



GE 3011 – Engineering Entrepreneurship Seminar Spring 2014 Syllabus

Simrall 100, 2:00pm - 3:15pm Tuesdays

Catalog Description: (1 hour credit) Seminar. Current topics in engineering entrepreneurship to enable students to better understand the role of an entrepreneur in creating start-up companies and leading young existing companies.

The Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership Clearinghouse on Entrepreneurship Education defines entrepreneurship education as *"the process of providing individuals with the concepts and skills to recognize opportunities that others have overlooked, and to have the insight, self-esteem and knowledge to act where others have hesitated.* It includes instruction in opportunity recognition, marshaling resources in the face of risk, and initiating a business venture. It also includes instruction in business management processes such as business planning, capital development, marketing and cash-flow analysis." This summarizes our goals in the Engineering Entrepreneurship Program at Mississippi State University.

This seminar is the first leg in a triad of entrepreneurship initiatives. The other two are the engineering entrepreneurship project experience, "the company experience," and the formal course of study leading to the Engineering Entrepreneurship Certificate.

Details can be found on the BCoE web site at:

<http://www.bagley.msstate.edu/programs/entrepreneurship/index.php>

Learning objectives of this course are:

1. Develop student insight into opportunity recognition
2. Develop student self-confidence through successful examples
3. Help the student realize the basic business skills required to be a successful entrepreneur

These objectives are accomplished by providing case studies by successful entrepreneurs and lectures on business aspects such as venture capital and patent law.

Course Format

Guest Talks

This course is centered on talks presented by successful entrepreneurial alumni and other guests invited to speak. They will share their background, how they built their business, and general insight into overcoming challenges critical to being an entrepreneur in today's world.

At the end of each talk will be a Q&A opportunity with each speaker. This semester we will open a discussion board in MyCourses for you to be able to submit questions during the talk. Your question will be asked of the speaker. You will receive points for asking questions. Note that the number of questions is time dependent.

Finally you have the opportunity to research and write about the speaker's talk to receive additional credit. We provide a template in this syllabus of how that should look.

Special Topics Forum

During the semester there will be up to four roundtable discussions, where we invite an entrepreneur, a student, and a faculty member to discuss a current issue important to building a successful enterprise relevant to entrepreneurship. These are generally hosted in the evening at Nine Twenty-Nine Coffee. You can receive credit for attending.

Engagement Activities

The MSU Entrepreneurship Center will host several activities during the course of the semester which GE3011 students can receive credit for attending and participating in.

Some examples include:

- Start-up Weekend (see <http://www.startupweekend.org>)
- Elevator Pitch / Business Plan Competitions
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Workshops
- New Business Grand Openings
- Product Testing Opportunities
- And more...

Business Model Canvas Project

Entrepreneurship is driven by taking action and "doing". This project is an optional self-guided "track" inside this class, in which you will formally begin to sketch out a business idea and validate it with early customer feedback. Instructors will help to provide you with guidance to complete a Business Model Canvas and provide mentorship with validating your model and customers. To receive full credit, you must A) complete a business model canvas with an idea, B) submit weekly updates on changes, progress, and goals, C) contact at least 5 potential customers during the course. This can jumpstart your project required for the Jack Hatcher Entrepreneurship Certificate!

Attendance

This class is designed to expose you to the world of entrepreneurship, and therefore you **must attend class to gain any appreciable value** from the stories these successful people share. You will note that the grading structure reflects your involvement.

We will use MyCourses to track attendance. You will be given a password to open an Assessment in MyCourses only available during class. It is ultimately your responsibility to ensure your attendance is properly recorded. You must resolve attendance discrepancies prior to the next class period, or you will not receive credit!

Grading

Your grade is based entirely upon your participation in the course's activities. You will earn points in three main categories.

Category	Points	Total Possible
Attending a guest talk	70 / talk	700
Asking a speaker a question	20 / talk	200
Writing a speaker summary	20 / talk	200
Special Topics Forums	25	100
Engagement Activities	10	50+
Business Model Project		200
Total Possible		1450+

Your grade is calculated based on the total number of points you earn during the class. Note that we offer substantially more points than required, so grades will not be adjusted or rounded at the end of the semester!

- A: 900 – 1000
- B: 800 – 900
- C: 700 – 800
- D: 600 – 700
- F: 599 or below

Course Instructors

Gerald Nelson

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Mississippi State University Honor Code

"As a Mississippi State University student I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do."

Upon accepting admission to Mississippi State University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor Code. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the MSU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor Code.

For additional information please visit: <http://www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/1207.html>

Business Model Canvas Project

Entrepreneurship is driven by taking action and “doing”. This project is an optional self-guided “track” inside this class, in which you will formally begin to sketch out a business idea and validate it with early customer feedback.

By the end of this project, you will have a **market-validated** idea and know how to generate revenue from it.

Part I: Complete an Initial Business Model Canvas

The Business Model Canvas was first developed by Alex Osterwalder in his book *Business Model Generation* and several derivations now exist (such as Ash Maurya’s *Lean Canvas*). The sole purpose is to create an easy, at-a-glance, and flexible outline of what your business will do, for whom, and how it can scale to generate revenue. Contrary to a traditional business plan, the Canvas is designed to be constantly adjusted and refined iteratively.

For the first part of the project, you will roughly sketch out your business by completing all of the blocks of the canvas with your best educated “guess” as it relates to your business.

Part II: Contacting Potential (or Would-be) Customers

Arguably the toughest part, this is where the key benefit to the project lies. You are expected to actually interview customers or would-be customers of your business and gauge their response to your proposed value. Do they like it? Would they pay for it? How would you make it better? Or should you entirely shift your business strategy (pivot)? You must submit evidence of customer contact to receive credit (i.e. email or signature of notes by interviewee)!

Part III: Weekly Update on Project Deliverables

The final part of the project is to force you to constantly pursue refinements to the canvas. Each week you will submit at least one question of uncertainty on your canvas. Your goal is to resolve and update your canvas accordingly each week. Your week’s submission should be largely based upon consideration of customer feedback from prior discussions. Each phase of this project is designed to get you closer to honing in on a “minimum viable product” – that version of a new product which allows a team to collect the maximum amount of validated learning about customers with the least effort (Ries).

The project will be graded as follows:

1) Complete an initial business model canvas	50 pts	50 pts
2) Contact at least five potential customers	20 pts x 5 cust.	100 pts
3) Submit a weekly update on project deliverables	5 pts x 10 wks	50 pts
Total		200 pts

Name: _____ Net ID: _____

GE3011 Seminar Talk Speaker Summary

Guest Speaker: _____ Date: _____

Complete this document and submit online to receive 20 points. While we do not grade on length of responses, generally three to four sentences are needed to satisfactorily answer each question.

- 1.) RESEARCH** the speaker's personal (e.g. hometown, family, schools, hobbies, etc.) and professional (e.g. work history, titles, etc.) background. Write three to four sentences summarizing what you discovered. (4 pts)

- 2.) IDENTIFY** the *value proposition* of the speaker's company. Start by determining who are all of the customers, and recognize what the company offers them. What is the company's "unfair advantage"? (6 pts)

- 3.) REFLECT** upon what the speaker discussed during his talk. What did you find most impactful, insightful, or otherwise meaningful to you? (7 pts)

- 4.) SHARE** one quote from the speaker that struck you as memorable. (3 pts)

I abided by the honor code (signature): _____