INF2325H
Launching Information Ventures

Instructors:
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Class Mondays 1-4pm
Location: BL728 unles announced otherwise
Office Hours: By appointment, BL625
Mailbox: BL50

Course Material: Blackboard Portal

Course Description:

Entrepreneurship is key to economic growth. The development and launch of new products and services is one of the most important means of creating new jobs, building wealth, and effecting social change. This course focuses on a specific type of entrepreneurship where resources are very limited, almost nonexistent, and innovators begin with an idea they are passionate about.

Students will experience the early stages of a new venture, exploring their own product ideas while developing a real-world business plan (in small groups) to take their ideas to market. Students are encouraged to pursue both for-profit and social ventures and are encouraged to consider topics explored in other courses as the basis for their product or service ideas.

iSchool students possess the interdisciplinary foundation to be uniquely positioned to start and lead the firms and organizations that will launch the next wave of innovative products and services driving economic, cultural and social change. New products and services are the result of marrying information, design and technology in innovative ways and are the result of a deep understanding not only of the enabling technologies but of the complex underlying social, cultural, information, and economic context within which they exist.

This is an experiential course where students will learn basic business theory and concepts through the development of a business plan for their own business idea. Students will work in small groups of 2 to 3 individuals. Students will discuss the fundamentals of a sound business strategy while exploring the uncertain landscape startups operate in where markets and opportunity are constantly and rapidly evolving.

Guest speakers including entrepreneurs from both for-profit and non-profit ventures will speak about their own practical experiences launching their businesses. An expert panel

including Investors, Entrepreneurs, and representatives from funding agencies will be invited to hear final business plan pitches.

Course Objectives:

The goal of this course is to provide students with a theoretical framework for development of a business model and business strategy for their new information venture ideas. Students will conceive of, research, and formulate a strategy for their own business ideas and in the process learn the terminology, format, and tools for communicating these ideas in the current startup environment.

Learning Outcomes:

Through the practical application of the business model framework students will develop:
- Familiarity with the Business Model Canvas and other business model analysis tools and their application
- Familiarity with common business model patterns including for-profit and non-profit business models
- Basic skills to write, present, and critique business pitches and business plans

Students will demonstrate their familiarity with the business model framework and new venture strategy through:
- In class discussion and interaction with practicing entrepreneurs applying the business model concepts to understand the entrepreneur's business
- Regular in-class venture pitches and written drafts of the business model
- A final business plan submission including appendices
- A final business pitch to a panel of investors, entrepreneurs, and funders

Relationship Between Course Learning Outcomes and Program Learning Outcomes[1]:

Students will understand the basic frameworks of a strategy and plan for both for-profit or non-profit ventures These are important tools for economic, social and cultural leadership. This will be demonstrated in their final business plan submission and business plan pitch.

Once students develop their own business idea they must define their product or service. This will require deep understanding not only of the enabling technologies but of the complex underlying social, cultural, information, and economic context within which their product or service exists. Skills and understanding of information theory, where information is found, and how it is used will be key to their successful envisioning of a product.

Students will be prepared for economic, cultural and social leadership armed with the skills to envision a new venture and develop a plan for its implementation. This course will

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[1] Master of Information Learning Outcomes
http://current.ischool.utoronto.ca/studies/learning-outcomes

prepare students to respond to the changing information needs of society through new ventures that deliver the necessary products and services to our society.

This course will give students tools to take the research and theory they are learning in their core curriculum and apply it to new projects they may wish to launch in the future. Students are encouraged to draw on material from their research or from other courses as they generate their own business idea.

Finally this course will highlight that the landscape of information products and services is constantly and quickly changing and that entrepreneurship requires a commitment to lifelong learning.

Instructional Methods

The class will meet weekly for 12 weeks.

Each class will provide a variety of teaching methods, including formal lectures (theory, frameworks, techniques, case studies), enrichment from guest speakers (local entrepreneurs and other skilled practitioners active in the industry) and in-class workshops.

Students are expected to read the course readings before the class and come to the class prepared to apply the patterns and concepts therein.

