

Media Entrepreneurship - COMM 449-01
Fall Semester 2017



Instructor

Dr. Ronen Shay

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Office Location: William A. Fay Building, Room 209

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 10am - 11am, Fridays 2:30pm – 4:30pm, or by appointment

Meetings

COMM 445-01 meets on W 2:30pm – 5:35pm:

Basil Hall, Room 101

Website

Check our Blackboard site via mySJFC regularly for course materials and announcements.

<https://cas.sjfc.edu/>

Course Description:

The media and communications industry is subject to the incredibly fast pace of technological development, yet many enterprising professionals use this to their advantage, innovating traditional business models and developing new media entities that grow into industry titans. In this course students will study media entrepreneurship and innovation in an effort to identify the strategic decisions that led to some of the greatest successes and failures of contemporary media firms. Primary topics covered include how to propose, plan, finance, launch, and run a new media start-up. Each team will run their startup for at least six weeks of the semester. Students will also be exposed to a variety of strategies for building startup capital including crowd sourcing via Kickstarter, attracting angel investors, and the digital distribution of indie content. This course is intended to be a bridge between a student's academic experiences and the real-world skill-sets necessary to become a successful media entrepreneur.

Required Texts

A .pdf copy of the required readings for this course is available on Blackboard, and therefore no textbooks need to be purchased. The readings are generously provided courtesy of the REBUS Foundation. They originate from the new textbook:

Ferrier & Mays. *Media Innovation and Entrepreneurship*. Creative Commons, 2017.



Course Goals:

- Students will understand the advantages and disadvantage of different types of business structures.
- Students will practice the practical implementation of a business plan of their own design.
- Students will develop a crowdsourcing campaign and raise real capital for their business initiatives.
- Students will create a real media product or service for distribution to their consumers.
- Students will experience running a business of their own design for approximately 5-6 weeks.
- Students will practice reporting on the performance of their business.

Grading Scheme:

Entrepreneurial Knowledge Reviews (individual)	10%
Business Plan (10% individual + 5% team)	15%
Kickstarter Campaign Performance (5% individual + 10% team)	15%
Prototype Product / Service (5% individual + 10% team)	15%
Operational Success (team)	20%
Performance Report (10% individual + 5%team)	15%
Participation + Professionalism (individual)	10%

Business Activity Descriptions:

A detailed description of each business activity will be distributed in our weekly meeting as the semester continues.

During team activities: the instructor reserves the right to not give all group members the same grade, should an individual's attendance, participation, professionalism, or assignment feedback forms demonstrate they did not make an equal contribution.

During presentations: when a student/team is not presenting they are expected to be actively listening to the presentations being delivered in a professional and courteous manner. The behavior of individual students in the audience will be noted and taken into account when determining their participation + professionalism grade.

Below is a brief overview of what to expect from each activity.

Entrepreneurial Knowledge Reviews: Over the course of the semester you will be exposed to a variety of information that is relevant for starting a business in the Rochester Area. Examples



include: the advantages of disadvantages of different business structures, tax policies, and partnership agreements. Understanding this information is crucial for being able to successfully use your entrepreneurial skills outside of the classroom. Accordingly, the relevant knowledge from each weekly meeting will be reviewed in a quiz format at the end of most sessions (10 in total).

Business Plan: As the goal of the course is to launch a business of your own design, each group's business plan will be different than the others. Students will be provided with a list of common sections generally found in a business plan, and each group member will contribute at least two sections to their team's final implementation strategy. Carefully select which sections you are to be responsible for as this likely will end up being your area of specialization in the business moving forward. Also, remember that you actually have to implement what is described in your plan, so stay realistic with your writing. Students will also present their business plans to their instructor and classmates.

Kickstarter Campaign Performance: Successfully raising capital is an enormous catalyst for the success of your business, as it gives you more resources with which to operate. Once the business plan has been finalized, you will begin raising capital through a Kickstarter campaign. The campaign will run for 21-30 days, varying based on your team's fundraising goal. Any money raised must be tracked and ONLY used for business-related expenses. While you are ultimately evaluated on the volume of capital you raise, students will be given an opportunity to justify and explain any missed fundraising goals.

Prototype Product/Service: During the Kickstarter campaign, but before its conclusion, you will need to create the media product/service you will be distributing. Again this will be different for each group. Recommended suggestions include: an event (e.g., battle of the bands), a periodical (e.g., a bi-weekly magazine/comic book), a student-centric service (e.g., the buying and reselling of textbooks), or selling an app or music on iTunes. Remember that you actually have to create and distribute your product/service, so be pragmatic in your choice. You will be evaluated on the quality of your prototype.

