

WHY A COURSE ON FAMILY FIRMS?

Aim and content

Welcome to a course that introduces you to the widespread, important, and exciting phenomenon of family enterprises! Family enterprises represent the most common form of business organisation across the world, both among established firms and new ventures. Family-owned businesses dominate most industries, and they are not only small or medium-sized enterprises. Founders and business families own and control many large private companies (e.g., Ikea, Lego, Bonnier) and are controlling owners of well-known publicly listed companies such as H&M, Investor, Ford, LVMH, Volkswagen, Walmart and Samsung. Indeed, many of the world's most famous brands are built by family enterprises.

Furthermore, much of the capital flowing into entrepreneurial firms and start-ups, as well as established firms with growth intentions, originates from business families via so-called family offices or family investment companies. In addition, family enterprises are increasingly targets for acquisitions let by e.g. private equity firms and private and public investment companies. This means that family enterprises and family offices/family investment companies form a crucial force for economic, entrepreneurial, and social development around the world. In short, family ownership is a key driver in most global economies. This course will provide you with an understanding of why this is important to consider for your future career.

Working in or with family enterprises and family offices/family investment companies presents distinct challenges and opportunities for owners, managers, advisors, employees, and consultants. This is because family firms are different compared to other types of firms. They have potential strengths that can be used to seize specific value-creating opportunities. But they also face potential challenges that risk destroying value. Interestingly, both the strengths and the challenges are related to the overlap between the family and the firm. In order to successfully grow an entrepreneurial family business or family office, regardless of whether it is a start-up or an established company, it is important to understand and strategically leverage the unique and positive family firm characteristics, as well as to deal with the challenges arising from the firm's connection to a family.

This course covers important themes relevant for starting, managing, growing and investing in successful family enterprises and family offices. Course themes include characteristics of family enterprises, strategy, governance, succession, sustainability, non-family management, organising and leading family offices, innovation, entrepreneurship/innovation, conflicts, and relationships, and advising and consulting to family enterprises.

The aim of the course is to introduce concepts and tools that can enhance students' understanding of important perspectives on the challenges and opportunities facing different types of family enterprises. The course includes many practical learning situations with real case studies and live case guest lectures that illustrate and allow for an in-depth understanding of family enterprises that have maintained and developed their growth and entrepreneurial spirit. The course blends examples and experiences from a Nordic setting with a wider international focus and outlook.

The overall purpose of this course is to help students develop a skillset that allows them to effectively apply, in practice, appropriate concepts, theories and experiences presented during the course, as well as to critically examine the strengths and weaknesses of these concepts, theories and experiences.

Intended learning outcomes

The course is designed for students who are interested in working in family firms and family offices (e.g., as entrepreneurs, managers, owners) or with family firms (e.g., as advisors, consultants, board members, bankers) or who come from a family firm background (e.g., next generation family owners). Given that family firms represent the most common type of business organization in most industries and countries, it is very likely that students with a business school degree will work in or with family firms at some point in their careers. Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Exhibit a deep understanding of central characteristics, opportunities, and challenges that different types of family firms face and how they are different compared to non-family firms.
2. Describe and integrate main theories, models, and concepts within the field of family firms, and explain how these can be applied to understand different types of entrepreneurial family firms.
3. Demonstrate an advanced ability to analyse common themes essential for building and growing entrepreneurial family firms, from both a theoretical and practical perspective.
4. Demonstrate an advanced ability to integrate and reflect upon common challenges and key decisions facing entrepreneurial family firms and to build appropriate strategies to address these challenges and key decisions in practice.

Faculty and speakers

The course director and the teaching assistant lead the Center for Family Enterprise at SSE's House of Innovation and are experienced teachers, researchers and advisors in the field of entrepreneurship and family enterprises. The course director has extensive experience from starting and owning his own businesses, as well as in the role of consultant and advisor to family enterprises and their owners and leaders at an international level.

The course includes many guest speakers who are all active owners, board members and/or leaders in family enterprises and family offices, or they work as advisors and consultants to family enterprises and family offices. The purpose of this mix of speakers and lecturers is to provide a broad set of both academic and practical perspectives on family enterprises.

COURSE FORMAT AND STRUCTURE

The course uses different learning and teaching formats with the purpose of blending theories and concepts, based on current academic research, with a strong component of practice and experience through real-life examples, live cases, and guest speakers

sharing their most pressing challenges. While there are lectures led by the faculty, primarily in the beginning of the course, most of the sessions are interactive and in the form of class presentations and discussion around readings, case studies (live cases and written teaching cases), and guest speakers from various family enterprises, family offices/family investment companies and other stakeholders.

