

# MMC 3254 Media Entrepreneurship

Spring 2016 / Section 023D

Mondays, 3 pm to 3:50 pm, Flint Hall Room 115 / 1 credit

## **Tom Burton, Adjunct Lecturer**

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“Office hours” are a challenge, since I don’t have an office. However, you can schedule time with me after class on Mondays. I am also on campus on Wednesdays for another class I am teaching. Email and phone call connections can work too.

## **ABOUT THE COURSE**

This course is for future media professionals who aspire to control their careers. Rather than be cogs in a corporate machine, people in this class will make a difference by being indispensable because of their ideas, their ability to put those ideas into actions and by finding an audience.

You will learn techniques to develop projects and businesses that take advantage of the evolutionary environment in digital media. You will find a community to serve and find ways to deliver while also making at least enough money to keep the project going. You will be a lynchpin in the success of a media company, the entrepreneur who starts the next amazing company or the independent media professional who provides unique insights to help others grow their businesses.

Most all, you will do the scary work of evaluating a most precious asset — you. Extrovert or introvert, artist or business minded, writer or visual, you will start to identify strengths and weaknesses and how they will serve you. Then, you will bring those attributes to a team.

To do this, we will talk and share. My title is lecturer so I will ramble a bit, but you will be expected to contribute. You need to share your ideas and, as importantly, listen to your classmates. Before the end of the semester you will be forming project teams and who you work with may be the most important decision you make in this class.

This is a just one-credit class, and showing up is important, but not enough. You will do need to do something to surprise me, and yourself.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

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

- Answer the question of “Why you?”
- Learn how to create internal projects in a corporate environment as an “intrapreneuer.”
- Learn business concepts that will allow you to create a business, work for yourself or manage your career working within a media company.
- As part of a team, create a prototype and business plan for a viable digital media startup.

## **PREREQUISITE**

There are no prerequisite course requirements for this class. You will need these skills: clear writing, basic familiarity with a spreadsheet, and effective presentations using PowerPoint or equivalent. You will have additional advantage if you can communicate across multiple platforms. You will be working independently on early projects and collaboratively on the final project.

## **COURSE FORMAT**

The class is one credit and meets one period, one day a week. Most work will be done outside of class. You will have reading assignments in advance of class and will be expected to contribute in the conversation.

We will also schedule an additional meeting time at the end of semester for project teams to pitch their media company proposals. We will also schedule practice sessions for that presentation.

As you can see, although this is a one credit class, it carries a workload.

## **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

- “The Startup of You” by Reid Hoffman and Ben Casnocha. Crown Business, 2012. ISBN: 978-0307888907. Also available as an e-book.
- “The Lean Startup” by Eric Ries. Crown Business, 2011. ISBN: 978-0670921607. Also available as an e-book.
- “The Art of the Start 2.0” by Guy Kawasaki. Portfolio, 2015. trade ISBN 9781591847847. Also available as an e-book

## **RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS**

- “Linchpin: Are You Indispensable?” by Seth Godin. Little, Brown Book Group, 2010 ISBN 1591843162. Also available as an e-book
- “Hatching Twitter” by Nick Bilton. Portfolio trade, 2014. ISBN: 978-1591847083. Also available as an e-book.

I will be lecturing from the textbooks, but there is not a written test from that information. Other readings from internet sources will be assigned during the semester.

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

### **Why you? (10%)**

This is a paper of about two double-spaced pages that thoughtfully identifies the competitive advantage you now bring to the workplace or wish to develop. Be specific about the skills you bring and why they are distinctive. (Hint: “good writer” is not a competitive advantage.) Be specific about the skills you wish to develop to make yourself distinctive and how you plan to acquire those skills.

### **Legacy Media Intrapreneurship Paper (30%)**

This is a paper of about five double-spaced pages about a legacy media organization of your choice – preferably, one you would like to work for. Your paper will analyze the market challenges and opportunities facing the organization. It will propose realistic innovations and ways to infuse intrapreneurship into the organization to help it adapt to the evolving digital media environment.

### **Digital Startup Prototype and Business Plan (60%)**

This is a presentation built on the lean startup model. It incorporates several elements: (a) identification of an underserved niche market and an analysis of the competition, (b) market research involving potential customers, (c) an extensive wireframe or working prototype of the proposed product, (d) a three-year business plan that identifies revenue sources, estimates expenses and proposes a viable path to economic sustainability, and (e) justification for why your proposal is viable and why you’re the right person to do it.

You will present your project to a panel of professionals who will have questions for you and will assess the originality and viability of your project.

This is a team project. As in the workplace, you will rise or fall as a team, and everyone on the team will get the same grade. If someone does not pull his/her share of the load, call a team meeting to resolve it. If you are unable to resolve the conflict, I’m happy to meet with you to help you – but only if all members of the team are in the same room at the same time.

On the other hand, teamwork can be remarkably productive and rewarding. Good teams share a common goal while benefitting from diversity, as each person brings a distinctive perspective or

skill set that complements the others on the team. As the saying goes, none of us is as smart as all of us.

## Grading Scale

- A 100-90%
- B 89-80%
- C 79-70%
- D 69-60%

## Classroom Policies

Attendance is required and expected each week unless you have a documented absence, such as illness, jury duty, university event, etc. If you have an extenuating circumstance, please speak to me beforehand. More than one unexcused absence will result in a 2-point deduction from your overall grade for each absence.

You are permitted to use devices such as phones, tablets and laptops for notes. However, use of these devices must be related to the course and assignment at hand.

Students requesting special classroom needs must first register with the Dean of Students Office, which will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide the documentation to instructor.

Violation of the honor code includes plagiarizing material from other sources or fabricating material, as well as other forms of cheating. Violations will result in a failing grade, and you will be dismissed from the journalism program and reported to the Honor Court. See the Department of Journalism web site for specific outline of honor code violations.

## Schedule

The schedule can change during the semester if we need to pivot. Guest speakers will also be added.

Date	Topics	Speaker	Assignment
January 11	Opportunities in today's media environment.		
January 18	No class; MLK holiday		

January 25	Why you?: Your competitive advantage		
February 1	Developing an idea.		
February 8	Intrapreneurship		Why you? paper due.
February 15	Finding the audience		
February 22	Building contacts	Steve Johnson	
February 29	No class: Spring Break		
March 7	Facing the challenges of entrepreneurship		Intrapreneurship paper due.
March 14	Building a team		
March 21	Wireframe: Building the prototype.		
March 28	The competition and market research		
April 4	\$\$		
April 11	Presentation skills		Business plan drafts review
April 18	Practice presentations		
April 25	Final presentations		Final business plans due.

