

University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Belk College of Business
MGMT 4300/MBAD 5300
Entrepreneurial Decisions

Professor: Dr. Justin Webb
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Email: Justin.w.webb@uncc.edu
Class time/location: 5:30-8:15p, Thursdays; Zoom (perhaps a few events on campus, but if you're more comfortable, you can still log in via Zoom)
Office hours: By appointment

Course Description:

Entrepreneurship is defined as “the process of creating value by bringing together unique resource combinations to exploit opportunity.” At the heart of any entrepreneurial venture is an entrepreneur and her/his team. These are the individuals with the vision, the tenacity and perseverance, the adaptability, and the passion to successfully implement a novel concept. Entrepreneurs are agents of change. They are the “dreamers and doers” who see a better way and do whatever it takes to make that better way happen. Much of what can be learned from them involves not so much their idea, but how they made it happen, how they overcame the obstacles and the negatives, how they found resources when there were none, how they brought along the team, how they dealt with personal and ethical conflicts, and more regarding implementation and growth.

This is a course about the decisions that entrepreneurs made to address key entrepreneurial tasks and challenges as they have sought to exploit opportunities. The course seeks to provide understandings to students about the decisions that real entrepreneurs have faced in operating their ventures, presented by leading entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial stakeholders. The process of entrepreneurship involves the recognition of challenges and dilemmas, vigorous debate, and ultimately, solutions. No solution lasts long in an entrepreneurial milieu whose underpinning is “creative destruction”.

We will attempt to discuss a variety of decisions in entrepreneurship by interacting with prominent entrepreneurs and also through your own research and out of class activities. Entrepreneurship is more than something one does at a point in time. It is a philosophy of life. The challenge to each student is to discover their own entrepreneurial potential and find ways to capitalize on that potential. The challenge is to build an entrepreneurial career that might include starting ventures, working for high-growth ventures, taking over a family business, entrepreneurship in a large company, and/or pursuing social and non-profit entrepreneurship. The amazing entrepreneurs you will meet in the coming weeks can help you in defining your path.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will:

- Have a better understanding of the entrepreneurial process as it is pursued by successful entrepreneurs;
- Have a richer appreciation for their own entrepreneurial potential and how that potential can be capitalized upon;
- Be able to relate their own life experiences and accomplishments to the life experiences of successful entrepreneurs;
- Recognize the many dilemmas and choices that entrepreneurial individuals confront as they pursue and implement their concepts, and the fact that the 'right' course of action is rarely apparent;
- Distinguish entrepreneurial approaches to implementation and management of a venture from conventional management approaches;
- Develop a better sense of some of the underlying characteristics, skills and behaviors of successful entrepreneurs;
- Understand that successful entrepreneurship is both an individual and a team activity;

Required Materials:

Each week, materials will be uploaded to Canvas that should be read prior to and in preparation for class. Materials will be used by students to conduct assignments discussed below.

Attendance and Tardiness Policy:

Class attendance is a critical component of learning, therefore, you are expected to attend and participate fully in all scheduled class meetings. It is considered so essential that your grade will be affected by your absences. ***This class has a mandatory attendance policy.*** If you are required to participate in official university-sponsored or work-related activity you should receive an excused absence if you provide PRIOR NOTIFICATION of the planned absence to the instructor with written documentation signed by the official in charge of the activity. You will be required to submit assignments due during that class period before the planned absence. **You will be allowed only one unexcused absence.** Two unexcused absences will drop your final grade by 10 percentage points. Three unexcused absences drop the final grade by 20 percentage points, etc. Excuses must be official – letter from doctor, job interview confirmation letter, employer's note etc. and must be presented no later than one week following the class period in which you were absent. Please don't ask for exceptions. While we are reasonable, if it wasn't critical for your health or life, you should be in class. Learning in this course is heavily based on the classes themselves.

Tardiness is not welcomed. If your tardiness causes a disruption, you will be docked points for it. Pay attention in class. Texting or surfing your computer is forbidden. Inattention and indiscreet eating are also not appropriate. The guests coming to our class deserve your respect and interest. They are doing UNC Charlotte a big favor in modifying their busy schedules to share time with you.

Student Assignments and Grade Allocation:

There are no examinations in this course. The assessment will center around the student's involvement, interaction and learning from the guest entrepreneurs.

