

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP CAPSTONE: 2 SEMESTER SEQUENCE
SOC 1930: Fall Semester 2009

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*“**Social entrepreneurship** strives to combine the heart of business with the heart of the community through the creativity of the individual.”*
Gary McPherson

This quote from a well-known expert on entrepreneurship leaves out one crucial characteristic of social entrepreneurship: it involves **collaboration** with community groups. This new two-semester capstone experience will provide students with hands-on experience in the collaborative process of social entrepreneurship working with community groups in the Providence area. We have designed this capstone to provide an important synthesizing option for seniors in the Organizational Studies track of COE, (although it is open to seniors from other COE tracks and from other concentrations). Students in this capstone will synthesize knowledge at several levels: synthesizing across disciplines, across theoretical and practical knowledge, and across private and public sector experiences of entrepreneurship.

We have designed the Social Entrepreneurship Capstone as a parallel to the Engineering Entrepreneurship Capstone (1930G and H), in that students will be organized into client-mentored teams to work on social entrepreneurship projects. The course is partnered with the Brown Swearer Center for Public Service to identify potential social entrepreneurship projects and mentors. The Social Entrepreneurship Capstone is scheduled to run at the same time period as the ENG 1930G and H, and the two courses will meet jointly for discussions of selected topics and for guest speakers on topics of importance to both types of entrepreneurial activity. Registration in the course requires an application (see instructor or COE website), and instructor approval. Preference will be given to seniors in the Organizational Studies track of COE, and to those who will participate in the course for two semesters. The main requirements are enthusiasm and a willingness to work hard in a real-world environment.

Social Entrepreneurship Capstone Mission:

This two semester capstone is designed to fulfill two major goals:

- 1) To provide students an entrepreneurial experience in the nonprofit, public, or private sector, in the design and development of a creative solution to a specific community or social service problem, using technological or managerial innovations. Students will learn how to collaborate in the development of solutions to real needs, using methodologies successfully applied elsewhere in creating commercial entrepreneurial ventures. Students will work in teams with a mentor from an organization or group outside of the University. These organizations or groups may come from the human services, community development, public policy and/or administrative sectors; private sector organizations are also possible. Final selection of agencies for Fall 2009 is in process (as of September 4, 2009). More detail on agency projects will be provided shortly.
- 2) To provide students with an opportunity to apply the conceptual and theoretical grounding obtained in COE foundation courses (particularly SOC 1030 Organizational Theories of Public and Private Sectors; and SOC 1090 Theories of Organizational Dynamics and Decision Making). You will be asked to think analytically and practically about basic concepts of social entrepreneurship, the management of innovation and change, the comparison of private and public sector entrepreneurship, governance, cooperation and collaboration, and accountability in working with communities, service agencies, and other nonprofit organizations.

To achieve these two goals, this capstone will pursue several specific course objectives:

Social Entrepreneurship Capstone Objectives:

- Provide conceptual and hands-on understanding of the entrepreneurial process;
- In collaboration with a community mentor, experience the entire process of project definition and development, resulting in a completed strategic/business plan and a successful project demonstration by the end of the year;
- Develop expertise in a specific problem area, thus understanding the social context and leverage points that influence the entrepreneurial process in the non-profit sector, including economic, legal, social, diversity and cultural conditions, and the different organizational contexts of government agencies, social institutions, corporations, NGOs, and advocacy groups);
- Gain an understanding of the local context for social entrepreneurship (Providence, Rhode Island), and of the development of working relationships with clients to define the challenge and develop an appropriate solution set;
- Build skills in disciplined problem analysis, business plan preparation, product/solution development, market research, presentation and public speaking, and development of a management infrastructure within teams of diverse members (including performance evaluation tasks);
- Gain an understanding and practical application of team building for problem solving.

