
Description

What distinguishes a famous rock-band touring all over the world from a traditional company listed on the Stock Exchange? Is there a difference between a restaurant in Paris and an online delicatessen service in New York City? Do tech companies and more traditional, i.e. industrial manufacturing firms, have anything in common? Are start-ups, rather than established companies, more appealing to job-seekers with an Engineering background? The answer to these questions is 'Enterprise Essentials', an introductory course to the firm, its reason of being, organization, internal and external environments.

Course objectives

The business organization, i.e. the enterprise, is the main player of any economy. While its reason of being, form, size and structure may vary greatly from country to country and from industry to industry, there are several essential and distinctive features that are common to all companies. In the context of the entrepreneurial surge driven by digital technologies and of the accelerated transformation of our modern societies and economic systems, this course aims at providing an introduction to the enterprise, its environment, its essential operating and organizational structures, and its core functions. Special attention will be paid to the concepts that are relevant to today's digitalized, globalized and highly interconnected economy and to the challenges raised by the transformation of traditional firms into digital organizations. The more specific objectives of the course are:

- Understand the fundamental reasons why firms exist and how these reasons may vary in time and across geographies
- Understand the basics of the environment in which firms operate, with a focus on today's digital economy
- Understand the role of technology, both on firms' performance and on industry structure
- Understand the role of management in steering the firms' performance, overall; and with a focus on innovation

Pedagogy and course design

The course is divided in several classes, 3-hour each. Classes 1 to (n-1) are essentially composed of lectures, short quizzes, team works and group discussions. The last class (n) shall be devoted to group and/or individual presentations towards achieving the final grade.

The pedagogy principles behind this course are:

1. **Progressivity** – we shall start from basic principles, concepts and statements and we will evolve towards more complex and subtle issues which require the combination of the basic

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ideas presented throughout the course and, to some extent, the adaptation of these same fundamental concepts to different reality frames

2. **Interactivity** – each class is designed so that individual and collective participation are integral parts of the teaching environment. Attendance, punctuality, mutual respect, attention to others and team spirit are mandatory. Exploratory spirit, mind inquisitiveness, and curiosity, when aimed at the common good, are largely encouraged. Individual claims should be thoroughly self-assessed in terms of common interest before they are brought to the wider audience.
3. **Maximization of the learning experience** – individual readings, when assigned, are to be – mandatorily - performed prior to each class. The classes shall then only be devoted to deepen the understanding of such prior individual work. Groups shall be formed and expected to last throughout the course. Self-organization, within and between groups, for assignments and team works, for the whole duration of the course is a must. Work is individual, even if presented in the name of the group. Each student is expected to produce high-quality inputs based on his/her own work.

Course materials, prerequisites, and revisions to syllabus

Prior reading material for this class is composed of selected chapters from the following books:

- *Business Model Generation: A handbook for visionaries, game-changers and challengers.* **Alexander Osterwalder Yves Pigneur. et al.** John Wiley & Sons, 2010 (hereafter **Business Model book**)
- *The Second Machine Age – Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technologies.* **Erik Brynjolfsson, Andrew McAfee.** WW Norton & Company. New York, 2014 (2015, Odile Jacob pour la traduction française) (hereafter **The Second Machine Age**)

While there is no request for prior knowledge for this subject matter, however, each class may require individual readings to be performed prior to coming to the class (see schedule). Lectures will be based on .ppt presentations which will be subsequently made available to students via the School's intranet. **(Important note: These .ppt slides are only for students enrolled in the course and should not be distributed by students to any other individuals.)** Other resources and media may be used by the professor in class, included but not limited to short video clips. The syllabus and some of its materials (excluding books, reports, other printed matter, when applicable) for this course will be made available to students via the School's intranet. Print-outs and hard copy handouts, when requested, shall go through the School's facility services. Minor revisions may be made to the syllabus, due to unforeseen events. Any such revisions shall be communicated upon and students will be informed in due time. Available online resources, when the class requirements call for the use of such resources, are expected to be accessed, downloaded, and processed by the students according to their specific copyrights.

