

## Syllabus – Elective Course

Course title:

**Launching your Impact Venture**

Credits:

6 ECTS credits

Teaching language:

English

Target students:

Undergraduate students in Business, Economics, Finance, Social Science, Science, Engineering, Sustainability, and any student interested in Entrepreneurship

Teachers in charge of the course:

Benoît Guyot, MSc in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability (Blekinge Institute of Technology)

## COURSE PRESENTATION

Prerequisite:

Students undertaking this course should normally have successfully completed at least one semester at university, or have equivalent experience. They must have some ability to work as a group and be able to communicate easily in English at a standard university level. In other respects, the course is intended to serve a mix of profiles and learning backgrounds for a more diverse international learning experience.

Content:

Entrepreneurship has been one of the main forces powering industrial development and socio-economic progress for more than 200 years. Today, in times of social and environmental pressures, it can also become a lever to accelerate the transition towards a more sustainable society.

We draw inspiration from visionary entrepreneurs like Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank and laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize. Professor Yunus has pioneered the concept of 'social business' to address pressing social issues. He transformed the bank to serve millions of people who previously could not access financial services.

While big companies have the potential to be systemic change agents due to their global presence and economic impact, they are often limited by short-termism and technological inertia, falling short at addressing the significant challenges of our time. 'Social business' represents an opportunity to leverage entrepreneurship in addressing sustainability

challenges more rapidly and bringing disruptive innovation to scale, thus creating a positive impact on the system.

These 'impact ventures' have embraced the regenerative value of doing 'better' (i.e. regenerative) rather than doing 'less bad', aligning their company's purpose with sustainable development. We need more entrepreneurs with this changemaker mindset, who have the ambition to create a positive impact on the system. So, are you one of the next 'social impact leaders' ?

This course will guide changemakers through the essential steps of structuring a business project, from identifying critical needs and problems to developing innovative ideas that offer impactful solutions. Throughout this learning journey, we will practice methodologies such as a 4-step planning process for sustainable development, Design Thinking (user-centered design), and Lean Startup. But we won't stop at theory; we'll go to the field, engaging with communities, successful social entrepreneurs, and users to gather insights, pitch ideas, prototype solutions, and test products and services.

Get ready to embark on a transformative journey and discover the path of becoming a social entrepreneur in this hands-on, action-packed class!

**1) Session #1 | Vision 2050**

Introduction to the course and its objectives.

Discussion on the challenges and opportunities of transitioning towards a low-carbon society (game).

**2) Session #2 | Current Reality + Methodological Introduction**

Presentation of a strategic planning process for sustainable development.

Start of case studies to understand and analyze current realities in various sectors such as Food, Mobility, Housing, etc.

**3) Session #3 | Study Visit**

Visit to local communities to understand their challenges and existing solutions.

**4) Session #4 | Systems Mapping (1/2)**

Introduction to systems mapping through a case study.

Pro Action Café activity to map system dynamics.

**5) Session #5 | Study Visit + Focus on Real Estate and Housing Challenges**

Study visit to focus on challenges related to Real Estate and Housing.

Presentation of current innovation trends in this domain.

**6) Session #6 | Systems Mapping (2/2)**

Continuation of systems mapping with a focus on PESTLE analysis.

**7) Session #7 | Study Visit + Focus on Mobility Challenges**

Study visit to understand Mobility challenges.

Presentation of innovation trends in Mobility.

**8) Session #8 | Intermediary Presentations**

Presentations of Causal Loop Diagrams developed by students.

**9) Session #9 | Study Visit + Focus on Food Challenges**

Study visit to explore challenges in the Food sector.

Presentation of innovation trends in Food.

**10) Session #10 | Ideation Phase**

Introduction to brainstorming for creative solutions.

Presentation of the Lean Startup methodology

**11) Session #11 | Business Model Innovation**

Pitch training session and feedback on innovative business models.

**12) Session #12 | Measuring Social Impact**

Presentation of various social impact measuring methodologies and tools.

**13) Session #13 | Case Study**

Presentations Final presentations of case studies developed throughout the course.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, the students should be able to:

- Understand the role of entrepreneurship in addressing pressing social and environmental issues.
- Develop a changemaker mindset to create a positive impact on the system through entrepreneurship, by
  - learning various methodologies such as strategic planning for sustainable development, Design Thinking, and Lean Startup,
  - developing critical thinking skills by analyzing current realities, mapping system dynamics, and identifying innovation trends,
  - acquiring practical skills for turning a business idea into a project: identifying needs, creating a business model, and measuring social impact, and
  - gaining practical experience through field visits, engagement with communities, and interaction with successful social entrepreneurs.

