The Sociology of Entrepreneurship

Sociology 359, Fall 2015

Instructor: Professor Martin Ruef; Soc / Psych Building 344 (mr231@duke.edu); office phone # (919) 660-5792

Course Hours: Wednesday and Friday, 11:45 AM - 1:00 PM
Soc / Psych Building 126

Office Hours: Wednesday, 10:45 AM - 11:30 AM (or by appointment)

Course Description

All around us, media and pundits emphasize the importance of a “new economy”, an “ownership society”, another “dot-com” era, and, more generally a culture of entrepreneurial capitalism. Advice and courses on entrepreneurship abound, but more critical perspectives are sometimes lacking. This course is an introduction to the social scientific view of entrepreneurship and innovation. Its goals are (1) to familiarize you with major perspectives on entrepreneurial activity; (2) to develop your skills in applying insights from these perspectives to empirical case studies, as well as practical issues affecting business startups and social enterprise; and (3) to help prepare you for a lifetime spent working in entrepreneurial careers (or partnering with business and social entrepreneurs).

The course considers a range of issues: Why and how are startup organizations created? Why do startups fail? When do entrepreneurs work with others and when do they go it alone? Who reaps the rewards (or suffers the costs) of entrepreneurial efforts? What distinguishes social and for-profit enterprise? How do environments influence entrepreneurship and innovation? What is the broader role of entrepreneurship and innovation in modern society?

This may appear to be a long list, but the literature on entrepreneurship has been distinguished from the outset by the diversity of its subject matter. It is also distinguished by the diversity of backgrounds of those who write in this field. We will examine the work of sociologists, historians, geographers, economists, and even a few business gurus.

Prerequisites:

Although the class has no course prerequisites, it does place some demands on your ability to perform independent research on entrepreneurs, startup enterprises, and innovations. You should familiarize yourself with Duke Library resources -- in particular, databases such as ABI/Inform, Lexis-Nexis (Academic), and Factiva – that can assist you in collecting business data.
**Teaching Assistant:**

Jarron Bowman  
Office Hours: Th 10:00-11:00 AM;  
F 2:30-3:30 PM  
jarron.bowman@duke.edu

**Requirements:**

Active participation in class is expected. We will keep track of attendance and ask that you come prepared to discuss the readings for each day.

Each student will participate in one formal presentation, which will occur on a specified date during the term. To assess your progress, there will be a mid-term exam before the Fall Break. The final exam is cumulative, with a mix of short and long answers.

In addition, there will be two research projects. These are team projects, involving up to fifteen pages of written material. All material for the projects must be submitted in printed or electronic form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading:</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Scale:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>A 93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 1 (Startup)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>A- 90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 2 (Innovation)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>B+ 87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>B 83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>B- 80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/ Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>C+ 77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C 73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C- 70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D+ 67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D 63-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D- 60-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F below 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Policy on Assignments and Missed Exams:**

The *Duke Honor Code* will be in effect for all written work. Assistance on research projects is restricted to those individuals who are part of a student’s project team.

Assignments turned in after a specified due date (*in class*) will be penalized at ten percentage points per day. The time of the final examination can only be changed with an excuse validated by the dean.
**Required Texts:**

We will make extensive use of a set of course readings, a number of which are available in PDF form. This syllabus is also web-enabled, allowing you to access many of the articles directly from the internet as electronic readings (ER). The texts for the course can be obtained from the Duke bookstore or an on-line retailer:


Case Studies: Electronic or hardcopy versions should be purchased through Harvard Business School Press. The coursepack is available at …

[https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/38411338](https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/38411338)

**Supplemental Reading (optional):**


---

**Tentative Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week I. Studying Entrepreneurs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 1. Introduction (8/26/15)</td>
<td>Wasserman, Ch.1 <em>(skim)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 2. History of Entrepreneurship (8/28/15)</td>
<td>Gerschenkron, S6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week II. Who Becomes an Entrepreneur?</strong></td>
<td>ER, <a href="https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/261512">Shane et al.</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 1. Entry into Entrepreneurial Activity (9/2/15)</td>
<td>Wasserman, Ch.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 2. Creating the Entrepreneurial Team (9/4/15)</td>
<td>Wasserman, Chs.3 and 4 (through p.96 only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;&gt; Project 1 Assigned (Due: 10/14/15) &lt;&lt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week III. Networks, Roles, and Rewards</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 1. Entrepreneurial Networks (9/9/15)</td>
<td>Burt, S12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 2. Roles and Rewards (9/11/15)</td>
<td>Wasserman, Chs.5 and 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Week IV. Managing the Startup Enterprise
   Session 1. People and Activities (9/16/15)  
   ER, Baron & Hannan
   Wasserman, Ch.8
   Session 2. Case Study: Wikipedia (9/18/15)  
   CS, Project Esperanza

Week V. Entrepreneurial Environments
   Session 1. Industry Evolution (9/23/15)  
   Aldrich, S9
   Session 2. Communities and Entrepreneurship (9/25/15)  
   ER, Saxenian

Week VI. Entrepreneurial Goals
   Session 1. Goals and Startup Performance (9/30/15)  
   Wasserman, Chs.10 and 11
   Session 2. Case Study: Apple (10/2/15)  
   CS, Apple’s Core

Week VII. Intermezzio
   Session 1. Mid-Term Exam (10/7/15)  
   Session 2. Project Prep Day (10/9/15)

Week VIII. Case Study Presentations
   Session 1. Class Presentations I (10/14/15)  
   Session 2. Class Presentations II (10/16/15)

Week IX. Presentations (cont’d)
   Session 1. Class Presentations III (10/21/15)  
   Session 2. Innovation and Intellectual Property (10/23/15)  
   ER, Boyle (Chapter 1)
   Arrow, S10
   >> Project 2 Assigned (Due: 11/20/15) <<

Week X. Innovation in Business and Social Enterprise
   Session 1. Diffusion of Innovations (10/28/15)  
   ER, Van den Bulte & Lilien
   Session 2. Social Entrepreneurship (10/30/15)  
   ER, Dees

   Special Guest: Richard Pitt, Vanderbilt University

Week XI. Innovation in Established Organizations
   ER, Anderson & Tushman
   Session 2. Case Study: 3M (11/6/15)  
   CS, Profile of an Innovating Company
Week XII.  Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Global Perspective

   Session 1.  **LASA Panel Discussion:**  (11 / 11 / 15)  
               Entrepreneurship in Latin America

   Session 2.  International Context of Innovation (11 / 13 / 15)  
               ER, *Kogut & Zander*  
               Montoya, S14

Week XIII.  From Innovation to Marketplace

   Session 1.  **Case Study:** Danimal in South Africa (11 / 18 / 15)  
               CS, Management Innovation  
               at the Bottom of the Pyramid

   Session 2.  Class Presentations IV (11 / 20 / 15)

Week XIV.  >> THANKSGIVING BREAK <<

Week XV.  Presentations (cont’d)

   Session 1.  Class Presentations V (12 / 2 / 15)
   Session 2.  Class Presentations VI (12 / 4 / 15)

Final Exam:  Tuesday, December 8th, 2 PM - 5 PM