Course Structure:

This two semester capstone will use a combination of lecture, group discussion, team projects, and guest lectures. Students will need to meet outside of regular class hours for mentor visits, team meetings, etc. Guest lecturers will be drawn from Brown faculty and staff across the university with expertise in various aspects of entrepreneurship, as well as outside experts in law, local government, community advocacy groups, start-up experience, investment, corporate philanthropy and human service agencies.

The course will meet Tuesday and Thursdays, and most weeks will include at least one lecture, one or more opportunities for class discussion, and one team working session. Students are expected to attend every class, and there will be team meetings and mentor-meetings that occur outside of regular course meetings. A key feature of this class will be learning through interaction. Discussion and debate will help to refine our understandings of social entrepreneurship and collaborating with community groups. Please complete all readings prior to the start of class. We will rely heavily on a discussion-format. All capstone participants will be expected to participate in discussion. Class attendance will be taken.

We will periodically join the Engineering Entrepreneurship Capstone for key discussions and guest lectures on topics that span both for-profit and nonprofit concerns. **In the outline of course topics provided below, those weeks with possible joint capstone meetings are indicated with an asterisk (*).**

Course Requirements:

Your grade each semester will be based on four criteria:

- 1) your participation in discussion and faithful attendance each week (20%),
- 2) your individual performance on two short written assignments (20% total),
- 3) your team's performance on two short written assignments (20% total),
- 4) your team's performance on:
 - Semester 1: a complete first draft of your proposed strategic/business plan, accompanied by an oral presentation to your mentor of your proposal (40%).
 - Semester 2: a final draft of your proposed strategic plan, accompanied by a "prototype/demonstration" of your proposed project for your mentor (40%).

Course Materials:

Two texts are recommended for purchase:

- 1) The NonProfit Sector: A Research Handbook
by Walter Powell and Richard Steinberg
2006, Yale University Press

- 2) Strategic Tools for Social Entrepreneurs
by J. Gregory Dees, Jed Emerson and Peter Economy
2002, Wiley.

Additional readings will be available on line through OCRA, drawn from the following illustrative list of journals:

The Administrative Science Quarterly
The Academy of Management Review
The Academy of Management Journal
Journal of Social Accounting
Strategic Finance
Strategic Management Journal
Society
Social Forces
Stanford Social Innovation Review

Social Entrepreneurship Capstone: Semester I **Outline of Course Topics**

Week 1: September 10: Course Introduction:

Course Applications; substantive calendar and team project calendar; review of course goals and requirements; description of potential group project(s); introductions of course members; introduction to “the entrepreneurial experience,” and to the experience/history of course members.

Readings: Dees et al: Part 1, Chapter 1, Chapter 11:
Developing a Strategic Service Vision
Managing Organizational Change

Powell & Steinberg: Part 1: Chapters 1, 2, 3
History and Scope of the Nonprofit Sector

Week 2: September 15 & 17: Value Creation in the Community Services Sector:

Recognizing “niche” possibilities; Problem solving as value creation; The fuzzy boundary between for-profit and non-profit ventures; major areas of non-profit activity

Readings: Dees et al: Chapter 2 and 8:
Developing an Entrepreneurial Competitive Strategy
Performance Information that Really Performs

Powell & Steinberg: Part IV: Chapters 16 & 17; skim Chapters 18-21
Key activities/actors in the nonprofit sector

Week 3: September 22 and 24: Teams and Groups in Entrepreneurship and Corporate Life: * (joint with ENG 1930)

- a. Divisions of Labor
- b. Leadership roles
- c. Process vs. Task roles
- d. Organize students teams and define member roles

Readings:

Dees et al: Chapter 3: Leading, retaining, rewarding people

Other Readings on OCRA:

- 1) Cronin & Weingart: “Representational Gaps, Information Processing and Conflict in Functionally Diverse Teams.” 2007. Academy of Mgmt Journal; Vol. 32 (3) 761-73.
- 2) Fennell & Sandefur. “Structural Clarity of Interdisciplinary Teams.” 1983. Journal of Applied Behavioral Science. Vol. 19 (2) 193-202.
- 3) Walker et al: “Gender, Interaction, and Leadership.” 1996. Social Psych Quarterly. Vol. 59 (3) 255-272.
- 4) Polonsky & Waller: “Group Dynamics and the Role of Conflict.” Chapter 4 in Designing and Managing a Research Project. 2005. Sage: p. 33-52.