Operational Success: Ultimately some consideration will be given towards the volume of profit you generate over the semester. Accordingly, you should budget strategically, and closely monitor your revenue relative to your expenses throughout the semester. Much like the real world, reporting positive profit margins is your goal here.

Performance Report: Fear not, as profit is not the only key performance indicator (KPI) necessary for receiving a successful grade. Each student will select a KPI other than profit (e.g., subscribers) that they will be responsible for over the course of the semester. Accordingly, each student should be looking to increase their specific KPI, while also supporting the overall profit



generation of the business. At the end of the semester each student will submit and present a report summarizing the performance of their KPI.

Participation + Professionalism: All members of this class are required to participate by taking part in discussions, asking/answering questions, and by responding to the material. Participation will be assessed based on attendance, contribution to group activities, in-class activities/use of in-class group time, your involvement in class discussions that should arise during lectures, and most importantly your accountability to your team.

As this is a business oriented class the classroom should be viewed as a simulated work environment. Accordingly, students are required to demonstrate respect and professionalism in all course related activities. Professionalism will be assessed based on appropriate technology use, behavior as an audience member, respect towards your peers and instructor, and proper email/course communication etiquette.

Academic Integrity: All students, regardless of level or school, are responsible for following the St. John Fisher College Academic Integrity Policy in addition to any other individual school's or program's academic expectations and/or professional standards. Every student is expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all academic pursuits at all times. If a student suspects that another student has violated the Academic Integrity Policy, he or she should contact the instructor for that course and provide support for that suspicion. Any finding of responsibility and associated sanctions for a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is retained per the College records policy.

All students are expected to be familiar with the details of the Academic Honesty Policy (available via <http://catalog.sjfc.edu/undergraduate/2016-2017/academic-information/integrity.dot>). The policy specifies a number of behaviors (including cheating and plagiarism), that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions (including failure of the entire course). Ultimately, you are responsible for completing your own course activities and ensuring you produce original work, both when working individually and as a team. It is your responsibility to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor of this class.

Attendance: Students should understand that class attendance will be taken into consideration in achieving a satisfactory grade. Starting a business encompasses a lot of interactive concepts, and so much of what can be learned is a direct result of attending our weekly meetings, participating in group and sole business activities, and your involvement in any discussion that should arise.

Should you accrue more than 3 absences at any point in the semester (i.e., 4 or more), you will receive an FA (failure due to excessive absence). Students should understand that absences 1-3



will still be taken into consideration in determining your final grade. Having a legitimate reason for being absent does not permit you to exceed 3 absences.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with the St. John Fisher College Attendance Policy that can be found at: <http://catalog.sjfc.edu/undergraduate/2016-2017/academic-information/courses/attendance.dot>

College Policy Concerning Students with Disabilities: In compliance with St. John Fisher College policy and applicable laws, appropriate academic accommodations are available to students with disabilities. All requests for accommodations must be supported by appropriate documentation/diagnosis and determined reasonable by St. John Fisher College. Students with documented disabilities (physical, learning, psychological) who may need academic accommodations are advised to refer to the Disability Services website <http://home.sjfc.edu/AcademicAffairs/Disabilities/DisabilityOverview.asp> Questions should be directed to the Coordinator of Disability Services in the Disability Services Office and Test Center, Kearny 300. Late notification will delay requested accommodations.

College Policy toward Research of Human Subjects: Learning about the research process includes learning about the protection of the rights of human subjects (participants). Students in courses which include the collection of data from human subjects must comply with Institutional Review Board policies and procedures which protect the rights of human subjects. This protection includes informed consent, as well as measures to promote the confidentiality of the data which is collected. Students involved with course related data collection should speak with course faculty to learn about Institutional Review Board policies relevant to the course project. Copies of the St. John Fisher Institutional Review Board Policies and Procedures are available in the Office of Academic Affairs, in the Kearney Building room 202, or on the IRB web page at <http://home.sjfc.edu/institutionalreviewboard>.

Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction received by completing online evaluations as per the Online Course Evaluation Process located at <http://www.sjfc.edu/campus-services/ed-tech/online/evaluation.dot>. Evaluations are typically opened at the end of the term, and students will be made aware of the specific times in which they can be completed. Results will only be made available to faculty members, department chairs, the dean, and the provost after final grades have been submitted.

Grading:

A 93-100%	C 73-76.99
A- 90-92.99	C- 70-72.99
B+ 87-89.99	D+ 67-69.99
B 83-86.99	D 63-66.99
B- 80-82.99	D- 60-62.99
C+ 77-79.99	F Below 60

As students will be running a business together in groups of four, should an individual choose not to contribute their share of the work, they will have a large negative effect on the performance of their group's business. With this in mind, students should be aware that if they do not adhere to the requirements specified in the table below, they could be removed from their group, and therefore would be unable to complete the graded activities and receive a satisfactory grade. Should a student be removed from their group they will receive an I (Incomplete).

