

# ENTR 559 Entrepreneurial Planning and Consulting

Fall 2012 Wednesday 6:00 PM - 8:30

Taft Hall 120 Aug 29 – Dec 5

Instructor

Dr. Christopher M. Barlow  
barlowc@uic.edu

**Office Hours:** By appointment UH 2204  
Extremely available by e-mail. Please  
include ENTR559 in SUBJ.

Entrepreneurs succeed or fail in a complex web of systems and issues. This course covers specific tools for thinking about complex interactions and systems, discovering points of greatest leverage, and using the cross-functional breadth of MBA knowledge and business experience to develop new ways to be more successful. Students exercise these tools and skills by working in cross-functional, multi-national teams on the success of real companies. Students can team around enterprise ideas of their classmates or real-world clients from UIC's Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies.

Each team is expected to develop a detailed understanding of all the systems relevant to the enterprise. Consulting teams must select leverage points and develop new approaches, while enterprise teams must both complete and optimize plans for a real business start-up – far beyond a “business plan”. Each student will also demonstrate their understanding of the tools of complex strategic thinking by applying them to their own life and career and entrepreneurship in a paper due at the end of the term.

## Text materials

*Practical Strategy: Structured tools and techniques* (Paperback), by Geoff Coyle. Prentice Hall (January 22, 2004), ISBN-13: 978-0273682202

Downloaded articles from the UIC Library and from my consulting company

All the textbooks from all your MBA courses

## Approach: Seminar/Workshop

Most class sessions will blend the seminar approach, discussing the various readings in small groups and full class, with the workshop approach in which project teams will immediately apply the concepts to their projects. To make this work, you will read and post online your discussion of text materials every two weeks by Tuesday Noon, giving you time to look over and discuss online your classmates' insights before class. The in-class workshop time will enable you to organize your individual and group project work outside of the classroom. As we close class each night teams will report the action items team members have committed to.

## Grading: (Assignment details on the following page)

Grades will be awarded based on summing the points earned from work submitted by December 5

900 Pts = A 800 Pts = B 700 Pts = C 600 Pts = D

All materials are graded based on the knowledge demonstrated and the quality of analysis. Materials of good quality will receive about 80% of the points indicated. The A level is given for excellence, such as superior insight, relating and integrating concepts, personal reflection, use of graphics, use of the Internet, use of presentation resources, or other elements that demonstrate your creativity and managerial expertise.

### Individual Work

- Top Ten: In alternate weeks, read assigned materials, posting to Blackboard by noon Tuesday a one page "Top Ten List" of the most important points from the assigned reading. [5 x 50 pts ea = 250 pts] Half credit if late.
- Suggest entrepreneurial planning resources. [50 pts]
- Demonstration of Knowledge: Personal Plan: Write a report of key points from the course, demonstrating your understanding of course concepts and tools by applying them to your own life and career. (10-15 pages) [200 pts]

### Team Work

Whether helping a client or developing a new business, each team will:

- Develop and present an analysis of the various systems impacting success, identifying key leverage points for improvement potential (100 Pts)
- Make a final report to clients, the class, and visiting managers outlining your analysis, ideas, and proposed process of implementation (200 Pts)
- Develop an “After Action Report” of team dynamics, making recommendations for future projects (100 Pts)
- A participation grade will be assigned by me based on the inputs of your team members. (100 Pts)

Extra credit is encouraged, such as posting extra comments on the discussion board. Missed classes require making up the learning with extra credit. Note that points are added, not averaged, allowing you to make up points with additional effort.