Workshops provide further opportunity for in-class discussion, practical application of the business model canvas, and opportunities to discuss assignments. Students will be called on to informally present their work to date and obtain feedback from the instructor and fellow students. Students are expected to attend all classes in order to participate in these workshops as they are essential building blocks for later assignments.

Schedule and Readings

For important dates
http://current.ischool.utoronto.ca/studies/academic-dates

Books available at U of T Libraries and in the Inforum on short term loan

Blank, Stephen Gary, Dorf, Bob, (2012). *The Startup Owner's Manual: The Step-By-Step Guide for Building a Great Company.* ($10 as an eBook on Indigo, $27 on Amazon)
(on Course Reserve at the Inforum)

Osterwalder, Alex & and Pigneur, Yves (2009). *Business Model Generation*. John Wiley and Sons. ($28 on Indigo – one per team is sufficient however this is a useful reference)
(on Course Reserve at the Inforum)
An excerpt is also available at: http://www.businessmodelgeneration.com/book
Business Model Canvas is available at: http://www.businessmodelgeneration.com/canvas

Ries, Eric (2011). *The Lean Startup.*
(on Course Reserve at the Business Information Centre, Joseph L Rotman).

Kawasaki, Guy, (2011). *Reality Check: The Irreverent Guide to Outsmarting, Outmanaging, and Outmarketing Your Competition*.
(on Course Reserve at the Inforum)

Readings: - means these are required for the session
Additional: - optional readings for more depth
Of Interest: - optional readings from popular media, it is strongly recommended you at least browse these for language and themes of importance in the entrepreneurship community

#	Lecture	Workshop
Class 1 Mon January 9 AI	Brainstorming Workshop Entrepreneurship in Canada Sources of Innovation **Readings:** Drucker, Peter F. (1985). The Discipline of Innovation. *Harvard Bus. Review*, May-June 1985, 67-72. http://go.utlib.ca/cat/8395274 "Types of Innovation" OECD Oslo Manual http://www.oecd.org/document/19/0,3746,en_41462537_41454856_41476947_1_1_1_1,00.html **Additional:** The Importance of Young firms for Economic Growth. September 2015. Available online at:	Brainstorming Workshop with entrepreneurs and guests.

	http://www.kauffman.org/what-we-do/resources/entrepreneurship-policy-digest/the-importance-of-young-firms-for-economic-growth Build your list of news sites and other resources you will find useful for the course. We suggest: ● Betakit http://betakit.com/ for Canadian News ● TechCrunch https://techcrunch.com/ ● CB Insights https://www.cbinsights.com/ subscribe to their weekly newsletter ● tech podcasts such as Jason Calacanis' This Week in Startups http://thisweekinstartups.com/ Kara Swisher's Recode Decode http://www.recode.net/podcasts and the a16z podcast http://a16z.com/podcasts/	
Class 2 Mon January 16 MM	Introduction to the Business Model Canvas Social Entrepreneurship Introduction to Lean Startup Tips on picking good ideas Elevator Pitch How-To **Readings:** Business Model Generation, Section 1: Canvas. pp 14 - 47 Lean Startup, Chapters 1, 2 **Additional:** Eric Reis talks Lean Startup on TWIST http://thisweekinstartups.com/twist-live-eric-ries/ Hacker, Hustler and Designer: Building the Tech Team https://www.marsdd.com/news-and-insights/hacker-hustler-and-designer-building-the-tech-team/ **Of Interest:** Podcast: Yancey Strickler on Kickstarter and Publc Benefit Corporations (Social Entrepreneurship) http://radar.oreilly.com/2015/11/yancey-strickler-on-kickstarter-and-public-benefit-organizations.html	**In-Class Workshop**: Team Formation (Groups of 5) Draft Multiple BMCs Select Best BMC Identify 10 Hypotheses for further research **Submit:** ● List of Team Members ● Best BMC Draft ● List of Hypotheses
Class 3 Mon January 23 AI	***Assignment 1 Due before class*** Customers and Customer Segments Value Proposition Minimum Viable Product Customer Development Process **Readings:**	In-class elevator pitch presentation by 2 members of each team randomly selected (all students will submit by video)