## WORKLOAD

*French contact hours = 60 minutes (in some countries/institutions, 1 contact hour = 45-50 minutes)*

Form:	Number of hours	Comments
In-class highly participative sessions (content presentation + workshops)	27 hours	
Study visits, and other activities “in the field”	12 hours	4 sessions of 3 hours - including visits to local companies and not-for-profit involved in urban-planning for sustainable development
Approximate personal work / homework	10 hours	
Student total workload	49 hours	

## ASSESSMENT

Form	Number	Duration	Comments
Continuous assessment (30%)	1	1 x 10 minutes	One intermediary presentation
Final exam (60%)	1	1 x 15 minutes	One final presentation (group case study)
Others (student participation...) (10%)			Attendance, participation, and contribution to group discussion

## EDUCATIONAL METHODS

Students are encouraged to become familiar with sustainability through their own reading and research. They will fully prepare in advance for the classes, thereby maximising classroom time. Active student involvement of the learning of the themes studied is expected. Common features of the classes will include:

- Reading of prescribed essays and articles
- Discussions/debates
- Short presentations
- Review of case studies
- Research on internet to further knowledge of the topics

## RESOURCES

All course materials will be supplied in class. References may be made to the following resources:

### *Essays*

Benyus, Janine 1998. *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired By Nature*.

Bertaud, Alain 2018 *Order without Design: How Markets Shape Cities*, The MIT Press

Dassen, Ton (Editor) and Hajer M. (Contributor) 2015 *Smart about Cities: Visualising the Challenge for 21st Century Urbanism* Paperback, nai010 publishers

Elkin, Lauren 2016 *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice, and London*, Chatto & Windus

Florida, Richard 2017 *The New Urban Crisis: How our Cities are Increasing Inequality, Deepening Segregation, and Failing the Middle Class — and What We Can Do about It*, Basic Books

Hamilton, Marilyn 2008 *Integral City: Evolutionary Intelligences for the Human Hive*, New Society Publishers

Harari, Yuval Noah 2014 *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, Harper

Hawkins, Paul 2018 *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*, Penguin Books

McFarlane, Colin and Graham S. (Editors) 2014 *Infrastructural Lives: Urban Infrastructure in Context*, Routledge

McLaren, Duncan and Agyeman J. 2015 *Sharing Cities: A Case for Truly Smart and Sustainable Cities*, MIT Press

Montgomery, Charles 2013 *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design*, Penguin Books

Rifkin, Jeremy 2012. *The Third Industrial Revolution: How the Internet, Green Electricity, and 3-D Printing are Ushering in a Sustainable Era of Distributed Capitalism*

Rifkin, Jeremy 2014. *The Zero Marginal Cost Society: The Internet of Things, the Collaborative Commons, and the Eclipse of Capitalism*. Palgrave Macmillan Trade.

Rose, Jonathan 2016 *The well tempered city: What Modern Science, Ancient Civilizations, and Human Nature Teach Us About the Future of Urban Life*, Harper Wave

Sadik, Janette 2018 *Streetfight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution*, Viking

Saunders, Doug 2011 *Arrival City: The Final Migration and Our Next World*, Windmill

### ***Books***

Schumacher, E. 1973. *Small Is Beautiful*. London: Blond & Briggs Ltd.

Therborn, Goran 2017 *Cities of Power: The Urban, The National, The Popular, The Global*, Verso

Utopies 2018 *Fabcity : Toward productive cities*

### ***Other articles***

Kirsch, Vanessa, Bildner J. and Walker J. 2016 *Why Social Ventures Need Systems Thinking* Harvard Business Review

Senge, PM and Carstedt, G. 2001. *Innovating our way to the next industrial revolution*. MIT Sloan Management Review 42(2): 24-38.

Sustainability Illustrated 2014. *Cats in Borneo* (article and video) <https://goo.gl/sN9SwA>

Young, Eric 2007 *The Magic Canoe. Opening Remarks: City Summit Alliance*

### ***Guidebooks***

Bateson, Nora 2018 *The Warm Data booklet*

The Natural Step Canada 2009 *Sustainability Primer*

The Natural Step Canada 2009 *Integrated Community Sustainability Planning Guide*

### ***Videos***

Andreas Dalsgaard and Simon Lereng *Human scale city* (trailer) <http://thehumanscale.dk/>

Indy Johar 2018 Social innovation - From Grassroot to System Change" - keynote at SISummit [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flj\\_CrNUoIY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flj_CrNUoIY)

Janette Sadik-Khan *New York's streets? Not so mean any more* (NYC Tactical urbanism) [https://www.ted.com/talks/janette\\_sadik\\_khan\\_new\\_york\\_s\\_streets\\_not\\_so\\_mean\\_any\\_more](https://www.ted.com/talks/janette_sadik_khan_new_york_s_streets_not_so_mean_any_more)

Jason Roberts *How to build a better block* (Dallas, Texas) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntwqVDzdqAU>

James Howard Kunstler *The ghastly tragedy of the suburbs* [https://www.ted.com/talks/james\\_howard\\_kunstler\\_the\\_ghastly\\_tragedy\\_of\\_the\\_suburbs](https://www.ted.com/talks/james_howard_kunstler_the_ghastly_tragedy_of_the_suburbs)

*This syllabus is based on information available at the time of publication (March 2024). Changes may occur.*

*For updated information about course content, please contact us: [lilleprograms@univ-catholille.fr](mailto:lilleprograms@univ-catholille.fr)*