## **ASSIGNMENT DETAILS**

### **READING AND THE "TOP TEN LIST"**

A major part of the learning in this course will come from discussing the readings with classmates and working in groups to apply the concepts to reality. Since learning is maximized when everyone has read and thought about the readings, for every assigned set of readings you will prepare by Tuesday noon a "Top Ten List" of the points you found most interesting and/or valuable from the all of the assigned reading for that class. Do not re-explain or summarize the points, but state why you feel each of these points are important. Please limit yourself to a single page for the whole assignment. Post these to the appropriate assignment link in the Course Documents section of Blackboard for me to grade, then go to the discussion area to post in the appropriate folder two of those points you would like to see discussed in class and on the discussion board. Take some time to look over the points your classmates have posted. Post on the discussion area any ideas or comments for extra credit. To give your classmates time to look over your ideas, each top ten list should be posted by noon of Tuesday before the class meeting. Late postings lose half credit.

### **SHARE AN ENTREPRENEURIAL PLANNING RESOURCE**

There is a huge array of resources available to help plan enterprises. In a single page describe and recommend a book, website, software, organization, or other resource which your classmates might find useful in their planning this semester. Post this both in the course documents area, and in the folder in the discussion board, using a descriptive title so that classmates can easily find it. In later homework, class members will be expected to comment on their choice of these resources.

### **DEMONSTRATION OF KNOWLEDGE: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

At the end of the course, December 5, you will submit a ten to 15 page paper applying the course tools and concepts to yourself, your life, and your career. This will include:

- a review of your life and career. What events or activities demonstrate your motivation and abilities?
- a discussion of your learnings about yourself from the team project and course activities
- a review of course concepts relevant to your life and career
- an analysis of the complex interactions and systems affecting your life and career
- ideas for improving your success in life and career.

I encourage you to co-write this with your spouse, significant other, mentor, and/or potential business partner(s).

### **TEAM PROJECT: PLANNING OR IMPROVING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESS**

There will be two different kinds of team projects in this class. You will team with 3-5 classmates to plan a business that one of you intends to start or expand, or help a client company with their project. This target project should challenge all aspects of business learning, so you can develop and demonstrate your MBA capacities in this area. You will thoroughly explore the many different elements that must be handled in order for this business to start successfully or improve this business and demonstrate detailed alternatives for each. Your team will take time in each class to work out the details of this plan, applying the ideas from the class, and constantly improving and extending the plan in realistic ways. You will probably find it necessary to do a certain amount of research and data gathering outside of class, but most teamwork and development will happen in class.

You will present and submit repeatedly, improving your work as you go:

Oct 17 Analysis of relevant systems and list of key leverage/target points (about 10 pages)

Nov 28 Project Presentations: Formal MBA-style business plan targeted at partner, funder, etc (about 20 pages)

Dec 5– Present Team Dynamics "After Action Report" (about 10 pages)

For each presentation I will create a Blackboard discussion area to post your report and your presentation materials to share with your classmates and for me to grade. If teams wish to revise their Client or Classmate projects after the presentation, let me know and you will have until Dec 5 to submit the revised version.

**Team Report: Systems Analysis/Targeting**

Both types of projects will select various analysis tools which seem appropriate to their target, apply those tools, and explain their learnings and insights. Both types of projects will demonstrate a completeness of understanding of the breadth of systems which influence success and will identify areas of the most potential to invest their creativity and effort. Classmate project teams will identify areas that need the most research and creativity (ignoring critical areas with easily available solutions) while client project teams will identify areas of greatest potential impact even where the recommendation is an easily available solution.

**Final Team Report: Classmate Project**

These project teams will review their learnings from the systems analysis and describe a plan for establishing the intended business, highlighting the insights and ideas that most surprised them. A standard MBA business plan will be part of that report.

**Final Team Report: Client Project**

After reviewing the insights from the systems analysis, the teams will describe actions and alternatives that they recommend the client consider. For each alternative describe the decision making and the process you recommend the client use to confirm the idea. For each idea, also describe the basic steps the client will have to take to start it and keep it working.