Assignments and grading

For this course, the individual grade shall be calculated as follows:

Final Composition	Grade	Class attendance and participation throughout the lecture	Course quiz (MCQ)	Final presentation (group and individual)
Weight		30%	30%	40%

Orientative rubrics for grading

Class attendance and participation throughout the session

- A (between 14.5 and 20.00 points) – student attends each class and contributes frequently with high-quality contributions. Emphasis is placed on the quality of the contributions in terms of deepening the understanding and application of concepts to practical and real-world examples, however, all students are encouraged to participate as long as their interventions are aimed at the common group interest and the overall learning objectives
- B (between 13.00 and 14.49 points) – student attends each class, with moderate contributions.
- C (between 11.00 and 12.99 points) and lower (between 0 and 10.99 point) – student does not attend classes, or misses some classes and does not make any contribution or makes only limited contributions

Note on class attendance: The most important aspect of class participation is to attend each class on time, be present through its entire duration, be attentive and participate throughout the lecture. Punctuality is mandatory. Attendance will be taken for each class. If a student is sick or faces any situation precluding him/her from attending the class, he/she should provide the School admin services and the Professor with an explanation and proof/justification to this effect, as far ahead of time as possible. Each class will last three hours. Breaks shall be accommodated.

Course quiz (MCQ)

- A 20-question MCQ shall be provided midcourse. The MCQ will test the understanding of concepts, statements and ideas developed and discussed during the course. Grading is 1 point per correct answer.

Final presentation (group and individual) – a short project (essay), in the form of a question to which students will answer through a carefully drafted presentation (.ppt presentation) shall be assigned to groups that have been formed at the beginning of the course. The subjects shall be communicated to the established groups during class (n-2). The groups are then expected to

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prepare the essay (indication: the equivalent of a 2,000 to 2,500 words' document in .ppt format, i.e. between 8 to 10 .ppt slides, including illustrations) and present it during class (n). The specific expectations for this final presentation shall be discussed during class (n-2). The orientative rubric for grading the short essay is as follows:

- A (14.5-20) – illustrates mastery of the concepts at hand; and the results are presented in a well-written, well-structured way. Positive group dynamics allowing each individual to have his/her say are demonstrated both during the preparation and the final presentation
- B (13-14.49) – illustrates an average understanding of the concepts discussed in class; however the presentation is written and presented in an understandable way. Uneven participation of the group members to the preparation and to the final presentation
- C (11 -12.99) or lower (0-10.99) – is of low quality, both in terms of contents and format. Group is obviously disengaged

Course schedule and class details

Class # 1	Contents	Reading material
	Setting the scene: The economy and the firm as an economic agent	The Second Machine Age, chapters 1 and 8

Class details:

- The economy:
 - o Fundamental macroeconomic concepts
 - o Globalization, digitalization, interconnectedness
 - o 21st century challenges
- The firm as an economic agent
 - o Why do firms exist?
 - o What is a firm, from an economic perspective
 - o Forms of business (overview of economic and legal considerations)

Class # 2	Contents	Reading material
	The business environment: industries and markets	The Second Machine Age, chapters 4 and 10

Class details:

- Industry structure, industrial organization

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- Horizontal and vertical integration
- Barriers to entry
- Markets and market structure
 - Monopoly, oligopoly, competition
 - Firm performance and the industrial value chain
 - Innovation
- Class discussion: Technology-driven industries and markets

Class # 3	Contents	Reading material
	Enterprise models	"The Business Model Canvas" Osterwalder

Class details:

- The firm: horizontal and vertical views
- The business organization
 - Organizational models (e.g. hierarchy, matrix, etc)
- Overview of business functions and their implications on organization
 - Production function
 - Sales & Marketing Function
 - Technology functions
 - Support functions
- The business model
 - Concept introduction
 - Class discussion

Class # 4	Contents	Reading material
	Managing a business organization	"Six Rules towards simplicity" Yves Morieux, HBR

Class details:

- Why are managers necessary?
- The role(s) of the manager
 - External roles
 - Internal roles
- Management principles and practices – an overview
 - Class discussion: do start-ups need to be managed?



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- Course wrap-up

Class # 5	Contents	Reading material
	Final presentations (group and individual)	NA