School for New Learning  
Undergraduate

Starting a Successful Business (FA 309)  
Spring Session, 2016

1. Instructor: Ed Paulson, PhD, MBA  
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   630-960-3299 (cell)  
   Appointments by arrangement before class or phone

2. Course Dates:  
   Tuesday evening - 5:45 PM start time  

3. Course Location: Loop Campus

4. Course Description  
   Starting a new business is now more possible than ever. All businesses start as an idea  
   but not all ideas are good ones. To decide that an idea is worth a major time, career and  
   financial investment, it is best to critically evaluate its likelihood of success in light of the  
   marketplace, the competition, the economic environment, its financial costs and  
   opportunities, and the needs of the entrepreneur. In this course, students learn evaluation  
   techniques for determining the business viability of a new idea and methods of  
   performing an overall critical financial analysis with special focus on spotting business  
   environment marketing and demographic trends. Students learn the details associated  
   with starting a functional new business with the ultimate deliverable being a written 10-  
   15-page business plan for a new product or service idea that would be worthy of review  
   by potential investors. Students will work together on a group project that entails the  
   writing of a business plan and then a Shark Tank type of group presentation to classmates  
   for evaluation and grade. This is a challenging and potentially life-changing course.  
   Competencies: H1X, H2C, S2D, FX

5. Learning Outcomes, Competences, and/or Objectives  
   H1X: Can learn collaboratively and examine the skills, knowledge and values that  
   contribute to such learning. [From the DePaul Program Guide]

   H2C: Can identify an organizational problem and design a plan for change based on an  
   understanding of change theories or models. [From the DePaul Program Guide]

   S2D: Can describe, categorize and analyze the interactions and exchanges between living  
   organisms and their physical environment. [From the DePaul Program Guide]

   FX: Can integrate diverse areas of a new business idea and then write and present a  
   feasibility study that analyzes whether this idea should be pursued or ignored. [The  
   overall goal of the course.]
6. Learning Strategies & Resources
The classroom learning environment is highly interactive and involves conceptual content, smaller group discussion, larger group discussion, and homework all leading to a final paper. The intent is to enable students to work as an efficient group to perform a feasibility analysis of whether an idea deserves more attention or if it is simply without enough business merit. Much group discussion as well as analysis of real world situations will occur in class. Instructor intends to use D2L as part of the course. Students should ensure that their respective D2L account and information is up to date before the start of class. All work should be submitted electronically in accordance with the assignment instructions. Much use of the DePaul Library and other available information sources will be encouraged and required to complete this course.

6A: Required Book

7. Learning Deliverables
The learning deliverables for this class are four written homework assignments that will later be incorporated into the written business plan, a written business plan and a SharkTank-like presentation about the business plan to the class for evaluation and feedback.

8. Assessment of Student Learning
Student assignments will be evaluated through a combination of how effectively the classroom concepts were applied, the level of critical thinking applied, the comprehensive nature of the analysis, basic writing effectiveness and the use of external sources to make a point (beyond the student’s opinion). The assignments are designed to build on each other so that they can be substantially combined when forming the final business plan project. Assignments are completed in a small group environment and all individual group members get the grade of the entire group except in special cases brought to the instructor’s attention early enough for corrective steps to be applied.

Group Work: Creating a Feasibility Study and Presentation
Each group is to pick one product or service idea, not covered in class, which is of interest to them. A list of product or service ideas will be generated in the first class session. The only restriction is that no two groups may cover the same idea and a maximum of eight separate group plans will be created.

IMPORTANT: Not everyone need have a business idea in mind coming into the class and not everyone will be able to have their business idea be the focus of the group exercise. Having taught this course many times, it turns out that as a group we always find the ideas that people can rally behind that often also fulfill a passionate goal for a specific student. It has always seemed to work out.
The groups are required to hand in a 10-15 page written business plan that critically analyzes the idea in light of information presented in class and externally investigated information. Approaches to writing the plan will be covered in class and the homework assignments are designed to be incorporated into the final plan. The business plan will be evaluated by the instructor for grade based on the depth of investigation into this idea, the level at which the course concepts are incorporated into the plan, basic writing ability, and the overall quality of the plan itself.

Each group will also make a MAXIMUM 15 minute formal Shark Tank-type presentation to the class about their idea. The class as a whole evaluates the presentation and offers a grade assessment.