	The Startup Owner's Manual, Chapters 1, 2, 3 Lean Startup, Chapter 3 The Value Proposition Canvas http://www.businessmodelalchemist.com/2012/08/achieve-product-market-fit-with-our-brand-new-value-proposition-designer.html **Additoinal:** Oliver Gassmann, Karolin Frankenberger, Michaela Csik. 2013. University of St Gallen Business Model Navigator ™ http://www.im.ethz.ch/education/HS13/MIS13/Business_Model_Navigator.pdf **Of Interest:** Osterwalder, Alex, Pigneur, Yves, Tucci, Christopher. Clarifying Business Models: Origins, Present, and Future of the Concept. Communications of the Association for Information Systems. May 2005. Volume 15. http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7697530 (The BMC is based on work in ontologies)	
Class 4 Mon January 30 AI	Customer Relationships Customer Channels - Identifying and Defining communication and channels with customers - Marketing and Distribution Strategy Market Segments - TAM, SAM & TM Industry Forces - Competition, Barriers to Entry, Positioning **Readings:** Business Model Generation, Section 2: Patterns. pp 54 - 119 Startup Owner's Manual Ch 4 (read pg 71-75 on TAM, SAM, and ™ and pg 112-123 on Competition carefully) The Lean Startup Chapter 4 **Additional:** Moore, Geoffrey A. (1995). *Inside the Tornado: Marketing Strategies from Silicon Valley's Cutting Edge.* Harper Business. pp. 13-100. Startup Library - this is more of a resource page. It will be useful for the session. https://www.marsdd.com/collections/market-research/ **Of Interest:** Chris Dixon: Size markets using narratives, not numbers. http://cdixon.org/2010/04/03/size-markets-using-narratives-not-numbers/ Fred Wilson: Narratives Over Numbers.	**Workshop:** Refine BMC VP CanvasWorkshop Customer & Market Hypotheses TAM, SAM & TM Hypoyhesis Draft MVP 10 Hypotheses to research **Submit:** VP Statement Customer & Market Hypotheses TAM, SAM & TM visualization Draft MVP List of Hypotheses	

	http://www.avc.com/a_vc/2010/04/narratives-over-numbers.html Bryce Roberts: You Can Never Size a Market in Excel. http://bryce.vc/post/9586039643/you-can-never-size-a-market-in-excel	

Class 5
 	
Mon
Feb 6
 	
MM
	Key Activities
	    ● Identifying Core Competencies
	    ● Production - Product Design, Development Delivery
	    ● Problem Solving - Customized Solutions
	    ● Platforms and Networks - Ranges of Integrated Products and Services
	Key Resources
	    ● Types of resources; Company Building; Intellectual Property
	Key Partners
	    ● Partnership Strategies
	    ● Types of Partnerships
	    ● Value Chain and Value Network
	Team building
	    ● hiring
	    ● staffing plans
	
	Readings:
	Allee, Verna (2009). *Value Network Analysis and value conversion of tangible and intangible assets.* , Online version of final draft. Journal of Intellectual Capital Volume 9, No. 1, 2008, pp. 5-24.
	http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7725217
	
	Additional:
	Porter, Michael E. The Five Competitive Forces that Shape Strategy. Harvard Business Review, January 2008.
	http://go.utlib.ca/cat/8395274
		In-Class Workshop:
		Draft Competition Analysis
		Draft Product Development Plan
		Activities and Resources
		Revise BMC
		Map Value Network
		
		Submit:
		Competitive Positioning Diagram
		Identify 6 Hypotheses to research
		Product Development Plan
		Identify 6 Hypotheses to research

Class 6 Mon Feb 13 AI	Market Research Workshop with Special Guests **Readings:** The Startup Owner's Manual, Chapters 5, 11 See the Entrepreneurship Resources and Guide Here: http://guides.library.utoronto.ca/mgd421 **Additional:** Lesson #118: Market Research for Startups from Red Rocket VC. View the video lecture (28 min.) http://redrocketvc.blogspot.ca/2012/06/video-george-deeb-teaches-market.html Slides are available at http://redrocketvc.blogspot.ca/2012/08/lesson-118-market-research-for-startups.html **Optional:**	**In-Class Workshop:** Market Research Workbook