**Team Dynamics "After Action Report"**

Part of the reason for the team project is to improve your ability to lead and to participate in complex cross-functional and multi-cultural teams. Therefore, during and after the team project your team will collaborate on an assessment of your team dynamics and your learnings for future team projects. Project presentations will be completed a couple of weeks before the end of the course, allowing the team to meet to complete a Team Dynamics Assessment in which they review the things learned during the process that they would hope to manage in future projects. This is the process the military calls an "After Action Report". Tell the story of how the team formed and managed the process. Discuss what worked or didn't, culture based issues, best events in the process, communication problems, management dynamics, suggestions for improvement next time, etc. I recognize that this might be the toughest part of the course for many teams, but I am convinced that learning to more effectively work with people who are different from you is a critical part of being a manager.

**Peer Assessment**

Each team is responsible for its own management, ensuring that each person fully contributes to the effort. To assist in this process, each student will report their opinion of the level of effort and quality of contribution of each team member. My reaction to their inputs will determine each student's team project participation grade.

### Reading and Assignments

Downloads available on Blackboard. [?] is estimated number of pages in that reading.

Additional readings may be added during the semester. Other adjustments to schedule are possible.

WK	DUE	Team
Wk 1 Aug 29	Introduce yourself online and suggest projects <b>Optional Follow-up Readings</b> Barlow (download) Deliberate Leadership [2] Barlow (download) Teamwork Goes Both Ways [2] Barlow (download) Styles and Creativity [2] Barlow (download) Brainstorming [2]	Meet classmates Suggest projects
Wk 2 Sept 5	<b>Top Ten 1 Due Noon Tues Sept 4</b> Barlow (download) Strategy: Synergy and Serendipity [2] Strategy 1 : Keys to the toolbox [16] Barlow (download): External modeling [2] Barlow (download) What Do You Really Want to Do? [2] Barlow (download) Function Analysis and Modeling [18] Barlow (download) Quickstart [2 ] Barlow (download) Cross Cultural Teamwork [2] Hofstede's numbers [1]	Form teams
Wk 3 Sept 12	<b>Entrepreneurial Planning Resources Due Noon Tues Sept 11.</b> Continue Discussion	Meet with clients
Wk 4 Sept 19	<b>Top Ten 2 Due Noon Tues Sept 18</b> Download: NYT FRIEDMAN It's a Flat World, After All [8] Download: NYT KRISTOF Do-Gooders With Spreadsheets [2] Strategy 2: Unraveling Complexity [27] Strategy 3: Thinking about Futures [33] Barlow (download) Creative Problem Solving [2] Barlow (download) Decision Matrix and Fuzzy Logic [2] One resource from class generated list	
Wk 5 Sept 26	Continue Discussion	
Wk 6 Oct 3	<b>Top Ten 3 Due Noon Tues Oct 2</b> Download: The Long Tail by Chris Anderson (Wired) [8] Strategy 4: Identifying Strategic Actions [22] Strategy 10: Stimulating Innovation [20] One resource from class generated list	
Wk 7 Oct 10	Continue Discussion	
Wk 8 Oct 17		Present Problem Statement
Wk 9 Oct 24	<b>Top Ten 4 Due Noon Tues Oct 23</b> Strategy 5: Finding Viable Organizations [11] Strategy 6: Evaluating Strategic Moves [15] Barlow (download) Levels of Bureaucracy [3] One resource from class generated list	
Wk 10 Oct 31	Continue Discussions	
Wk11 Nov 7	<b>Top Ten 5 Due Noon Tues Nov 6</b> Strategy 7: Obstacles, Remedies, Plans, and Decisions [10] Strategy 8: Sorting out the Toolbox [10] Strategy 11: Art of Judgement [13] Barlow (download) Unappreciated AHA [2] After-Action Report Handout [9]	
Wk12 Nov 14	Continue Discussion	
Wk13 Nov 21	Team Project work day – no class	
Wk14 Nov 28		Present Team Projects
Wk 15 Dec 5	Last day of class: Individual Demonstration of Knowledge Due	Present Team Dynamics