The instructor takes the group aspect of this class seriously. All group members are expected to work as an active team member, furthering the success of the overall group. This is particularly true of those registered for the H1X competence. This means participating in group activities, meeting group deadlines and generally being an active/contributing member of the group. Should group complaints about specific members start to arise, a special internal group member evaluation form will be used which could cost the non-contributing members as much as 15% of their grade and jeopardize successful completion of the H1X competence.

**Instructor Personal Overall Student Evaluation.**

The instructor evaluation is a subjective one that reflects the instructor’s assessment of the level to which the student contributed to the overall class learning experience, the level of in-class participation and the degree to which the student assimilated the presented concepts beyond the basic material presented. Full participation with the group project is expected and students who do not contribute to the group project may see their grade affected by being awarded a lower percentage of total instructor points. Class attendance and participation as well as demonstrated levels of integration of concepts and the information presented are key criteria for receiving the highest level of instructor evaluation.

9. **Grading Criteria & Scale**

Evidence of learning and grading will constitute homework assignments (40%), a written business plan (30%), a presentation about the business plan (15% as outlined below) and instructor evaluation (15% also outlined below) for a total of 100%. 90+% = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, <60 = F. Plus/minus grades will be given as follows: 0,1,2 <letter grade minus>, 3,4,5,6 <letter grade> 7, 8, 9 <letter grade plus>. Late work will automatically lose 10% and work submitted more than 7 days late will forfeit all points. For additional information pertaining to the grade designations see [undergraduate grades](#).

PASS/FAIL: Students may take this course Pass/Fail if they choose. They must submit their request to the instructor in writing. For more on Pass/Fail option see [Pass/Fail Grading Options](#).
INCOMPLETE GRADES: I rarely give incomplete (IN) grades and students should not expect to get an incomplete grade except in highly unusual circumstances such as medical or other types of emergencies. Incompletes must be requested by the student and approved by me by email before students should assume an incomplete is applicable. Should you receive an incomplete grade, you will be expected to meet with me to determine what must be done to correct the incomplete and that work must be fully completed by the end of the quarter following the incomplete to receive a passing grade. It is my experience that incomplete grades are often not completed so students should resolve themselves to fully completing the course in the allotted time. Not completing an incomplete as agreed will result in an “F” grade. This is non-negotiable.

10. Course Schedule (This information subject to change)

   Homework: Before First Session: Read Paulson Chapters 1 and 2

   **Session 1: Introduction and Course Overview**
   What constitutes a "good” business idea?
   Sources of Ideas
   Relating your business to you
   Homework: For Next Session Read Paulson Chapters 3, 4 & 7

   **Session 2: Preparing a Business Plan**
   Building effective groups
   Business Planning Overview
   Idea brainstorming session
   Measuring and achieving success
   Homework for next sessions: Read Paulson Chapters 8, 9, 10 & 11

   Homework 1: (Due before the next session): Business opportunity description – 10%

   **Session 3: Marketing & Sales Overview**
   Differentiating Sales and Marketing
   Understanding value and ideal customers
   Finding and using forecasting information – data and economic trends
   Using data trends to understand the business environment

   **Session 4: Marketing & Sales Overview Continued**
   Target marketing
   Dealing with competition
   Understanding that the human environment makes up customers, suppliers and competition
   Computer Lab Session – Using the DePaul Library (Guest librarian presentation)
   Homework for next sessions: Read Paulson chapters 13, 14, & 17
   Homework 2: (Due before the next session) – Ideal Customer & High Level Market Opportunity Analysis - 10%
Session 5: Overview of accounting
Financial statements overview
Accounting as applied to start-up cash flow analysis

Session 6: Overview of accounting continued
Break even analysis
Cumulative cash flow analysis
Homework: Read Paulson chapter 12.
Homework 3: (Due before the next session) – Cash Flow Analysis Framework
Spreadsheet - 10%

Session 7: Operations overview
Defining operations
Service and product company operational overview
Relating operations to sales
Homework: Read Paulson Chapters 15 and 18.
Homework 4: (Due before the next session) – Detailed Operations Description and Estimated Cost - 10%

Session 8: Business legal structures
Various legal business structures
Tax implications of the business types
Special corporation considerations
Side Topic: Making effective presentations
Homework for next session: Read Paulson chapters 16, 19, and 20.