	Christensen, Clayton M., and Raynor, (2003). Michael E., The Innovator's Solution: Creating and Sustaining Successful Growth. Harvard Business School Press. (pp. 21-100).	
Mon Feb 20	**Family Day Holiday February 20**	
Class 7

Mon Feb 27

MM | Financial Models
- Cash Flow
- Cost and Revenues
- Cost Structures
- Types of Revenue Streams
- Product/Service Pricing
Formal Financial Statements

Readings:
Business Model Generation, Section 3: Design. pp 124 - 189
The Startup Owner's Manual TBD

Kawasaki, G. (2007, October 14). How to Change the World: Glenn Kelman's Financial Model. *How to Change the World*. Retrieved March 20, 2013, from
http://guykawasaki.com/glenn-kelmans-f/
- Read through the post and links. Download the 'Redfin' 5-year financial model (Excel) - and become acquainted with its structure and what is in the different tabs. We will discuss financial modeling in detail next week.

Additional:
Bergeron, Pierre G. (1985). *Finance for Non-Financial Managers*. Methuen Publications. Ch. 5, pp. 91-98, 100-103.
https://portal.utoronto.ca/bbcswebdav/pid-3342897-dt-content-rid-17877635_2/xid-17877635_2

Reality Check: Chapters 6 to 14 ('The Reality of Raising Money'). They are very short chapters! | **In-Class Workshop**:
Sketch Financial Model
- Top down market
- Bottom Up Market
- Pricing
- Revenues
- Costs
10 hypotheses to research

Submit:
Draft Financial Model
List of Hypotheses

Assignment 3:
In-Class Presentations:
(3 mins)
Examples:
Bottom-up Market Analysis
Top-Down Market
Pricing and Business Model
Costs
Key Metrics
Financing Plan |
| Class 8

Mon March 6

AI | Key Metrics
Growth Techniques

Readings:
Lean Startup Chapter 7
Dave McClure Pirate Metrics
- Dave McClure, Pirate Metrics – video talk: http://500hats.typepad.com/500blogs/2007/09/startup-metrics.html Slides:
- http://www.slideshare.net/dmc500hats/startup-metrics-for-pirates-long-version
- AARRR! Dave McClure's "Pirate Metrics" And The Only Five Numbers That Matter, http://www.inc.com/walter-chen/aarrr-dave-mcclure-s-pirate-metrics-and-the-only-five-numbers-that-matter.html | **In-class Workshop:**
Refine Financial Model
Draft Sales Funnel
Identify Key Metrics
Identify 10 Hypotheses to research

Submit:
Sales Funnel
Identified Metrics
List of Hypotheses |

	● Case Study http://startitup.co/guides/374/aarrr-startup-metrics Croll, Alistair, Yoskovitz, Benjamin, (2013). *Lean Analytics: Use Data to Build Better Startup Faster*. O'Reilly Media., Pg 9-30, 45-54, 71-152 Casey Winters, Product Growth Lead Gives a Crash Course on Growth at Launch Conference http://thisweekinstartups.com/casey-winters-pinterest-launch-incubator/ **Additional:** Startup Owner's Manual Ch 9, 12 (pay attention to pp 338-349, 437-459) John Shahidi, Shots Studios interviewed on This Week in Startups ● CEO John Shahidi on evolving Shots Studios from selfie app to mega-talent content creator, making videos with Justin Bieber & Floyd Mayweather, & discovering the next generation of comedy superstars ● http://thisweekinstartups.com/john-shahidi-shots-studios/?utm_source=feedburner See at about 16 minutes for metrics and data on Apps	
Class 9 Mon March 13 AI/MM	***Assignment 3 - In-Class Presentations*** All students will present In-Class Discussion **Readings:** TBD **Additional:** TBD	**In-Class Workshop;** Presentations and Discussion
Class 10 Mon March 20 MM	Investment and Funding Basics ● Valuation ● Types of Funding and Stages ● Grants and Other Funding Sources **Readings:** Reality Check, Chapters 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 Startup Owner's Manual, Ch 10 The Lean Startup, Chapter 11 **Additional:** TBD	**In-Class Workshop:** Refine Financial Model Draft of Financing Plan Hypotheses to Research **Submit:** Financing Plan List of Hypotheses
Class 11 Mon March 27	Intellectual Property **Readings** MaRS Toolkit ● Patent Strategy for Tech Startups https://www.marsdd.com/mars-library/patent-strategy/	**In-class Workshop:** ***Assignment 4; Investor Pitch dry Run***

