



College of Business--International Business

Syllabus v 1.1

I. COURSE NUMBER, TITLE, PROF.:

IBUS 841--Creativity for Managers: A Global Perspective (3 units)

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II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisite: Enrolled student, SFSU/EMBA Program.

Creativity skills for managers are crucial in a globalized world. Recently, creativity has risen in importance for businesses seeking competitive advantage. This course teaches creativity skills for managers and emphasizes the international elements of creativity.

It is no longer enough to practice aggressive international sourcing to produce a working product at the lowest feasible cost—consumers and business customers thirst for innovative, truly productivity- and life-enhancing products. Customers are becoming increasingly sophisticated and picky regarding their purchases. Creativity skills in product and service design are increasingly valued by managers—this is well-recognized in the world of creative professionals. Outside the realm of professional design, however, there are signs that creativity skills are becoming important to firms outside of areas traditionally dominated by “creative professionals.” This course adopts the latter perspective and promotes a view of the “creative organization” as one major element of successful firms in the 21st Century.

Creativity is the process that generates new and useful ideas; more: it is the new arena for international competition. Yet the transition from mind to market, from the creative idea to the saleable product, is contingent on effective management and organization practices—an arena in which the utility of “creativity” skills have gone largely unrecognized. Similarly, global sources of new ways to think about creativity in organizations have, until recently, largely been ignored.

Change drives creativity, more than ever in our highly interconnected world. Firms exist and operate in a competitive, globalized, rapidly evolving, harsh selection environment where the possibility of negative outcomes constantly looms. Today, all firms must find

ways to be creative or face obsolescence. Organizations respond (1) by facing the challenge of tapping the creativity of their people, and enhancing their capabilities for creativity; and (2) by going wherever in the world they need to go to obtain access to creative resources (e.g., knowledge, productive capabilities, IPR) at the most competitive costs.

Central Questions of the Course In addition to recognizing the importance of creativity for sustained high performance, this course explicitly considers globalization affects creativity and how managerial creativity skills might benefit from creativity in different parts of the world. Important questions include the following:

“What creativity skills, from all over the world, are best suited my organization’s needs?”;

“How can I teach my multicultural, international workforce creativity skills that will enhance organizational performance?”;

“How can I leverage the international aspects of my firm to achieve the highest possible creative and innovative performances?”;

“What lessons and skills can be learned from creativity in other cultures?”;

“How can I leverage other cultures’ approaches to creativity to improve my entire organization?”;

“Where should I engage in my creative/innovative endeavors?”;

“How should I organize creativity in my organization throughout the world in order to incur minimal costs while obtaining the best possible results?”;

“Where can I find the best creative minds for my business?”;

In this course, students will learn to recognize, analyze, and support the value-adding determinants of creative behavior in organizations with an eye towards leveraging recent developments in globalization of creativity. Students will learn specific techniques for assessing and fostering productive creativity in themselves and in those they lead.

Learning activities and topics. In the process of answering the above central questions, this course works through multiple areas related to creativity in business from a global view. These include (but are not necessarily limited to) the following topics:

- . • Examples of creativity (individuals and organizations) outside the USA
- . • Globalizing the sourcing of creative skills
- . • Creativity skills for managers working in internationally diverse groups
- . • Transitioning from a creative idea to a product/service in the globalized economy
- . • Globalization of entrepreneurship—implications for top managers and creative professionals
- . • “The Next Big Thing” – An exploration of hot global trends in new products and services
- . • Best practices in creativity from around the world
- . • How different cultures think of creativity and its importance for international business

In addition to the many in-class exercises, students focus on measuring and understanding creativity from both scholarly and practical perspectives—this qualifies students passing this class to bring creativity skills into their own organizations. The class is reading and participation-intensive; group-based work forms a (non-majority) fraction of the total grading. A final project is required of all student groups. The class utilizes a variant of the Problem-Based Learning pedagogy (student-centered assignments). The course is a foundation course for other EMBA courses in creativity, innovation and technology, because it teaches basic creativity skills that may be usefully applied in those courses.

III. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, students will possess the following knowledge and skills:

- A. The student will be a substantially more creative individual, and will possess skills for communicating creative output in a compelling, cogent manner.
- B. Understanding of creativity issues in different business cultures
- C. Understanding of global sourcing of creativity skills
- D. Managing creativity in diverse, internationally operating organizations
- E. Understanding of how an individual (the student) can be a more creative person and manager.
- F. Understanding of how to share (teach) creativity skills to others in the organization.
- G. Understanding of measurement and output issues in creativity for business.
- H. Awareness of the many sources of creativity information in order to engage in self-directed free inquiry on any relevant creativity-related topic (emphasis on internationally diverse sources of creativity skills)
- I. The ability to lead sessions designed to evoke outstanding creative output from those under the student's guidance/management.
- J. The ability to plan and execute organizational creativity-enhancing exercises, events and meetings.
- K. The ability to apply critical thinking and reasoning to creativity-related issues, notably which tools for enhancing creativity are appropriate for which types of organization throughout the world.

