



Business Plan Development and Decision Making
ENTR and MGT 823
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to help students learn how to create new ventures, which can be stand-alone new organizations (traditional entrepreneurial businesses) or new units within larger or more established firms. By going through the entrepreneuring process, or by creating a plan for a new venture, students will learn not only how to start a business, but also how to help small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) as well as larger, established firms grow their businesses. The *art and science* of entrepreneurship are explored in this class, and we do it through numerous skill-building and learning exercises that work together to help build "start-up people."

Start-up people have the spirit, energy, enthusiasm, skills and knowledge to help grow organizations. Growing a business is fun and rewarding; it also is a learning journey. We capture the essence of what is involved in creating and growing new ventures in this course. The class is taught using adult learning processes, and we replicate the "real world" or business world as much as possible. As such, this class relies heavily on teamwork, discussions and online collaboration tools and services. We expect you to be comfortable signing up for and using services like LinkedIn, Wordpress, Twitter, blogging tools, Campfire, Evernote, mind mapping tools, and Google Docs. This class may introduce you to new technology, and we will be practicing virtual collaboration, which is a critical skill for today's entrepreneurs. We also expect you to know the basics of project management and running good meetings. High quality communication and writing skills also are essential for success in this class.

The intended practical, specific learning goals for each student are:

1. You will learn to evaluate and critique business opportunities.
2. You will understand the complex, non-linear nature of building a business. A business plan is not enough; successful business ventures require an agile approach to business and people.
3. You will learn to be better storytellers because this is a skill important for any entrepreneur to master.
4. You will be working with new technology because we think technology is critical to thrive in today's business environment.



5. You will learn to create cash forecasts and understand the resources needed for start-up ventures.
6. You will have a better understanding of your own interest in entrepreneurship and how you can bring your skills to creating a new venture or to helping another team or organization.
7. Lastly, you will learn the topic of entrepreneurship- the key areas of work, the language that is used and the skills that can be acquired.

This class does not assume everyone will be a traditional entrepreneur and start his/her own company. We do, however, know that each one of you can learn the skills of entrepreneuring and bring them to any endeavors you pursue in your lives and careers.

This course is labor intensive and sometimes uncomfortable. Estimates put the number of hours needed to develop a business plan at about 200. When you present your ideas, you will receive practical, honest and sometimes uncomfortable feedback.

This course is agile; you will need to be flexible. We will be inviting virtual guest speakers to speak with us and holding live chat sessions (which will be recorded). You will be learning from each other, and the needs of the course will change as we dig into the class' unique business opportunities. We are going to practice what we preach - learning in an entrepreneurial manner, hands on, and doing or entrepreneuring.

BOOKS FOR CLASS - REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL

- Launching New Ventures: An Entrepreneurial Approach (6th edition) by Kathleen R. Allen (Required)
- The Lean Startup: How Today's Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses by Eric Riles (Required)
- Burn Your Business Plan: What Investors Really Want from Entrepreneurs by David Gumpert (Optional)

OTHER READING AND MATERIALS

There will be numerous resources posted on the Blackboard web site. In addition, you should be reading material that entrepreneurs read. Below is a sampling.

<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/business2/>
<http://www.entrepreneur.com/#>
<http://www.fastcompany.com/>
<http://www.garage.com/>
<http://www.pipelineentrepreneurs.com/>
<http://www.forbes.com/>
<http://www.redherring.com/>
<http://www.inc.com/>
<http://www.wired.com/>
<http://www.entrepreneurship.org/>
<http://www.smartbrief.com/news/entrepreneurs>
<http://www.nielsen.com/>



Set up google alerts for topics and industries of interest to you.