REQUIREMENTS TO EARN A SATISFACTORY GRADE
ATTENDANCE AT WEEKLY MEETING
COMPLETION OF WORK BY THE DATE SPECIFIED
COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION WITH GROUP OUTSIDE OF CLASS
COMPLETE 20 HOURS WORTH OF WORK OUTSIDE OF MEETINGS
NO REASSIGNED WORK

Grading is consistent with the St. John Fisher College grading policies that can be found at: <http://catalog.sjfc.edu/undergraduate/2016-2017/academic-information/grading/>

20 Hours of Work Outside of Class: You are required to track and complete at least 20 hours worth of work outside of weekly meetings (over the course of the semester). It is the responsibility of each individual student to track their own hours and document the work they completed (i.e., each log entry should include the date, amount of time worked, and 2-3 bullet points summarizing what was completed). A student's work log is subject to review by the professor at any point during the semester, and will be taken into consideration when determining if a student is eligible for a satisfactory grade in the class.

Health, Wellness, Safety and Security: The Health and Wellness Center provides medical, mental health services, and wellness education to students.

Contact information for the Health and Wellness Center:

<http://www.sjfc.edu/campus-services/wellness/about/>

(585) 385-8280

healthcenter@sjfc.edu

The Safety and Security Department operates 24 hours a day and 365 days a year with the goal to provide a safe and secure environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors to live, work and study.

Contact information for the Safety and Security Department:

<http://www.sjfc.edu/campus-services/safety/>

Non-emergency number: (585) 385-8025

Emergency number: (585) 385-8111

Late Work: Assigned work is due at the beginning of class on the date specified. Late submissions will be accepted within 24 hours of the end of the class period in which the work is due. Students should understand that late submissions will still be taken into consideration in determining your final grade. Work not submitted within this 24-hour period can be reassigned to other students. Should a student's work be reassigned they risk receiving a grade of U (unsatisfactory).

Requirements for attendance, assigned responsibilities, and other work are consistent with the St. John Fisher College Attendance Policy that can be found at:

<http://catalog.sjfc.edu/undergraduate/2016-2017/academic-information/courses/attendance.dot>

Meeting Content: I will not repeat material missed by absent students. It is the responsibility of the students who fail to attend the weekly meeting to get notes from their classmates and professor. Such second-hand exposure seldom provides a fully satisfactory substitute for attendance. Missing our weekly meeting will not serve as an excuse for failing to submit assigned work on time.

Syllabus Changes: The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus or lab schedule as the need arises.

Tips for Running a Successful Startup:

- Review and address feedback carefully
- Focus on quality, not just completion
- Ask questions
- Respond to customer inquiries in a timely and professional manner
- Come to every meeting
- Hold yourself accountable to your business partners
- Participate

COMM 449 Course Schedule

WEEK	Topic	Assigned Reading	Tentative Deadlines
Week 1 Sept. 6	-Developing the Entrepreneurial Mindset	Ferrier & Mays pp. 2-29	
Week 2 Sept. 13	-Ideation	Ferrier & Mays pp.30-53	
Week 3 Sept. 20	-Customer Discovery	Ferrier & Mays pp. 54-76	
Week 4 Sept. 27	-Business Models for Content & Technology Ventures	Ferrier & Mays pp. 77-102	
Week 5 Oct. 4	-Startup Funding -Business Plan Presentations	Ferrier & Mays pp. 244-257	Business Plan due Wed. Oct. 4 th
Week 6 Oct. 11	-Startup Funding	Ferrier & Mays pp.190-243	Tentative launch of Kickstarter campaigns Wed. Oct. 11 th
Week 7 Oct. 18	-Marketing Your Venture to Audiences	Ferrier & Mays pp. 258-289	
Week 8 Oct. 25	-Pitching Ideas	Ferrier & Mays pp. 156-189	
Week 9 Nov. 1	-Entrepreneurship Abroad	Ferrier & Mays pp. 290-327	Prototype Due Wed. Nov. 1 st Tentative end of Kickstarter campaigns. Earliest a business can be launched.
Week 10 Nov. 8	-Nonprofit Model Development	Ferrier & Mays pp. 103-131	Latest a business can be launched.
Week 11 Nov. 15	-Performance Reporting	TBD	

THANKSGIVING BREAK			
Week 12 Nov. 29	-Freelancing as Entrepreneurship and Consulting as Business Models	Ferrier & Mays pp. 132-155	
Week 13 Dec. 6	-Exiting the Market	TBD	
Exam Week COMM449-01 Wed. Dec 13th 3pm-5:30pm	-Performance Report Presentations	N/A	Performance Report Due Wed. Dec. 13th