

ENTR 335: Social Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Spring 2026

Class Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00 PM - 2:15 PM

Location: Smith Hall 250

Professor: Matthew Regele

Office Hours: By appointment

Email: regelem@xavier.edu

Course Overview

This course examines how entrepreneurial thinking can be applied to address social and environmental challenges. We will explore the distinctive features of social ventures, including mission-driven strategy, systems thinking, stakeholder engagement, financing models, measurement, and scaling. Students will learn by doing — observing real systems, engaging stakeholders, and developing a concept for a social initiative rooted in evidence and thoughtful design. The course blends readings, discussion, analytical reflection, practical experimentation, and a semester-long applied project. By the end of the course, students will be better prepared to understand complex social issues, evaluate opportunities for impact, and think like a responsible, reflective changemaker.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the unique aspects of social ventures and the ecosystems in which they operate.
2. Identify and analyze social problems, leveraging systems thinking to propose viable solutions.
3. Develop models and plans for social ventures, including social impact logic models and financial strategies.
4. Measure and evaluate social impact, critically assessing feedback and adapting venture designs.
5. Utilize AI as a strategic partner for enhancing creativity, conducting analysis, and refining communication for social entrepreneurial endeavors.

Relevant ENTR Major Student Learning Objectives:

- **(LO3) Strategic Management:** WCB E&I majors will be able to discuss the role of planning and testing in developing a new product, service, or business.
- **(LO4) Social Impact:** WCB E&I majors will be able to analyze the likely or actual social impact of a new venture.

Student Responsibilities and Course Organization

This course is designed to be experiential and interactive. It makes use of a broad range of instructional methods including discussion, exercises, and group activities. Preparation (i.e.,

reading and pre-class work), class attendance, and participation are very important. Please note that should you miss a class; you are responsible for anything covered that day. Furthermore, all assignments are due on the specified dates regardless of whether you missed class in preceding days or are absent on the specified due date. This is necessary, in part, because the lessons build upon each other. If you do not complete one activity, you may be unable to move onto the next. Perhaps even more importantly, this expectation is intended to help prepare you for career success upon graduation from Xavier University.

You should also note that this is a 3-credit course. Based on federal accreditation guidelines¹, this means that you should expect to spend a *minimum of 6 hours per week* working on course assignments outside of our scheduled class sessions. Course assignments and my expectations are based on these accreditation guidelines.

Required Texts and Readings

Primary Textbook:

Kickul, J., & Lyons, T. S. (2025). *Understanding Social Entrepreneurship: The Relentless Pursuit of Mission in an Ever-Changing World* (4th ed.). New York: Routledge.

The textbook has been ordered through the Xavier Bookstore. If you are participating in Xavier's Day One Program, you should be able to access the textbook through the BN Course Materials link in Canvas. If you are NOT part of the Day One program, then you can purchase access through the Barnes & Noble website, but you might want to shop around for the book – for example, Amazon often has lower prices. Please just be sure to purchase the 4th edition. Both print and digital versions are perfectly acceptable.

Supplementary Readings:

A selection of articles and case studies will be provided on Canvas.

Course Assignments and Evaluation

	Due Date	Points	%
Major Assignments		250	42%
Researcher's Journal	27-Jan	30	5%
Founder's Memo	10-Feb	45	8%
Fieldwork Debrief and Reflection	19-Mar	55	9%
Strategic Choices and Trade-Offs Memo	7-Apr	60	10%
The Venture Story and Founder's Commitment	27-Apr	60	10%
Reading Quizzes*		100	17%
Syllabus Quiz	13-Jan	10	2%
Defining and Distinguishing Social Entrepreneurship	15-Jan	10	2%
Dark Sides of Entrepreneurship	20-Jan	10	2%
Systems Thinking: Mapping Causes, Actors & Leverage Points	22-Jan	10	2%

¹ E.g., <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hearulemaking/2009/credit.html#credit>.

Problem Framing: Turning Systems Insight into a Focused Challenge	27-Jan	10	2%
Field Observation for Problem Understanding	29-Jan	10	2%
Building & Testing Initial Ideas (Human-Centered Design)	3-Feb	10	2%
Theory of Change and Logic Models: Linking Activities to Impact	17-Feb	10	2%
Financing the Mission: Grants, Earned Revenue & Impact Capital	24-Mar	10	2%
Organizational Forms, Legal Structures & Mission Protection	7-Apr	10	2%
Scaling Social Ventures	21-Apr	10	0%
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Process & Engagement		250	42%
Process Deliverables (Exit Tickets)		150	25%
Active Participation and Contribution		100	17%
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TOTAL		600	100%

Major Assignments:

- **Researcher's Journal:** In this initial assignment, you will connect a personal observation or experience to a broader social problem, create a “map” of the system surrounding that problem, and begin to develop empathy for the key stakeholders involved.
- **Founder's Memo:** Building on your journal, you will write a foundational memo that articulates your initial venture concept, its value proposition, a visual stakeholder map, and a reflection on the personal risks and power dynamics involved.
- **Fieldwork Debrief and Reflection:** This report requires you to synthesize findings from your own field research (interviews, observations). You will identify a key insight that challenged your assumptions and use it to make an evidence-based “pivot” or redesign of your venture.
- **Strategic Choices & Trade-Offs Memo:** A memo where you will justify your core operational and sustainability decisions. You will analyze the critical trade-offs related to your venture's most significant cost, its legal structure, and its long-term scaling strategy.
- **The Venture Story & Founder's Commitment:** This final, two-part assignment consists of a compelling pitch deck that tells the complete story of your venture's journey and a private, one-page memo reflecting on your personal growth and commitment as a founder.