Recommended sources for the semester's projects and for your career learning overall:

- [Google Docs](#) – collaborative document creation and editing
- [Evernote](#) – collaborative note taking
- [LinkedIn](#) – the Facebook of business
- [Wordpress](#) – easy to use blog and website building service
- [Mindmeister](#) – more mind mapping and project management
- [Campfire](#) – online chat for groups
- [Google Hangouts](#) – online chat for groups
- [Google Scholar](#) – easily find academic articles
- [Zotero](#) – Collect and share references from the web and build collaborative bibliographies

Opportunities to engage with the Center for Entrepreneurship

The Center sponsors numerous events, and as members of the class, you are all invited to participate. This includes the quick pitch competition in the fall semester and the spring semester business plan competition that is part of EntrepreneurDays@UNL. **The business plan competition has a \$50,000 grand prize for a UNL student.**

UNL students are starting businesses, and some of the businesses have been very successful. You will learn more about and from these students during the course. We are fortunate to have a very helpful network of entrepreneurs associated with our school and Center

University of Nebraska-Lincoln and College of Business Ways of Working

We Believe:

*That a quality education enriches our lives,
That giving our full effort to all that we do is essential to our success,
That people are our school's most valuable resource,
That lifelong learning is important to attain personal growth and sustain leadership, and
That we benefit from the support of our alumni and we, in turn, will give our support to the next generation of CBA students.*

It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to not discriminate on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin in its educational programs. The faculty of the College of Business Administration and Department of Management strongly supports this policy. If you feel that some form of discrimination has been directed at you, contact me or the Department Chair, Dr. Gwendolyn Combs, immediately.



Ethics Code UNL College of Business Administration

Integrity:

We will accept responsibility for our actions and hold others accountable for theirs.
We will adhere to our moral principles in all situations and support others in doing the same.

Honesty:

We will be sincere and authentic in our communications and interactions with others.
We will strive to create an environment of trust by being honorable and trustworthy.

Professionalism:

We will learn and adhere to the ethical standards of our chosen professions.
We will seek continuous learning by participating in the educational opportunities presented to us.

Respect & Compassion:

We will treat others with fairness, respect and compassion.
We will create a culture of inclusiveness by welcoming the diversity in our ideas, beliefs and backgrounds.

**Code was written by the Ethics Committee of the CBA Student Advisory Board and incorporates student survey results, as well as feedback from student organizations, students at large and faculty*

CLASS WAYS OF WORKING

- Of course the University's and School's ethical standards are operating for issues such as plagiarism and honesty. It also is important to keep in mind several other issues that are particularly important in a class like ours. People will be working on and talking about ideas with real earning potential. Truly proprietary information will be discussed among us. Whatever you hear from others, or about other businesses MUST remain confidential. You should not discuss it with anyone from outside the class, and even when you discuss it with classmates, you need to be careful to avoid discussing it where others could hear you.
- You also need to respect the concept that ideas are property. It is not right to take the idea of another person in the class and pursue it, unless you have permission. Similarly, the first time you pursue a contact you made through a classmate, you need to first secure permission from the classmate.
- In all experiences, you need to be careful to maintain a professional relationship. In the special case of plans done for one's family business, careful delineation of roles on the front end is required, since the student is invariably in a dual relationship. In addition, you are working on a team, and as such it is important to treat one another with respect and a professional attitude. Problems can arise, and they need to be discussed and worked out. When you need help, ask for it.



ORGANIZATION OF LEARNING TOPICS

- Section 1: Being an entrepreneur. Move from idea to innovation to entrepreneurial venture.
 - Review the innovation process
 - Introduction to the field of entrepreneurship
 - Finalize your business idea using the new venture workbook.
 - Sustainability- how do your decisions affect people, profit and planet?
 - Continue refining your skills to work virtually.
- Section 2: Focus in on your customer, industry, product and market
 - Learn from your industry
 - Find your niche
 - Learn how to pitch your offering
 - Design and launch your web site
 - Prepare a model for the structure to grow your business
- Section 3: Finalize your resource needs and prepare the business plan and presentation
 - Financial capital
 - Product and intellectual capital
 - Human capital
 - Relational capital
 - Pitch your business

OVERALL REVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS – See the detailed schedule at the end of the syllabus for due dates

1. **New venture plan (team work)**

You will work in teams on your new venture project. The size of the team depends on the number of students enrolled in the class. I would assume that the team size will be about 5 people. Many of you do not have ideas for your own businesses, and if you take too much time developing your idea, you will get behind very quickly in the class. Therefore, working with a team helps you brainstorm, accumulate more ideas and then pick a better idea to move forward in the new venture creation process. The deliverables for this assignment are:

(1) team submits one or more completed new venture workbooks, which assess feasibility; this will be handed in after the section 1 of the course;

(2) a mocked up marketing web site for new venture with a recorded introduction

(3) a power point summary of the business plan, with a recorded verbal presentation of the material and supplemental financial statements. Students also have the option of writing a more formal, traditional business plan, which is advisable if you plan to seek funding for your business in the near future or if you are involved in a business plan competition that requires formal business plans.



