

# THE BUSINESS PLAN LABORATORY

(ENT 4934 sec. 09DC /ENT 6930 sec. 09C3)

Syllabus: Fall 2017 Entrepreneurship Program University of Florida

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Class Meets: Thursday 6:15-8:10 pm  
Meeting room: Bryan 130  
Hours: By appointment

## INTRODUCTION

The development of a great business plan for starting a new business or non-profit organization is the focus of this course. The Business Plan Lab is a service course especially intended for non-business students, minors in entrepreneurship, and students writing business plans for new ventures, including those who plan to enter the **UF Big Idea Business Plan Competition** for the Spring of 2018. You do not need to be entered in the Competition to take this course, but it is strongly encouraged that you use this course as preparation for the competition. Students enrolled in any other business plan-related course should not take this course for credit without first talking with the instructor. The Business Plan Lab concentrates on the mechanics of constructing a creative, realistic and effective business plan for a new concept that the student team has generated and developed. Thus, it is intended as a "hands-on" experience that explores process that a person must go through to put together a proper business plan for a start-up venture. No business background is necessary. If you do not have an idea for a venture, you can team with someone in the class who does.

## HOW THE COURSE WILL BE CONDUCTED

The Business Plan Lab is designed as discussion-oriented tutorial on the key components of a business plan. Thus, each module focuses on a particular section of the plan, explores the key questions that should be addressed in that section, presents approaches to conducting the relevant analysis so that students can answer those questions, and discuss how to present the analysis and conclusions in the plan. Key information sources students might want to consider in each area are also highlighted. The Lab is intended as a "self-help" opportunity for students. Moreover, this laboratory will be the principal method for you to learn how to construct the business plan due at the end of this semester. In this vein, we will highlight specific ventures on which students are working, and illustrate tools and techniques that can be applied in writing the plan for these ventures. Student plans will be used as an example during the Business Plan Lab sessions and supplementary examples are provided in the readings packet.

## READINGS AND RESOURCES

- [Business Plans that Work: A Guide for Small Business](#) . Zacharakis, Spinelli and Timmons, McGraw-Hill Education; 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (April 14, 2011) (this text is required).
- "The Nuts and Bolts of Great Business Plans", prepared by the UF Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- Occasional readings to be handed out during the semester

- Two fabulous resources have been put together by the Entrepreneurship Program and the UF Library to help you in doing the research for your plan can be found at

<http://businesslibrary.uflib.ufl.edu/cei>  
<http://warrington.ufl.edu/centers/cei/businessPlan/>

## EXPECTATIONS OF THE STUDENT

You are expected to be totally immersed in your business plan. You are required to come to the laboratory thoroughly prepared, with a set of issues in mind in terms of which questions need to be addressed, what analyses need to be conducted, how to conduct these analyses, and how to draw conclusions from these analyses for each major section of the business plan. Students will be called on with questions pertaining to their plans and how a given point in the discussion might relate to their plans. In addition, students have to bring to the class parts of -the plan that they have prepared to date. Students are also encouraged to prepare the section of their business plan on the topic specified for a given week. If you have questions about other sections of the plan (i.e. other than the section being focused upon in a given week), please contact the instructor. Sample business plans can be viewed in the UF Center for Entrepreneurship.

You are required to submit a summary overview of the business model for a venture that you might start on or before Monday, February 7, 2017. While they can be (and often are) done alone, business plan teams typically consist of three to five members, preferably with mixed backgrounds or majors.

## GRADING

There are no exams in this course. Our focus is business plans and how they are prepared, and so the evaluation center on writing and critiquing plans. Below are the course requirements:

Participation, including class attendance	10%*
Business Idea Presentation	5%
Analysis of an existing business plan	15%
Final Business Plan Presentation	10%
Completion of a business plan	60%

Grades will be awarded using the following table:

Points earned (on a scale of 100)	Letter grade
90 - 100	A
85 - 89.9	A-
80 - 84.9	B+
75 - 79.9	B
70 - 74.9	B-
65 - 69.9	C+
60 - 64.9	C
0 - 59.9	C-, D+, D, D- or E as seen fit by instructor

**Note, if you satisfactorily complete a full business plan of at least 35 pages with appendices you will automatically get an A for this 60% component. NOTE:** If you are putting your name on a plan with other people. You must provide evidence that you personally wrote at least four sections of the plan. No more than three names can be on one plan for the course.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

For any academic class activity, students must follow the University of Florida Student Honor Code. Any violation of the honor code will automatically result in a grade of E (Fail) for this course and further sanctions that may include a suspension or expulsion from the University through the Dean of Students Office. All incidents will be reported to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution at the University of Florida. For the honor code guidelines, see the following link:  
<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

## BENEFITS OF THE BUSINESS PLAN LABORATORY

Completing a business plan while in school is a big challenge - not only do you have to complete a major project while doing other courses, you also may be working with team members possessing a diverse set of skills and preferences. The development process for the business plan is an invaluable experience, especially since it is relatively "risk-free" and under supervision as part of a course. At the same time, the exercise closely mimics the "real" experience a potential entrepreneur has to live through and a number of student teams in years past have actually started ventures based on the plans developed in entrepreneurship courses.