The course includes a final seminar when participants present a live course project report. The live course project is a core course component in which students work in groups throughout the course with a real challenge in a relevant family firm setting.

All sessions (lectures, seminars, presentations) are assumed to be interactive and based on active student participation. The teachers' role is to support and facilitate students' learning and ability to develop skills useful for future roles working in or with family firms. Participants should be prepared to present and discuss assigned readings in class as well as preparatory assignments. Videos and different forms of narrative texts might be used to support students' learning. Students are expected to perform professional presentations, including the group course project.

Groups

The course group work is performed in groups of four or five students. Please form your groups as soon as possible prior to but **no later than April 3rd**. The only requirement is that groups, to the greatest extent possible, are diverse in terms of gender, nationality, and professional/educational background.

Sign up for your group on the course page on the SSES Canvas platform. More specific instructions will be distributed at the beginning of the course. **If you have inquiries about group formation, please contact Jennie Lorisson, Teaching Assistant.**

Readings

Course readings in the form of academic articles, teaching cases, and newspaper articles are assigned for each class meeting (approx. 2-4 per class). All readings will be available for registered students before the course starts on the course's Canvas page. Please find a complete reading list in the detailed schedule below. Please make sure that you carefully read the assigned readings prior to the session, including the written teaching cases.

Additional readings may be assigned and distributed during the course, including supporting texts and cases distributed through library resources, handouts in class, and links on the course website.

In addition to being presented and discussed in class, students are expected to use the course readings for their course assignments and assessments.

There is no mandatory course textbook, but we recommend the following book:

Zellweger, T. (2017). *Managing the family business: Theory and practice*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

SCHEDULE

| Date | Time (CET) | Session (S): Theme | Faculty/Speaker | Preparation/Readings |
|--------------------|--------------|---|---|---|
| March 24, Tuesday | 5.15-7.00 pm | S1: Introduction | Mattias Nordqvist | Course syllabus, readings, videos |
| March 26, Thursday | 5.15-8.00 pm | S2: Key frameworks and family firm characteristics | Mattias Nordqvist | Readings, case, podcast, prepare an example of a family business you admire |
| March 31, Tuesday | 5.15-8.00 pm | S3: Creating strategy | Mattias Nordqvist Thomas Clementi, GSC Capital (6.30 pm) | Readings, read the case and prepare for discussion. |
| April 7, Tuesday | 5.15-7.00 pm | S4: Owning and leading a family firm – <i>Guest lecture</i> | Ariane Spandow, Amesto Group & Spabogruppen | Readings |
| April 9, Thursday | 5.15-8.00 pm | S5: Managing Succession | Hedda Spendrup, Omaka Beer & Spendrups Brewery (5.15 pm) / Mattias Nordqvist | Read readings. Identify questions to discuss based on Heddass talk. |
| April 14, Tuesday | 5.15-7.00 pm | S6: Ownership and governance | Mattias Nordqvist | Readings |
| April 16, Thursday | 5.15-8.00 pm | S7: Non-family CEO and top management– <i>Guest lecture</i> | Mats Liedholm, Fazer Sweden. | Readings, Prepare your project work pitch |
| April 21, Tuesday | 5.15-7.00 pm | S8: Innovation and Transgenerational value creation | Karin Bodin, Polarbröd | Readings |

Guest lecture

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| April 23, Thursday | 5.15- 8.00 pm | S9: Working with and in family offices – <i>Guest lectures</i> | Ole Fredrik Hamre, SEB, Alexander Ehrnrooth, Virala | Readings |
| April 28, Tuesday | 5.15- 7.00 pm | S10: Advising and consulting family firms - <i>Guest lecture</i> | Olof Jisland, Vinge Law Firm. | Readings |
| May 5, Tuesday | 5.15- 7.00 pm | S11: Building a family investment company – <i>Live case and guest lecture</i> | Johan H Andresen/ Morten Borge Ferd | Read the case and prepare for discussion. Watch video |
| May 7 Thursday | 5.15- 7.00 pm | S12: Philanthropy and societal engagement – <i>Guest lecture</i> | Cristina Ljungberg, The Case for Her, Firestorm Foundation and others. | Readings |
| May 12, Tuesday | 5.15- 8.00 pm | S13: Group project presentations and wrap-up | Students/Mattias Nordqvist/ | Preparing a group project presentation |
| May 19, Tuesday | | Individual final exam submission | | All readings and cases |