes, group exercises and guest lectures about key topics of the business environment (geopolitics, tech and energy in particular).

PREREQUISITES

Basic understanding of business concepts, in particular as they relate to economics, strategy and leadership.

ASSESSMENTS

50% An individual paper focused on the long-term strategy of an actor you adopted and that you'll need to develop. What long-term strategy would maximize that actor's long-term impact?

30% There will be two group exercises in parts 2 and 5.

20% Class participation.

CREDITS

18 contact hours or 3 ECTS in the HEC system.

GRADING

An individual paper focused on the long-term strategy of an actor you adopted and that you'll need to develop. What long-term strategy would maximize that actor's long-term impact? This will represent 50% of the grade.

There will be two group exercises in parts 2 and 5. This will represent 30% of the grade.

Class participation: 20% of the grade.

BIOGRAPHY

Jeremy Ghez is an Associate Professor of Economics and International Affairs (Education Track) at HEC Paris. He is the scientific director of the school's master program in Sustainability and Social Innovation as well as the academic director of the HEC Paris Center for Geopolitics. His research and teaching focuses on populism, the global business environment, strategic foresight, tech giants, as well as on US and European politics. Previously, he was an assistant policy analyst and a research fellow at the RAND Corporation and at RAND Europe. In 2016, he received an award for his case study on "The Economics of Amazon." In 2019, he was named one of the world's 40 best under-40 MBA professors by Poets and Quants.