Reading Quizzes: There are 11 short, open-note quizzes due before class to ensure you have a foundational understanding of the key concepts from the assigned readings. Each quiz is worth 10 points. I will drop your lowest Reading Quiz score when computing your final course grade.

Process & Engagement: Because this is an intentionally experiential course, it is critical that you are regularly present and participate in the course activities. Your performance in this area will be reflected in the Process & Engagement grade, which itself has two components:

- **Process Deliverables:** This portion of your grade is primarily assessed through the completion of regular "Exit Tickets" and other brief in-class submissions. These deliverables are designed to capture your work-in-progress, ensure timely engagement with course concepts, and provide feedback on key activities throughout the semester.
- **Active Participation & Contribution:** This reflects your regular attendance, active and thoughtful participation in class discussions and workshops, constructive contributions to group activities, and overall engagement with the course material and your peers.

Course Policies:

Late Work: Personal emergencies, technology issues, and illnesses affect us all, often at the worst possible times. However, I must hold everyone in the class to the same standards. Late assignments will be subject to the following penalties:

- Submissions up to 7 days late will automatically receive a minimum 25% grade point reduction.
- Submissions up to 14 days late will automatically receive a minimum 50% grade point reduction.
- Submissions more than 14 days late will receive zero points.

Extra Credit: I generally do **NOT** offer extra credit assignments; every student is graded on the same basis for the same work. Therefore, be sure to plan ahead and begin your assignments well before their due dates. In general, this should not be a problem as long as you come to class prepared and actively participate. If you begin to fall behind in any of the course requirements, you should take action early on to remedy the situation rather than during the last week of classes when it's too late!

Academic Honesty: Both Xavier University and I take academic honesty very seriously. Cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. You should be aware of the Xavier University policy on Academic Honesty, <https://www.xavier.edu/library/xu-tutor/xu-tutor-use/academic-honesty>.

Inclusivity Statement: I am committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity and in which all students feel comfortable and safe to learn. In order to build a classroom community, I ask that students:

- Share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
- Be open to the views of others
- Honor the uniqueness of their peers
- Appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- Communicate in a respectful manner
- Keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- Utilize this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the Xavier community

Note on Disability Services: It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students. If you are a student with a disability who may have trouble participating or effectively demonstrating learning in this course, contact me to arrange an appointment to share your Accommodation Letters from Disability Services and to discuss your needs. Disability related information is confidential. If you have not contacted Disability Services (located in the Learning Assistance Center) to arrange accommodations, I encourage you to do so by contacting Cassandra Jones, by phone at 513-745-3280, in person on the Fifth Floor of the Conaton Learning Commons, Room 514, or via e-mail at jonesc20@xavier.edu as soon as possible as accommodations are not retroactive.

Contact

The best way to contact me is via email. I check my email frequently throughout the day. I strongly encourage you to schedule time with me if you have any questions, concerns, or would just like to talk! I am happy to find mutually convenient times to meet. Please just email me and we will find a time that works for both of us.

Tentative Course Schedule

Please note – What follows is simply a list of topics! You will find specific readings and assignments for each class session in Canvas.

Date	Day	Topic
13-Jan	T	Course Introduction and Overview
15-Jan	Th	Defining and Distinguishing Social Entrepreneurship
20-Jan	T	The “Dark Sides” of Entrepreneurship
22-Jan	Th	Systems Thinking: Mapping Causes, Actors & Leverage Points
27-Jan	T	Problem Framing: Turning Systems Insight into a Focused Challenge
29-Jan	Th	Field Observation for Problem Understanding
3-Feb	T	Building & Testing Initial Ideas (Human-Centered Design)
5-Feb	Th	Workshop: Venture Concept Proposal
10-Feb	T	Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement Strategies
12-Feb	Th	Designing Stakeholder Outreach & Interview Guides
17-Feb	T	Theory of Change and Logic Models: Linking Activities to Impact
19-Feb	Th	Asynchronous Working Day – Stakeholder Landscape Check-in
24-Feb	T	Logic Model Workshop
26-Feb	Th	Field Research Methods for Social Ventures
3-Mar	T	Field Research Planning & Practice
5-Mar	Th	Asynchronous Working Day – Conduct Field Research
10-Mar	T	SPRING BREAK
12-Mar	Th	SPRING BREAK
17-Mar	T	Field Research Synthesis Workshop
19-Mar	Th	Applying Field Insights to Venture Redesign

24-Mar	T	Financing the Mission: Grants, Earned Revenue & Impact Capital
26-Mar	Th	Storytelling for Social Change: Crafting a Clear, Credible Pitch
31-Mar	T	Preparing for External Touchpoints
2-Apr	Th	EASTER BREAK
7-Apr	T	Organizational Forms, Legal Structures & Mission Protection
9-Apr	Th	Asynchronous Working Session – External Touchpoints
14-Apr	T	Project XLR8 Pitches (Exact Date TBD)
16-Apr	Th	External Touchpoint Reflection & Design Iteration
21-Apr	T	Scaling Social Ventures
23-Apr	Th	Final Presentation Workshop
28-Apr	T	Final Presentations - Part 1
30-Apr	Th	Final Presentations - Part 2