Session 9: Various Topics (as time allows)
International considerations
Working at home or setting up an office
Starting and Internet business
Work on projects and presentation
Homework: Finish written business plan and finalize presentations

Session 10: Final Session – Presentations – Attendance Mandatory
Hand in written business plan (30%)
Business Plan Presentations (15 minutes MAX per presentation – 15%)
The next step - What happens after the business plan is done? (Balance of time)

Session 11: No Class Session – Complete All Final Work
All work must be completed by the end of this week to be accepted for grade consideration.

11. Course Policies
**Class Attendance**
Attendance of all classes is highly recommended and will be considered by the instructor when awarding his percentage of the grade. Students cannot miss more than two (2) full class sessions throughout the entire quarter – arriving later than 30 minutes or leaving more than 30 minutes early constitutes half of a missed class. Students who miss more than (2) full class sessions will automatically be ineligible for a passing grade except in rare cases which must be brought, in writing, immediately to the instructor’s attention. Students wishing to withdraw from the class should do so by the last drop date.

**Vincentian Values**
All feedback and assessments will occur in the context of the four values of this Vincentian institution: clarity, flexibility, empathy and integrity.

**Academic Integrity**
DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students’ own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university’s academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit [http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html](http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html) for further details. Students should expect to have their worked submitted to the TurnItIn plagiarism checker so it is really the best approach to simply do your own work.

**Protection of Human Research Participants**
Although unlikely, this course may involve research activities intended solely for classroom learning outcomes. Collecting data from human beings for such activities do not require institutional review if there is no intent to generalize, publish, or otherwise disseminate the findings. However, students must still abide by federally-mandated guidelines for the protection of human beings who may be the sources of such data. These include, but are not limited to, keeping persons’ identifiable characteristics confidential and taking care to minimize or entirely remove the possibility of mental, social, financial, or physical harm. If findings from your research activities may be disseminated beyond classroom discussion, your activities carry risk of harm to the participants, or the identities of the participants are ascertainable, students must obtain approval from the SNL Local Review Board and DePaul Institutional Review Board. Please consult with the course instructor and visit the website of the Office of Research Protections at DePaul University ([http://research.depaul.edu](http://research.depaul.edu)) for additional information and guidance.
For Students Who Need Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter, preferably within the first week of class, and make sure you have contacted: PLuS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-4239 in the Schmidt Academic Center, room 220 or; The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-7290, DePaul University Student Center, room 307.

Chronic Illness Initiative

The Chronic Illness Initiative (CII) provides access to higher education for students disabled by chronic illnesses that unpredictably increase and decrease in severity such as chronic fatigue syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus or illnesses requiring frequent hospitalizations. At SNL, staff and faculty are compassionate and committed to helping CII students achieve their educational goals. Contact CII at CII@depaul.edu.

Writing Help

For help with organizing your ideas, grammar, citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, sample SNL assignments and much more, see the Writing Guide for SNL Students at http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/index.html. For on-campus and online tutoring, see the DePaul University Writing Centers at http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/.

This course includes and adheres to the college and university policies described in the links below:

- Academic Integrity Policy (UGRAD)
- Academic Integrity Policy (GRAD)
- Incomplete Policy
- Course Withdrawal Timelines and Grade/Fee Consequences
- Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability
- Protection of Human Research Participants
- APA citation format (GRAD)

12. Course Resources

- University Center for Writing-based Learning
- SNL Writing Guide
- Dean of Students Office

13. Instructor Brief Bio

Ed Paulson, PhD, MBA has been in one form or other of entrepreneurial endeavor his entire working life. He spent ten years in Silicon Valley working with several startup companies and then eight years in Austin, Texas founding and running his own software training company which he sold. He currently consults with small businesses around the
country. He is the author of over sixteen published business and technology books, has been an SNL faculty member since 2001 and is a professional speaker. He has a PhD in technology management, is an engineer and he also holds an MBA. Further biographical information is available from his Web site, www.edpaulson.com. He can be reached by standard mail at: Ed Paulson, PO Box 3026, Lisle, IL 60532. E-mail: author@edpaulson.com. Phone: 630-960-3299 (cell)