The Sociology of Entrepreneurship

Sociology 359, Spring 2016

Instructor: Professor Tiantian Yang; Soc / Psych Building 253 (ty41@duke.edu); office phone # (919) 660-5760

Course Hours: TuTh 4:40PM - 5:55PM
Course Location: Soc / Psych Building 129

Office Hours: WF, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (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:

Brian Aronson
Soc/Psych 141
Email: brian.aronson@duke.edu

Office Hours: MF, 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM
(or by appointment)
Spring 2015

Requirements:

Course participation (15%, 5% for attendance and 10% for participation)

Active participation in class discussion is expected. We will keep track of attendance and class participation. You are expected to read the assigned materials closely and be prepared to discuss them in depth.

Short-essay (10%, 2% each)
You will be asked to write some short essays (1-2 pages) based on readings in class. There will be 5 essays in total.

Presentations (10%, 5% each)
Each student will participate in two formal presentations, which will occur on specified dates during the term.

Exams (45%, 20% for Mid-term, 25% for Final)
To assess your progress, there will be a mid-term exam. The final exam is cumulative, with a mix of short and long answers.

Research Projects (20%, 10% each)
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.

Scale:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>F</td>
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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 will be penalized at twenty percentage points per day. The time of the final examination can only be changed with an excuse validated by the dean.

We expect all assignments and exams to be uploaded by a specified due date to Dropbox on Sakai.

Each student can miss up to 2 classes without any penalty throughout the semester. The 2 classes include any missed classes (due to illness, interviews, going home, family reasons, etc) except those for varsity athletic competition.
**Required Texts:**

We will make extensive use of a set of course readings, most of which are available in PDF form. We will upload electronic copies to Duke Sakai – Resource. 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 online 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/44088275

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<tr>
<th><strong>Topics</strong></th>
<th><strong>Readings</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme I. Studying Entrepreneurs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 1. Introduction (1/14/16)</td>
<td>Wasserman, Ch.1</td>
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<td>Session 2. History of Entrepreneurship (1/19/16)</td>
<td>Gerschenkron, S6 (Swedberg, 2000)</td>
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<td><strong>Theme II. Who Becomes an Entrepreneur?</strong></td>
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<td>Session 1. Entry into Entrepreneurial Activity (1/21/16)</td>
<td>Wasserman, Ch.2; Audia and Rider, 2005</td>
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<td>Session 2. Creating the Entrepreneurial Team (1/26/16)</td>
<td>Wasserman, Chs.3 and 4 (through p.96 only); Ruef, 2010 Chapter 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;&gt; Project 1 Assigned (Due: 2/27/15) &lt;&lt;</td>
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<td><strong>Theme III. Networks, Roles, and Rewards</strong></td>
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<td>Session 1. Entrepreneurial Networks (1/28/16)</td>
<td>Stuart and Sorensen, 2005; Aldrich and Zimmerman, 1986</td>
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<td>Session 2. Roles and Rewards (2/2/16)</td>
<td>Wasserman, Chs.5 and 6</td>
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<td><strong>Theme IV. Managing the Startup Enterprise</strong></td>
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<td>Session 1. People and Activities (2/4/16)</td>
<td>Baron &amp; Hannan, 2002; Wasserman, Ch.8</td>
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<td>Session 2. Case Study: Apple (2/9/16)</td>
<td>CS, Project Apple’s Core</td>
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Theme V. Entrepreneurial Environments
Session 1. Industry Evolution (2/11/16) Aldrich, S9
Session 2. Communities and Entrepreneurship (2/16/16) Saxenian, Chapter 1, 2, 3

Theme VI. Entrepreneurs as Organizational Productions
Session 1. Organizations Spawn Entrepreneurs (2/18/16) Sorensen and Fassiotto, 2011
Klepper, 2001
Session 2. Career Imprints (2/23/16) Higgins, 2005
Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4

Theme VII. Intermezzio
Session 1. Guest speaker (2/25/16)
Session 2. Mid-Term Exam (3/1/16)

Theme VIII. Case Study Presentations
Session 1. Class Presentations I (3/3/16)
Session 2. Class Presentations II (3/8/16)
Session 3. Class Presentations III (3/10/16)

>> SPRING BREAK <<

Theme IX. Studying Innovation
Session 1. Elements of Diffusion (3/22/16) Chapter 1, Rogers 2003 (to be posted)

>> Project 2 Assigned (Due: 4/15/16) <<

Session 2. Diffusion of Innovations (3/24/16) ER, Van den Bulte & Lilien

Theme X.
Session 1. Case Study: (3/29/16) CS, Design Thinking and Innovation at Apple

Theme XI. Intrapreneurship
Session 1. Innovation in Established Organizations (3/31/16) Sorensen and Stuart, 2000
Session 2. Employee Entrepreneurship (4/5/16) Burton, et al., 2002

Theme XII. Environments and Innovation
Session 1. Innovators’ Dilemma (4/7/16) Christense, 1997 Introduction, Chapter 1 &2
Session 2. (4/12/16)
How to Read Difficult Materials and Prepare for Class Discussion

Many of the readings are difficult. The selections are long and we are going to cover an enormous amount of material in a very short period of time. Therefore, I suggest you try to keep ahead of the readings. I ask that you come to class with at least one question or opinion on one of the readings. I may call on students to come forth with their questions/opinions.

As you read, you should think about: 1) what is the author's argument? 2) does it make sense? 3) how does it fit in with the other things we have read? Consider the following questions as you read the text.

1. With whom is the author arguing?
2. What is the position the author is arguing for?
3. How would we use this argument to understand other phenomena?

After reading each text, you should summarize the main argument. If you do not understand it, you should try to come to class and frame your question about it to the group.