AI/MM	• Barry Fogarty, CoFounder, clothed talks about his experiences with IP https://www.marsdd.com/mars-library/a-startups-guide-to-intellectual-property/ • Grant Tisdall, Partner and Patent Agent, Gowlings, Fundamentals of IP Management, https://www.marsdd.com/mars-library/fundamentals-of-ip-management/ • Email Adriana for PCK Toolkit on Drafting Your Own Provisional Patent Application Business Model Generation, Section 5: process. pp 244 - 259 **Additional:** TBD	
Class 12 Mon April 3 AI/MM	*** Assignment 4 Investor Pitches *** Final Investor Pitches for the Guest Panel **Readings:** TBD **Additional:** **TBD**	**Note that Assignment 5 is due on April 5 at 4pm, 2 days after the final pitches.**

Evaluation

Details of assignments are below. Assignment instructions will be circulated.

Assignments and Exercises	Individual	Group	Total	Due Date
Weekly submissions of in-class exercises & Participation in class discussions	10	0	10	Weekly ongoing
Assignment 1: Elevator Pitch	10	0	10	Class 3
Assignment 2: Business Model Canvas, Executive Summary & Supporting Materials	0	15	15	Class 7
Assignment 3: In-Class Presentation	15	0	15	Class 9
Assignment 4: In-Class Investor Pitch	0	20	20	Dry-run: Class 11 Final: Class 12
Assignment 5: Final Business Plan - Slide deck, Executive Summary, Appendices	5	25	30	April 5, 4pm
TOTAL:	40	60	100	

Total Course = 12 Classes

Evaluation of student work will conform to guidelines found in the University of Toronto *Graduate Grading and Evaluation Practices Policy,* at:
http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf .

According to this source, grades in the A range (A+, A, A-) are defined as being excellent and grades in the B range (B+, B, B-) are defined as being good. A detailed description of these categories can be found at:
http://current.ischool.utoronto.ca/grade-interpretation

For assignment 5 above with both a group and an individual mark all students within the team/group will receive the same group mark based on the assignment evaluation schema. The individual portion of the mark will be based on the individual's performance or on the team's report on individual contributions (in the case of written submission) to the assignment.

The class participation mark will be based on individual participation in the in-class discussions and continuous improvement of the business model canvas. Students are expected to

- attend every class and arrive on time
- read assigned materials *before* class
- contribute to discussions regularly
- share their experiences developing their business model and business plan
- submit proof-read, grammatically-correct, assignments on-time
- prepare oral presentations that respect time limits.

Late Policy and Extensions

Assignments must be submitted directly to the instructor at the beginning of class the day they are due. Assignments are NOT to be submitted by email without prior permission. Late assignments will incur a penalty of 5% per day. Assignments more than two weeks late will NOT be accepted and students will receive a mark of 0 on that assignment.

In exceptional circumstances, extensions may be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Extensions must be requested by email *before* the due date. Students will be required to provide a completed UofT Student Medical Certificate, and/or additional supporting documentation.