2. **Learning portfolio (individual work)**

The goal of the learning portfolio is for you to accumulate a body of work that represents your learning during the 8-week term. This includes personal journal entries, articles you add to the portfolio, comments on readings and your team's progress, summaries of interviews you will be doing with people about your business, and more. The learning portfolio will be available on Blackboard (that's the plan; if we need to do something different, you will know by August 24, the first day of class).

Samples of what will be included in this body of work:

- Entries into your learning journal
- Every week you need to **talk to at least five people about your business idea**. You will submit learning from these discussions.
- Reviewing work of other students in class and providing feedback and comments.
- You also need to do ongoing research on your ideas, and you will be submitting summaries of all your research work.
- Participate in mind-map discussions and the discussion board.
- Find and distribute articles for class on one of the mind map sites; we will build an expert wall for members of the class (learning and research to help everyone).
- Applying the reading to your new venture work. Review of key questions on the readings; dialogue with other in class about the readings.

Note: I will randomly choose student portfolios to read and grade each week. Consider this an exercise that is similar to the professor "calling" on you in class. At the end of the course, I will review all the entries for each person and then submit a final grade. The random selection grading will be on a check, check plus, check minus basis.

3. **Assignments to support development of your new venture project (team work)**

(a) Quick pitch - your team will be required to do a 3-minute pitch of your business idea. This will be posted on one of the mind-mapping pages. You also will be assigned to go in and provide feedback to specific members of the class.

(b) Magic quadrant assignment - this assignment helps you think through the competition for your offering. You will be asked to post the magic quadrant report and a short video explaining it.

(c) Cash forecast - template provided - hand in the projected cash forecast (detailed) for year one of your business.

4. **Peer evaluation.** You will be asked to provide peer feedback to your team members. You will be graded on the quality of your feedback and receive points based on your own peer ratings.



GRADING - total points for class = 1,000

Assignment / project (See explanation of grading process in next section on following page)	Points
New venture project – big deliverables (500 points total) - Percentage grading used for all (0 to 100%)	
Team hands in at least one new venture workbook	100
Power point business plan and presentation (with financials) and recorded presentation	200
Marketing web site and recorded presentation	200
Learning portfolio (300 points total) - Check, check minus, check plus grading used for weekly entries; summary grade will be a percentage (0 to 100%)	250
Smaller deliverables to develop new venture final project (75 points total)	
(1) Quick pitch Check, check plus, check minus grading used	50
(2) Magic quadrant assignment Check, check plus, check minus grading used	50
(3) Cash forecast Check, check plus, check minus grading used	50
Peer evaluation (points from peers and points for doing high quality evaluations)	100
TOTAL	1,000



GRADING PROCESS

Many of the weekly deliverables (on-line discussions, peer review work, weekly individual work) will be graded using a check, check minus and check plus system. Basically, check plus is excellent work; it equates to a 100%. Check is 90% (expected level of work for these assignments - given this is a graduate course), and check minus is 80% (minimal effort put into the project). In some cases, we may use a numeric grade if the work falls between or below the numbers allocated to the check system. If you don't hand in an assignment on time, you get zero points.

Other assignments will be graded using a 0 to 100% scoring system. Prior to doing the work, in many cases, you will be provided with grading criteria in advance. See Blackboard for documentation.