The study of entrepreneurship requires an interactive environment and the business plan project is a simulated entrepreneurial experience. Communication and persuasion are critical to any entrepreneurial endeavor and the business plan project helps to develop essential analytical, written and oral skills. In the final analysis, we can promise you that the business plan document will be one of the most impressive documents in your professional portfolio. As planning is relevant for every business, your business plan is guaranteed to be a valuable topic for discussion when interviewing with prospective employers — no matter what business they are in.

There is one extra credit opportunity for the Business Plan Lab. Students can earn up to 5 points on their course grade by having their concept and executive summary critiqued independently by a banker, private or angel investor or venture capitalist, with written feedback from this evaluator. This feedback cannot come from a judge in our business plan competition.

The UF Entrepreneurship Program supports the UF Big Idea Business Plan Competition, and the Carrot Capital Competition, a national event. We also will send UF teams to the Enterprise Creation Competition, the Nebraska National Business Plan Competition, and the Venture Challenge. Teams in the Business Plan Laboratory will have a leg up for these competitions, and the instructor will work with teams who would like to enter one or more competitions.

Especially important for our purposes is the **UF Big Idea Business Plan Competition**. The course is scheduled in the Spring semester to coincide with the campus-wide competition. This competition offers students over \$45,000 in prize money. Any team formally entered in the competition is eligible to sit in on the Business Plan Lab, with or without registering for the credit hours. The more involved in the Lab that teams become, the more one is likely to produce a higher quality plan that will be more competitive.

For lots of details on the competition, deadlines, judging, past winners, etc., all students are encouraged to go to the website at <http://warrington.ufl.edu/centers/cei/bigidea/>

## BUSINESS PLAN LAB SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Below is a schedule of topics for the meetings of the laboratory. The sessions correspond to sections of the business plan as outlined in the **Nuts and Bolts** document. Be prepared on the indicated evening with questions about each particular section of the plan as it relates to your own venture concept. We may move at a slower or faster pace depending on student needs.

### *Session 1: 8/21 (Getting Started)*

Introduction to the Lab; The What and Why of a Business Plan; Understanding the Logic of the Plan; Understanding Your Audience; Organizing Your Team and Your Time; Overcoming Flaws in Plans ; Ideation and Concept Generation; Business Concept Selection and Team formation; Writing Up the Business Concept and Ensuring All the Value-Creating Components Are Touched Upon; Begin discussion of The Industry

### *Session 2: 8/31 (Section I of Plan: The Industry)*

Library Resources; Assessing the Industry in Which You Will Operate: Definition, Size, Structure, Trends and More;

### *Session 3: 9/7 (Section II of Plan: Your Company and Its Offering)*

The Company Itself. Your Core Business Concept; Capturing the Products and Services to be Sold; Differentiation; Creating Barriers; Entry and Growth Strategy

**Business Idea Presentation – Each team presents 5-10 minutes on their idea**

### *Session 4: 9/14 (Section III of Plan: The Market)*

A Look at Your Market: Market Definition, and Putting Numbers on Market Size and Potential

### *Session 5: 9/21 (More on Section III of Plan: The Market)*

More on the Market: How Your Buyers Buy and How to Segment Them and Prioritize Target Audiences, How to Analyze Competitors and Establish Competitive Positioning

### *Session 6: 9/28 (Section IV of Plan: Economics or How You Make Money)*

The Economics of the Business: Determining the Cost Structure, Estimating Breakeven and Evaluating Operating Leverage

### *Session 7: 10/5 (Section V of Plan: Marketing or How You Make Sales Happen)*

The Creative (and Guerrilla) Marketing Plan; Promotional Mixes, Pricing and Distribution

**Analysis of an Existing Business Plan Due 11:59pm October 5, 2017**

### *Session 8: 10/12 (Section VI of Plan: Research & Development and IP)*

How to Write Up Design & Development; What to Cover on Technology and Information Systems; How to Deal with Intellectual Property

### *Session 9: 10/19 (Section VII of Plan: Operations and Your Operating Model)*

Operations or A Day in the Life, Production and Service Delivery, Logistics; Staffing

### *Session 10: 10/26 (Section XI of Plan: Your Financial Statements)*

Setting Up Pro Forma Financial Statements: Cash Flow, Income Statement, Balance Sheet

### *Session 11: 11/2 (Section XI of the Plan: More on Your Financial Statements)*

This will be a one-on-one help session for individual teams as they work through putting together their own financial statements

Session 12: 11/9 (Sections VIII, IX, and X of Plan: *Management Team, Risks, Timeline*)  
The Management Team, Boards and Advisors; Human Resource Management; What to Say  
about Risks and Contingencies; Putting Together the Master Timetable

Session 13: 11/16 ("*Section XII of the Plan: the Deal as well as the Executive Summary*")  
Figuring Out How Much Money You Need; The Deal or Offering; Writing the Executive  
Summary; Tying Up the Loose Ends and Putting it All Together;

**Session 14: 11/30 Business Plan Presentations**

**All Written Business Plans due by 11:59 pm December 1, 2017.**