COURSE OBJECTIVES

The core of entrepreneurship is discovering opportunities. Many believe that opportunities are discovered by creative thinking and that is a very difficult skill to learn. However, entrepreneurs are not artists. They do not spend their days waiting for inspiration. Instead, they observe social trends, customer frustrations, and unmet needs with a solution-focused mindset. They are business people who come up with solutions for other people’s problems.

This course will focus on the very early stages of the entrepreneurial process. We will discuss how new opportunities are discovered and how societal value is created throughout this process. In its approach, the course will be based on classic theoretical readings, the insights of economics, strategic management, organizational studies, psychology and cognitive science.

In addition, we will use the theoretical discussions as springboards of novel entrepreneurial ideas. We will continuously discover practical entrepreneurial opportunities, evaluate those ideas as a class and discard them for new ones as we move along.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Recognize and discover entrepreneurial opportunities. You will have an entrepreneurial mindset by which you will be alert to new business opportunities around you. You will also learn how entrepreneurs enact or create new opportunities based on their own assets and skill sets.
- Perceive unmet demand and provide solutions for them. You will have the skills to do something about the frustrations, problems, and needs of other people.
When you see an unmet need, you will look for a critical mass of people with the same need and think about potential solutions to help them.

- Apply analytical and critical thinking skills in an uncertain business environment. Uncertainty is a landmark characteristic of any entrepreneurial endeavor. With the tools you learn in this course, you will be better equipped to acknowledge it and adjust your moves accordingly.

- Be mindful of the attractiveness of the opportunities. Many entrepreneurial ventures fail. It will be useful to know the profit potential of your new business idea before you start the venture. You will learn tools and skills to analyze the attractiveness of an idea by numerous practices in class.

This course emphasizes a particular aspect of creativity; as applicable to entrepreneurship. We are focused on finding “business solutions” to unmet “customer needs”. Although this usually requires some level of creative thinking, we are not out to create new technologies as an engineer, nor create new designs as an artist. Instead, we will try to find existing, working solutions to new customer problems.

**LEARNING TECHNIQUES**

To accomplish our objectives, we will use a variety of learning techniques: lectures, outside class assignments, readings, written reports, presentations, class discussion of case studies, and a real-life project.

Entrepreneurship deals with the world of experience. The world of experience is not a world of certainty. Therefore, within the classroom, reasonable people (with different experiences) will view issues differently. This is a healthy tension. Management and entrepreneurship, whether discussed in the classroom or discussed within a firm, involve "making sense together." The very idea of making sense involves a creative process and is personal and subjective. Debate, conjecture, critique and subjective opinions are highly valued in the conversations we will conduct in class.

**Group Work**

Discussing cases and preparing analyses outside of class helps to deepen your knowledge. Group work will be essential for case preparation as well as the project. Developing effective group skills is a critical part of the learning process. It is a good idea to have students with different areas of expertise in the group to facilitate the exchange of a variety of viewpoints and to help guard against “groupthink.” To help bring about this internal balance within each group, I will divide the class into groups (with approximately 5-6 persons in each group) by the second session.
POLICIES

Please be on time. Attendance is necessary but not sufficient for participation. Since participation is an important part of our sessions, points will be deducted if you arrive late or leave early. You can take one absence, no questions asked. Beyond that, deductions will be made, no excuses can be accepted. Please arrange your work and other obligations accordingly.

Academic honesty will be enforced strictly in our course. Please read SBA’s honor code at http://www.luc.edu/gsb/pdf/honor_code.pdf.

It is primarily your responsibility to eliminate free-riding. If you think that there is a problem in your group, you should first try to solve the problem within the group. However, if the problem cannot be resolved in this manner then please discuss the matter with me. I want and need to be made aware of such problems in a timely manner, if they exist, so that corrective action can be taken.

To facilitate participation by all team members, I will conduct a peer evaluation at the end of the course. The results of the evaluation will greatly influence your score for the group projects.

Late submissions of the deliverables will not be accepted.

Please turn off cell phones, beepers, pagers, alarm clocks, etc. before the session starts.

TEXTS


Articles:

**Harvard Cases:**
Google, Inc.
Oprah Winfrey
What’s the big idea?
Henry Heinz
LeapFrog
Netflix

Harvard Business School cases can be found at their website. Please check Blackboard for the link.
REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

(1) Participation  15 points
(2) Bug List      5 points
(3) Quizzes and write-ups for the cases 20 points
(4) Midterm exam  20 points
(5) Idea Log      20 points
(6) Presentation  20 points

**Participation:** Active participation in the class is an essential part of the learning experience. We will be using cases and you must be prepared to discuss these cases. **Meaningful participation means making a contribution to our discussion, not merely talking, and it does not mean repeating case facts or simply agreeing with what others have already said.** Our interest is not "right" or "wrong," it is whether you have made a contribution to the development of the issues under study by the class, and whether you have moved the class forward. One clear way of making a contribution is to disagree with the comments of your classmates where needed; it is not the instructor's duty alone to decide whether a remark is of value. Failure to participate and disagree where needed penalizes you and the class in these ways:

- You lose incentive to prepare the case properly
- You lose the chance to develop communication skills
- You deprive all of us of your insights into the case
- Your ideas go unevaluated by others

**Please do not confuse attendance with participation.** While on-time attendance is important, active participation in the class discussion is evaluated separately.

**Bug List:** Many opportunities are discovered by individuals who are unhappy with the way things work currently. In this exercise, you are asked to write down problems; things that annoy you; any dissatisfaction you have with the way world around you works. Researchers argue that you are likely to start finding “interesting” bugs after finding tens of “ordinary” bugs that don’t lead anywhere. For that reason, you should write around 50 bugs by the end of the course. Remember that, you will not write down solutions for this exercise. You will write down only the bugs.

**Idea log:** Some researchers suggest that entrepreneurs are alert individuals who recognize opportunities. One way to improve alertness is to prepare yourself to identify unsolved problems and unsatisfied needs in the market. In this exercise, you will be asked to write down three business ideas a week. Each idea should describe what the problem/need is, how your venture could address it, and how you came up with the idea. The purpose of this exercise is to increase your sensitivity to the opportunities around you.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Session 2 | **Entrepreneurial Mindset**  
Baron & Ensley 2006  
Cantillon, 1755  
Carland, et. al., 1984  
Case: Netflix |
| Session 3 | **The Firm**  
Barney, 1999  
Casson, 2005  
Coase, 1937  
Case: Google, Inc. |
| Session 4 | **The Opportunity**  
Drucker, 2002  
Freeman & Engel, 2007  
Knight, 1990  
Case: What’s the Big Idea? |
| Session 5 | **Creativity**  
deBono, 1992  
Ward, 2004 |
| Session 6 | **Observing Trends**  
Bandura, 1991  
Case: Oprah Winfrey |
| Session 7 | **Observing Customers**  
Kanter, 2006  
Case: Henry Heinz |
| Session 8 | **Testing Ideas**  
Ireland & Webb, 2007  
Case: Leapfrog Enterprises |
| Session 9 | **Theories in Entrepreneurial Cognition**  
Alvarez & Barney, 2007  
Kirzner, 1997  
Mitchell, et. al., 2007 |
| Session 10 | Conclusion |