FINAL DETERMINATION OF LETTER GRADES

The final grade determination will be competitive, or follow a relative scale, and based on the class distribution of grades. You will be seeing your fellow students' work during the semester, and it will be clear to you what the distribution of performance looks like. If you are concerned your assignments are not meeting the average of the class, then you can work with me to bring your grade up. These efforts need to be taken in time to affect your final projects. Your peers will evaluate your contributions to the relative teams. This information may be used for the final grade assessment. In the past, the general distribution for graduate courses looked something like the following:

A	15%
A-	15%
B+	25%
B	25%
B-	15%
C+/C/C-	5% (could be B- if higher quality work)
D/F	As Needed

Note that this is a distribution that has worked in the past; however, I reserve the right to change the distribution based on student performance. Also, note that when using this model of grading, there is no pre-set number of points that will earn an A, or any other grade for that matter. For example, earning 90% of the available points **does not guarantee an A-**. Rather, the percentage of points required for any grade will be determined by overall student performance in the class. Some activities will likely be more difficult than others, but regardless of the level of difficulty or the percentage of possible points obtained, the top 30% of scores should get an A or A-. The goal of such a system is to set a high bar for a top grade in the course, and in turn to reward excellence – not just “good enough.” The use of such a system establishes that an A in this course will truly represent performance at the top of the class. In sum, you are encouraged to not think in terms of percentages of outstanding points. Rather, you should think of your standing in the course relative to the other members.



Note that details for all assignments are located in Blackboard in Modules section.

Note that I may change syllabus to accommodate new learning opportunities (speakers, extra credit work done by students, etc.).
You will be notified well in advance of any changes.

Week number, date (Monday date of each week listed), topics	Reading and webinars	Project assignments (details in Blackboard modules) Weekly – participate in discussions in Blackboard Below is a brief summary of the core assignments.
1. August 24 Introduction to class, each other, domain of the field of entrepreneurship and new venture workbook	Allen, chapters 1-3 and 11 Look over resources on Blackboard, including the new venture workbook, sample business plans and other resources.	Introduce yourself to your team and class members using the story-telling exercise (record your introduction and post to the mind map site). Introduction assignment due and to be posted on the discussion board (video function available within Blackboard discussion board) by Friday, August 28. Review the videos. Comment and chat with people as you like. Invite people to be on your team, and/or send preferences for team formation to Dr. Welbourne as teams will be formed early in week two. Review the new venture workbook. Sign NDA, for class. Due August 28.
2. August 31 Business models, industries and markets	Allen, chapters 4-6	Teams are formed. Start discussing your business ideas and then work through the new venture workbook with your team members. Post your business ideas to the mind map (each team will be assigned a mind map for the new venture work). This is due September 3. Provide feedback to at least 4 other teams - feedback due Monday, September 7. Start talking to people about your idea. Talk to at least 5 people per week, starting this week. Comments about what you learn can go into your personal learning journals and big insights should go on the team mind map.
3. September 7 Proof of concept, start-up finances	Allen, chapters 8-9 (also review appendix, pages 522-540).	Continue working on new venture workbook. Interview at least five people about your idea; post results.



Week number, date (Monday date of each week listed), topics	Reading and webinars	Project assignments (details in Blackboard modules) Weekly – participate in discussions in Blackboard Below is a brief summary of the core assignments.
4. September 14 Marketing strategy, funding the new venture	Allen, chapters 14-15; Ries, chapters 1-4	New venture workbook due on Blackboard by September 14th, midnight. Provide an update on the ideas that you are moving forward and those you are not using by September 14 . Review at least 5 peer ideas and provide feedback. Due September 17 . Interview at least five people about your idea; post results.
5. September 21 The business infrastructure and organization design	Allen, chapters 7, 10, 12 Ries, chapters 5-6	Quick pitch video due September 21 . Post to your team's mind map site. Interview at least five people about your idea; post results. Review at least four other videos and comment by September 24 . Interview at least five people about your idea; post results.
6. September 28 Marketing and business strategy.	Ries, chapters 7-8	Magic quadrant assignment and video discussion due Monday, September 28 . Post to your team's mind map site . Review at least 3 other mind map presentations and provide feedback on the mind map site. Review peer magic quadrants and videos; comments due by October 1 . Interview at least five people about your idea; post results.
7. October 5 Learning from entrepreneur journeys.	Ries, chapters 9-10	Cash forecast due October 5 at midnight . Final web site and video discussing it are due October 9 at midnight . Review 4 other web sites and provide comments.
8. October 12 Growing your business and the story of initial public offerings (IPOs)	Ries, chapters 11-14	Final power point business plan is due October 14 at midnight . Review 4 other team presentations and comment (fill out forms provided) by October 15 . Peer evaluations due by October 16 .