FIU Honors College
Course: Skunkworks (2017-2018)
IDH 3035-U26
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Course Description

It has become clear that the "traditional" way entrepreneurship has been taught for years, with the deliverable being a detailed business plan, is flawed. In fact, what we now know is that a startup, by its very nature is really "a temporary organization designed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model[1]". The goal of this course is to have working products/service businesses by the end of the course that are either generating real profits/and or offering real value to the people they serve. Another objective of this is course is to understand how great business ideas are conceived, designed and developed and provide you with the tools to do just that.

The term "Skunkworks" is often defined as a small, nimble, innovative group inside a larger organization working on cutting edge and advanced ideas. In our case skunkworks will be small groups of students 3-4 in size that will be coming together to ideate, build, and launch ideas that solve real world problems using business as their medium.

The course is team-based and demands effective collaboration. Each group agrees on a particular problem area they are going to address through the development of a product or service. Students then explore the desirability, feasibility and viability of their proposed solution. The course touches upon the topics of customer discovery, empathy building, industry research, user experience design, product development, prototyping and business modeling.

The course culminates in group presentations and a community demo day of the prototyped solutions.

Readings

Course readings will consist of articles and publications that will be distributed digitally on a weekly basis. No textbook is required.

Course Evaluation/Grading Standards

Team Production/Minimum Viable Product Prototype - 25%

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[1] https://steveblank.com/2010/01/25/whats-a-startup-first-principles/

Presentations - 10%

Written Assignments - 25%

Participation - 25% (In-class, on Slack channels, and simulations)

Final Showcase - 15%

Outline of Semesters

Weeks 1-8: Feasibility Analysis, Prototyping, Business Modeling
Weeks 9-14: Production, Viability Analysis, Market Testing
Weeks 15-16: Final Presentations and Demo Day

Weekly topics

1. Introduction to course / Defining problems
2. Understanding customer segments + From insights to opportunities (Personas)
3. Value proposition development + Prototype to validation
4. Business models + Progress reports
5. Prototyping + validating models
6. Customer development + marketing your product
7. Soft-launching your product
8. Half-way presentations/pitches

    Spring Semester
9. Minimum viable products (Jan 18)
10. Defining your market conditions (threats, opportunities, variables) (Feb 1)
11. Understanding your marketplace (Feb 15)
12. Customer acquisition + refining your pitch (Mar 1)
13. Defining your key metrics (Mar 15)
14. Distribution channels, understanding how to get to market (Mar 29)
15. In class presentation help (Apr 12)
16. Demo Day / Final presentations (April 19)

Weekly assignments will be distributed and submitted through the Slack platform.

Course Management & Communication

Course readings, assignments, discussions, communications and team collaboration will take place on the Skunkworks Slack Platform (http://skunkworksfiu.slack.com).

Assignments:

Students will be required to write progress reports every 2 weeks on their team project. These reports will be 1-2 pages max and to be submitted through canvas. If student is unable to access slack, assignments will be submitted via email. For technical support on class, please email Professor Breslin.

Course Objectives

Students who successfully pass this course should have the knowledge and understanding of how business problems are identified, how businesses form around said ideas, and how to go to market with one of these solutions. Students will learn how companies generate revenue and make profits while creating value in the marketplace.

Attendance & Participation

Attendance is mandatory and will contribute to your participation grade. More than 2 unexcused absences will negatively affect your final grade. Participation in class discussions and online Slack channels will contribute towards your evaluation.

Religious Holidays

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students whose religious practices coincide with class requirements scheduling. Please make sure to notify your instructor at the beginning of the semester of which dates you will be absent or any anticipated problems with completing course work.

Physical, mental and sensory challenges

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so challenged. Should you require accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC), if you have not done so already.

Honors College Requirements

Registration in this course implies an acceptance of and compliance with the Honors College policies for students and the FIU Code of Academic Integrity.

Honors Citizenship Requirements

Beginning in Fall 2014, Honors College students are required to accumulate at least **20 citizenship points** each academic year (Fall and Spring) by attending Honors College activities. Students attending only one

semester (Fall or Spring) are required to accumulate **10 citizenship points.**
See http://honors.fiu.edu/academics/policies/citizenship/.

Student Portfolios

The Honors College will be using a portfolio method to assess students' learning outcomes. The portfolio allows for maximum flexibility in gauging student learning. Students decide (with instructor consultation) what "artifacts" or assignments to include for consideration in their portfolios to demonstrate successful achievement of each of five key student learning outcomes over the 4-year Honors experience. See www.honors.fiu.edu/portfolios.

Honors Education in the ARTS (HEARTS)

The HEARTS program is designed to give Honors College students opportunities to "explore and appreciate different artistic and cultural traditions and modes of artistic expression. HEARTS will also serve as a clearinghouse (and curatorial framework) for our students to experience the arts on campus and in the community by providing them with information about cultural activities and access to performances with free or discounted tickets. See http://honors.fiu.edu/hearts/.

Honors College Academic Misconduct Statement

In The Honors College, the term "honor" refers both to academic accomplishment and character. Students in Honors should therefore adhere to and be held to the highest standards of personal academic accountability. Academic dishonesty in any form, including plagiarism, is antithetical to the very definition of being an Honors student at FIU. Consequently, an Honors College student found responsible for academic misconduct will be dismissed from the College.

Procedures and Penalties

An Honors faculty member may bring charges of academic misconduct against an Honors student if the faculty member suspects plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct. The faculty member will decide whether to pursue informal resolution, file formal resolution charges, or take no further action, and will follow the procedures outlined in the Honors College website (http://honors.fiu.edu/academics/policies/), and the Academic Misconduct Procedures, available at http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/1acmisconductproc.htm.

Please refer to the following documents for additional information:

FIU Code of Academic Integrity – http://www.fiu.edu/~dwyere/academicintegrity.html.

FIU Honors College Student Handbook – http://honors.fiu.edu/handbook0910.html

FIU Honors College Plagiarism Policy – http://honors.fiu.edu/current_policy_plagiarism.htmlCoursesdesignated as Global Learning courses (IDH 2003-2004, IDH 3034-3035) must list specific Global Learning outcomes. Assignments must be able to assess the students' ability to demonstrate these outcomes. Questions on Global Learning should be addressed to Jose Rodriguez, rodrigej@fiu.edu

GL Learning Outcomes for IDH 3034-5

· **Global Awareness:** Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems. This will be achieved by looking at how international factors (markets, threats, opportunities) could impact your team's business.

· *Course Learning Outcome:* Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated global dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape aesthetics, values, and authority in diverse cultural contexts. This will be achieved by learning about how today's interrelated world can impact bringing your product to market and understanding its role in the global marketplace.

· **Global Perspectives:** Students will be able to develop a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.

· *Course Learning Outcome:* Students will be able to analyze the multiple global forces that shape their understanding of aesthetics, values, and authority — economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc. Due to the interrelatedness of business factors all over the world, students will discuss the global forces that shape their understanding of their particular problem in the context of the global marketplace.

· **Global Engagement:** Students will be able to demonstrate a willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.

· *Course Learning Outcome:* Students will be able to develop solutions to local, global, international, and/or intercultural problems related to aesthetics, values, and authority. Student's final presentations will attempt to provide solutions related to intercultural as well as local problems.