**SOSC 3040 Corporate Social Responsibility Assignment # 1**

**Due November 29**

**Length ~2000 words**

**Topic: Debating CSR: the Merck Mectizan donation program**

A major theme of this course is the debate over the meaning and desirability of CSR. We have examined several positions in this debate, including:

- **normative stakeholder theories** (e.g. Donaldson & Preston, Donaldson and Walsh, Stone, Stout, Wood, Williams, Davis), who support a broad notion of CSR

- **instrumental (strategic) stakeholder theories** (e.g. Drucker, Stone)

- **normative stockholder theories**  (e.g. Sternberg, Henderson, Hasnas, Jensen) who support only a narrow notion of CSR

- some of these stockholder theorists (e.g. Sternberg, Henderson) are **right-wing critics** of broad CSR, while others (e.g. Jensen) are right-wing critics of normative stakeholder based broad CSR but supporters of instrumental broad CSR.

- **market-failure CSR theories** (e.g. Heath) which support some aspects of broad CSR but not stakeholder theory per se

- **left-wing critics of CSR** (e.g. Corporate Watch, Bakan), who strongly disagree with normative stockholder theory but might agree that descriptive and legal stockholder theory are accurate regarding current business practice and law.

For this assignment, you will be analyzing the **Merck Mectizan donation program** from the point of view of the above mentioned positions.

**Question: is the Mectizan program socially responsible, and why/why not?**

In answering this question, you will need to address the following issues:

What are the normative stakeholder (broad CSR) arguments for the program?

What, if any, are the instrumental/strategic (business case) arguments for the program?

What criticisms, if any, could be made of the program from a right-wing anti-CSR position (or, a stockholder narrow CSR perspective)?

What criticisms, if any, could be made of the program from a left-wing anti-CSR position?

To what extent is the program justified from the perspective of market-failure CSR theory?

Note that your answer to the topic question may be qualified and nuanced; we are not looking for a simple yes/no answer. However, you should have a thesis and defend it against the *strongest* counter-arguments. In doing so, you should make use of course materials and concepts that are *most relevant* to the arguments for and against your thesis. This does not require you to address or use all of the course materials and concepts. You should not simply apply each concept to the case one at a time.

Mectizan case:

The information you need on the case and context can be found in the Powerpoint slides posted with these assignment instructions, including the links embedded and in the notes. This assignment is **not** a research paper. You do not have to do additional outside research on the issue. The aim is for you to practice and demonstrate your skills in applying the course content (readings and lectures) on the perspectives listed above to a real world CSR program.

For your convenience, the links in the Powerpoint deck are reproduced here:

<http://www.mectizan.org/about/history>

[www.wto.org/english/tratop\_e/trips\_e/hosbjor\_presentations\_e/21sturchio\_e.pdf](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/hosbjor_presentations_e/21sturchio_e.pdf)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inPrvtyPTh8>

[https://medium.com/@MSF\_access/there-is-no-such-thing-as-free-vaccines-why-we-rejected-pfizers-donation-offer-of-pneumonia-6a79c9d9f32f#.eu7ryb2d0](https://medium.com/%40MSF_access/there-is-no-such-thing-as-free-vaccines-why-we-rejected-pfizers-donation-offer-of-pneumonia-6a79c9d9f32f%22%20%5Cl%20%22.eu7ryb2d0)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZt-lPTvhmc>

Grading criteria

1) Demonstrates accurate comprehension of relevant course content.

2) Uses course content effectively in addressing the issues posed in the assignment (as opposed to merely paraphrasing or rehashing course materials).

3) Defends a thesis (could be complex or multipart) from anticipated objections.

4) Skillfully writen: well organized overall; well-structured paragraphs; well structured, uncluttered sentences with correct syntax (grammar) and appropriate diction (word choice).

Submission instructions

The assignment should be submitted in hard copy to your tutorial leader at the November 29 lecture (if you have not already submitted it in tutorial). It should also be uploaded to Turnitin (via Moodle) by 12:50 pm on November 29. The file uploaded to Turnitin should be saved as a Word document, as we have found that Turnitin can’t open some other formats.

The format of the hard copy should be as follows. There should be a title page with only the title, your name and tutorial number. Your name should not appear elsewhere in the paper (i.e., not at the beginning, and no running head). Print and attach rubric in the file “SOSC essay rubric” (posted on Moodle with this assignment) to the end of your hard copy.