ACTIVITY: 1ST TEAM ASSIGNMENT: DEVELOP A TEAM CONTRACT AND STRUCTURE: DUE SEPTEMBER 24

Week 4: September 29 and October 1: Knowing the Community: Marketing Basics and Understanding the Community

*September 29: Joint Session with ENG 1930

- a. Market research and demographics;
- b. Market behavior of nonprofits

- c. Knowing the organizational contexts and constraints of government agencies, social institutions, corporations, NGOs, and advocacy groups

Readings:

Powell & Steinberg: Chapters 6 and 7 (nonprofits and nonprofit work)
Chapters 22, 25, 26, 27 (membership, mission & governance)

Additional Readings on OCRA: To be assigned

ACTIVITY: 1ST INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT: TO BE ASSIGNED ON 9/29 AND DUE 10/1

Week 5: October 6 & 8: Community Work and the Dynamics of Collaboration

- a. Knowing who the actors are in the community services sector: politics and partnership;
- b. Coalition Building/Collaboration
- c. The Board as Boundary Spanner...

Readings:

Dees et al: Chapters 3, 5, 7

Powell & Steinberg: Chapter 8; Review Section IV

OCTOBER 8: SPECIAL GUESTS: Alan Harlam, Swearer Center; and Nzinga Misgana, New Roots Providence: Introduction to the Project .

Week 6: October 13 and 15: Continue Readings from Week 5

October 15: Data Sources: Field trip to the Library

Accessing Census, government, and other secondary data

Week 7: October 20 and 22: The legal environment of nonprofits:

***October 20: Joint Session with ENG 1930:** The basics of legal issues and entrepreneurship:

- a. Licensing and certifications
- b. Intellectual property
- c. Liability issues
- d. 501c3 organizations

***October 22: SPECIAL GUEST: Professor Mark Suchman**

Readings: Powell & Steinberg: Chapters 11, 12, 13

Additional Readings on OCRA:

1. Edelman and Suchman: "The Legal Environments of Organizations." 1997. Annual Review of Sociology. 23: 479-515.
2. Suchman: "Organizations and the Law," 2001. IESBS.

**FROM THIS POINT ON: TOPICS OR DATES MAY BE CHANGED;
READINGS TO BE ASSIGNED**

Week 8: October 27 and 28: Strategic Plans:

- A. How to Develop a Strategic Plan
- B. Project Planning and Management

Week 9: November 3 and 5: Personnel Evaluations:

*Both Days Joint With ENG 1930

- a. Start-up vs. major corporations
- b. job descriptions and the content of evaluations
- c. process vs. outcome measures
- d. team process and task-related measures

**ACTIVITY: TEAM ASSIGNMENT #2: PERSONNEL EVALUATIONS OF
YOUR TEAM MEMBERS. TO BE ASSIGNED NOVEMBER 3; DUE
NOVEMBER 10.**

Week 10: November 10 and 12: Social Accounting and Accountability

- a. Performance metrics
- b. Program evaluation research
- c. Sustainability and Scalability: will this survive? Will it work in other settings?

**ACTIVITY: INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT #2: TO BE ASSIGNED 11/10; DUE
NOVEMBER 19.**

Week 11: November 17 and 19: Accounting and Financial Statements:
November 17 *Joint with ENG 1930

- a. cash flow
- b. time value of money

Week 12: November 24 (Thanksgiving week):
Discussion of Ethics, Ethical Cultures, and Corporate Responsibility

Week 13: December 3 and 5: Review and Catch up

Week 14: Reading Period: Team Project Work; **Presentation to Mentor**

FINAL EXAM WEEK:

DECEMBER 15: Complete first draft of initial strategic planning document;