Writing support: The University of Toronto Writing Centre provides writing support for undergraduate students. The services are designed to target the needs of both native and non-native speakers of English. Please avail yourself of these services, if necessary. Find out more information on their website: http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/

Academic integrity: Academic integrity is fundamental to your own learning process, as well as the ideals and practices of the University of Toronto. Please consult the University's site on Academic Integrity as well as the site How Not to Plagiarize. The Faculty of Information has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism as defined in section B.I. 1. (d) of the University's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. You should acquaint yourself with the *Code* including what behaviours constitute academic misconduct, the processes for addressing alleged misconduct, and the penalties that may be imposed.

Accommodation of students with disabilities: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services Office as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let them and me know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Regrade Policy: Grades will not be discussed on the spot, and instead we ask students to come back at least 24 hours later after having re-read these four things: 1) the assignment guidelines; 2) their own submission; 3) the feedback on the graded assignment; and 4) the iSchool's Grade Interpretation Guidelines (http://current.ischool.utoronto.ca/grade-interpretation). This interval ensures that

conversations about grades aren't based on first reactions in the heat of the moment. We ask that if you have an inquiry about your grade, that you wait at least 24 hours and re-read the materials mentioned above before contacting either of us.

Your regrade request should include an explanation of how you believe you met the assignment requirements and reference the marking rubric addressing the feedback on the graded assignment.

Assignments

Students should use an iterative design approach when completing assignments including steps for:
- Problem identification
- Data gathering
- Refining the problem description
- Brainstorming multiple solutions
- Evaluation of solutions
- Pitching and testing a solution
- Assessing success of the solution and iterating

An agile approach to completing the assignments including frequent but brief team status updates and checkpoints, careful management of team resources (time for research) and rapid incorporation of data into the design process will be critical for team success.

Students are encouraged to use collaboration tools such as Google Drive (features in Blackboard may be available to support group collaboration) to keep the team on track.

Weekly iterations and updates to Business Model Canvas (BMC), submissions of in-class exercises, Participation in Class Discussion of BMC (10% individual)

The instructor will assign class participation marks based on participation in in-class discussions and class activities demonstrating the student has completed reading assignments and has experimented with application of the concepts.

Students and their team will be called on to informally present their work to date in the workshop hour of the class. Student participation in these presentations and contribution to the feedback for other groups is included in the evaluation of participation.

Assignment 1: Elevator Pitch (10% Individual)
Each student will prepare an elevator pitch for the team business idea. Each student on the team will focus on a different audience for the pitch.

Assignment 2: Business Model Canvas, Executive Summary & Supporting Materials (15% Group)

Using the Business Model Canvas and the Value Proposition Canvas students will explore their idea and finalize a business model. Students are encouraged to speak with real customers that might purchase their product or service and obtain feedback on their idea validating the assumptions they have made.

Assignment 3: In Class Presentation (15% Individual)

Students will prepare and present a brief (3 minute) presentation demonstrating research has been conducted and data has been analyzed to provide the presenter with an understanding of some aspect of their business. Examples include bottom-up market analysis, top-down market analysis, pricing, costs, revenue projections, key metrics, etc. Presentations will be made to the class with brief Q&A to follow. each member of the team is required to present on a different aspect of the business model.

Assignment 4: Final Investor Pitch (1-page executive summary, presentation slide deck, presentation to panel) (20% group)

Students will prepare and present an "Investor Pitch" for their business. Presentations will initially be made to the class in a 'dry run' during which feedback will be provided. Students can target angel or venture capital investors, government lending institutions, agencies that fund early stage investments (such as the OCE), potential advisors or a strategic partner. All teams will present the following week to a panel of investors.

Assignment 5: Final Written Business Plan (5% Individual, 25% group)

1-Page Executive Summary, Investor Presentation, and Appendices including: Customer Interviews, Market Analysis, Competition Analysis, Pricing Analysis (value for customer), Business Model Canvas, Marketing Strategy, Sales and Marketing Plan, Revenue Streams and Forecast, Development Plan, Staffing Plan, Operations Model, Financial Model (Cost Structure and Expenses Forecast), and Financing Plan.

Students are encouraged to ask guest speakers for advice and insight on how to solve issues and make assumptions as they research and develop their plan.

The instructor will be available for guidance and feedback throughout the term to assist students in developing their plan.