I. Class Participation 40%

-Asking questions in class (see weekly readings for ideas)

-Turning in 3 questions on a weekly basis

II. Ownership of One Night's Class 30%

III. Live Case Analysis 30%

Total 100%

The final grade distribution will be determined as follows:

A:	100-89.5%
B:	<89.5-79.5%
C:	<79.5-69.5%
D:	<69.5-59.5%
F:	<59.5%

I. Quality Class Participation & Advance Question Preparation (Individual Effort)

The unique nature of this course places heavy responsibility on the student to get involved. It is a course where you learn from leading edge entrepreneurs. But the entrepreneurs do not lecture in a traditional sense. They are here to share. As a result, students must thoroughly immerse themselves in each class, including asking substantive and provocative questions with follow up queries. If you do not participate in a significant manner your grade will suffer. In addition, students are expected to prepare and submit at least **three** questions for each night's guest or panel. The questions should be based on the dilemma focused upon that week and advance information provided. Students are expected to participate in class each night based on the advance weekly readings and on the presentation of our guest or panel. **Questions must be submitted to me at justin.w.webb@uncc.edu before Wednesday at noon or they will not be counted.** Students will receive points for the quality of their questions, and points each week based on the quality of their inputs into the discussion.

II. "Ownership" of One Nights' Class (Team Effort)

Students will be placed into teams and each team will collectively take detailed notes of the class discussion and provide a single condensed summary of the notes to me at justin.w.webb@uncc.edu and to the class. The summary should also tie the advanced materials to the class summary. Quality summaries will compare and contrast entrepreneur approaches and seek to explain similarities and differences. The summary shall not exceed 15 pages.

III. Live Case Analysis (Team Effort)

A couple of the entrepreneurs who are engaging with us will present live case analyses, which involves the entrepreneurs presenting a case around a specific entrepreneurial decision context. You are then tasked with putting yourselves in the shoes of the entrepreneurs, so you will poke and prod the entrepreneurs for additional information to fill out the case. For the initial live case analysis, you will then conduct research that will support the delivery of a proposed solution to

the entrepreneur (via a 5-page analysis and 15-20 minute presentation). The second live case analysis will be less complex to where you will present a brief solution on the same evening that the case is presented.

Weekly Schedule
(some minor changes/additions might occur throughout the semester)

January 21 –Manuel Zapata (Zapata Inc) – Serving Uncle Sam: The Government as the Entrepreneur’s Customer

January 28 – Keith Luedeman (formerly GoodMortgage.com) and Aru Anavekar (Botsplash) – Entrepreneurial Organizing: Maintaining versus Relinquishing Control

February 4 – Chris Halligan (Payzer) and Don Rainey (Grotech Ventures) – Selling in a Startup: Pitching to Customers and Investors

February 11 – No class

February 18 – Hamza Seqqat (MyCig) – Entrepreneurship in Emerging Markets; Live Case Analysis, Pt. 1

February 25 – Louis Foreman (Enventys) – Idea Feasibility and Opportunity Evaluation

March 4 – Scott Price (UPS) – Entrepreneurial Transformation in Large Companies

March 11 - Thomas Goforth (Absolute Collision Center), Greyson Oxidine (Southern Cut Landscaping) – Everyday Entrepreneurs

March 18 – Roddey Dowd (Charlotte Pipe and Foundry) and Tom Bennett, Jr. and III (First Oklahoma Bank) - Family Business/Being Entrepreneurial in Mature Industries

March 25 – Morgan McBride and Julian Riccio (both Red Ventures) on Digital Entrepreneurship.

April 1 – Chris Elmore (AvidXchange) and Rob Cummings (formerly DealCloud) – Capital: How Much? What Type? At What Cost? When? From Whom?

April 8 - Hamza Seqqat - Live Case Analysis, Pt. 2

April 15 – Bryan Delaney and James Hartsell (both formerly Skookum) on Navigating Business Partnerships: Founding Ventures as Partners/Teams

April 22 – Scheduling Gender and Race Challenges for Entrepreneurs

April 29 – Jim Twining – Live Case Analysis

Academic Integrity:

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte has adopted an academic integrity policy emphasizing that honesty, integrity, and respect for others are fundamental expectations in our University. All students in the Belk College of Business courses must adhere to this policy. Please familiarize yourself with the academic integrity policy located in the syllabus attachment.

All students are required to read and abide by the Code of Student Academic Integrity. Violations of the Code of Student Academic Integrity, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Definitions and examples of plagiarism are set forth in the Code. The Code is available from the Dean of Students Office or at the following website: <http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-407>.

Diversity:

The Belk College of Business strives to create an inclusive academic climate in which the dignity of all individuals is respected and maintained. Therefore, we celebrate diversity that includes, but is not limited to ability/disability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.