

SYLLABUS

Course Title:	Workshop for Startups
Course Number:	MBA 295
Units:	2
Instructor:	
Meeting Days / Time:	Once weekly, 2 hours
Prerequisite(s):	Entrepreneurship Core Course
Class Format:	Short lectures with presentations by student companies

Course Purpose and Objectives

This workshop is intended for student teams with interests in entrepreneurship and who have their own venture in development. The business concept may be in the experimental mode, or further along in its evolution such as seeking customers or funding, but all concepts must have passed a basic opportunity recognition screen that can be explained to the class. Students must be willing to discuss their project with others in the workshop, including revealing any material that is required for classroom discussion. The class works best when entrepreneurial teams form around one company. Depending on the final size of the class and the mix of project teams, a very limited number of solo projects may be allowed with the professor's explicit prior approval.

The course will be conducted as a clinic, looking at various issues faced by entrepreneurs in converting their business concepts into successful companies. Team members will be expected to develop and deliver various presentations to the class on selected aspects of their business idea. Each class member is expected to contribute actively in the discussions and presentation critiques. While this course is structured around major elements of the business plan as the vehicle by which these issues get framed and analyzed for presentations to prospective investors and colleagues alike, it is not designed to produce a formal business plan per se. In addition, attendance at the Berkeley Entrepreneur Forums scheduled for the semester is expected.

Teaching Methods

This course does not teach entrepreneurship as a theoretical subject. We do not use cases or reference manuals as a guide to teach the class. The material for learning comes from the companies that the students are starting and their efforts to make progress in building those companies from the beginning to the end of the semester. The instructor shapes the course according to the number of students and companies in the class and highlights interesting facets of each along the semester. This creates a highly dynamic environment for teaching where the faculty is a facilitator, mentor and lecturer at the same time.

Deliverables and Requirements

Deliverables required for the class include:

1. Company documents
 - a. Executive Summary
 - b. Powerpoint pitch
 - c. Business plan if available
2. Name of chosen business advisor outside of class
3. Three letters written to the companies in class that you are advising, one at the start of class, one near the 2/3 mark and a final review letter at the end of the class.
4. A plan for your work on your company during the semester that calls out your goals, corporate strategies and tasks that you hope to accomplish.

Required Readings and Materials

Each student is required to purchase an entrepreneurship book that they can use as a guide for the course. Students who have taken entrepreneurship before (a strong recommendation) will have the books required for that class. Some of the favorites books include:

- Timmons and Spinelli, “New Venture Creation”
- Kawasaki, “Art of the Start”
- Abrams, “Six-Week Start-Up”

Evaluation and Grading

Grades will depend on the student's progress in developing his or her team project, level of participation and quality of presentations in class, and the quality of their peer-to peer consulting assessments of others' projects. The two units of credit students receive for this course may be combined with thesis work, independent studies or projects taken in other classes (with permission of the instructors in both classes)

Participation – 40% of final grade. Your participation grade will include topical presentations about your company and your efforts in starting the company. You will be required to prepare presentations to the class on each of the major subject areas: Markets and Customers, Product Definition and Management, Team, and Financing. You will also be scored in the quantity and quality of your in-class questions and comments. Attendance will also be a component of the grade.

Company progress – 20% of final grade. At the start of the class you will be required to describe the current state of your company and your goals for making progress on your startup during the semester. Your progress grade will be based on the actual work you perform and report to class in achieving goals and adapting to the circumstances of your company.

Advising – 40% of final grade. Throughout the semester, you will be required to meet and discuss your company with your advisors and meet and discuss your advisees company. Based on those interactions you will be required to write advisory letters to your classmates. You will be judged on the quality of your writing and advice given, and also on the your actions relating to the advice given to you by your classmates.

Schedule

Classes are scheduled from 6-8 in the evening.

Class #	Subject	Due
1	Class introduction	Presentation of company concepts.
2	Roll call; Advisor assignments	Book selections; Executive summaries and CVs of students to their advisors
3	Action plans	First Advisor deliverable due
4	Markets and Customers (C1)	Company action plan due
5	Markets and Customers (C2)	
6	Product Definition and Management (C1)	
7	Product Definition and Management (C2)	
8	Mid-semester summary	
9	Team (C2)	Second advisor deliverable due
10	Team (C1)	
11	Financing (C2)	
12	Financing (C1)	
13	DC out	Final advisor assessment
14	Pitches	
15	Conclusion	Pitch, Executive summary, Plan



Additional Information

Teaching Guide

Requirements: Instructors should have deep experience with entrepreneurship, having started their own companies and advised others. It is critical for the instructor to create an atmosphere that is conducive to rigorous work and accommodating to the ups and downs of the startup process.

The use of guests and guest lecturers is discouraged since the classroom needs to be an environment that is open to the exchange of ideas and information between students, while maintaining confidentiality of ideas and progress. The students are instructed at the start of the class that they should not speak about the companies and situations exposed during the class outside of class – we do not have the students sign a confidentiality agreement.