IV. COURSE CONTENT

The course is organized by topic. Typically, one or two sets of readings are scheduled for discussion and deep exploration in each class meeting. The following topics are treated (in order):

0. Intro to the Class Structure, PBL, Exercises.
1. Defining Creativity in Business
2. Creativity and Product Design—Origins of industrial creativity
3. Individual Creativity Skills
4. Group Creativity Skills
5. Globalization of Creativity
6. Creative Leaders
7. Technology and Creativity
8. Research in Creativity
9. Creativity and International Business in Different Countries
10. Best Practice in Creativity
11. “The Next Big Thing” – Where to focus creative energy
12. All topics in the Book, Conceptual Blockbusting, by James Adams

Note: though the number of topics exceeds the number of class meetings scheduled, some classes will treat two topics as needed.

The course will draw on scholarly papers and articles, popular sources, and cases illustrating creativity issues in diverse business domains (e.g., technology and science, entertainment, consumer services, and consumer products) and cultures. In addition to cases, the course will use research summaries, notes, articles from various sources, videos, guests, individual exercises, and group exercises.

This course examines both theoretical underpinnings and practical paths towards increasingly broader and sophisticated understanding and use of creativity-skills in product/service design and general business situations, i.e., throughout one’s organization. Students, in addition to receiving some understanding of the foundations of thinking about creativity, engage in multiple hands-on exercises, many of which are designed, presented and refined by student groups in consultation with the instructor.

The class covers individual creativity (some say this is one aspect of genius), group-based techniques for building "social" creativity skills in organizations, and explores advances in creativity-enhancing work environments. Extending the provision of creativity-enhancing skills beyond designers and design-related areas, i.e. throughout the organization is discussed.

V. PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE

A basic understanding of business methods and management; 5+ years full-time business experience is desirable but not required, and prior managerial experience is highly desirable.

VI. TEACHING METHODS AND MATERIALS

Methods: Lectures, discussion, case studies, paper writing, short essays, in-class exercises and presentations.

Texts:

*Custom reader (there are presently no textbooks available on the topics of creativity for managers, and international aspects of creativity in business).

*Adams, J. L. (2001). *Conceptual Blockbusting: A Guide to Better Ideas* (Paperback). Cambridge, MA, Perseus Publishing. ISBN: 0738205370

* Required.

VII. EVALUATION

Generally, NO late submissions of any work are permitted.

a. 40%: Final Case Project (Group-based). Written version: Due last class meeting, start of class. Length: maximum 12 pages double-spaced text (~3500 words). Do NOT exceed the length requirements (neither number of pages NOR number of words). Of the 40%, one-half (20%) will be decided based on the final presentation of your case; the other half (20%) of the grade will be based on the written submission. This may be a group project—if so, your group shares the grades for this project. Grades: Scale of 1-10.

b. 40%: Critical notes (Individuals) (2 x 20%) pertaining to specific readings in the textbook and reader (and occasional other materials as mentioned in class). Critical notes examine how well the student thinks critically about the material before it has been discussed in class. Due: at start of any class, but it is not allowed to turn in a critical note AFTER that topic has been discussed in class. No exceptions. This suggests a payoff to reading ahead and attacking the critical notes aggressively. Length--1 page MAX. double-spaced, Times Roman font, 12 point font minimum, 1 inch margins all around the page. Yes, that is a very short length--penalties (typically -1) apply for breaking ANY of these rules). This part of the class is an exercise in writing concisely to enable top managers to quickly read and understand your thoughts. Do not submit a second page—it will not be read. Only the first page will be graded. No title pages, please. Individual efforts only for these submissions (do not work together). If you do not turn in the required 2 critical notes, any unsubmitted notes will be graded 0. Grades: Scale of 0-10. See the website for advice in the form of many hints regarding how to write a good critical note.

AT LEAST ONE CRITICAL NOTE IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED BEFORE EITHER CLASS MEETING 2 or 3. This is so I can get some idea as to the level of the class' writing and critical thinking skills. After that it is up to individual students to decide for which chapter(s) they wish to write critical notes.

If you are unhappy with your grades for your critical notes (after you have turned in 2 notes), you may optionally submit one more critical note, and the lowest grade of the 3 critical notes will be tossed out and your grade will only reflect your 2 highest graded critical notes. All critical notes turned in under this condition must also meet the other requirements for critical notes laid out above (notably, timing). That is, it is very possible

to run out of time for submitting critical notes, since the student is allowed to select the chapters for which he/she submits notes. Note that the payoff for reading ahead and staying on top of the critical notes is increased by this condition.

c. 20%: In-class leadership duties (Group-based). You are graded on the execution of your own group's discussion leadership activities as assigned in the first class meeting. When it is your group's turn to lead the class discussion, you will be graded on the quality of your work (content, presentation), but you will also be graded on how well you stimulate relevant, insightful discussion among other students. This is an important part of the experience in the class—can you lead the other students to participate heavily and remain interested, engaged, and on-topic? Each group or individual (depending on enrollment numbers) is expected to do one in-class chapter presentation.

Further detail regarding the Final Project:

The Final Project consists of a detailed case: a real problem that remains to-date unsolved. Groups will choose a firm and an associated problem (in direct consultation with the instructor) that can be constructively addressed by using the creativity tools and frameworks provided during regular class meetings during the semester. Groups must use and cite (in-text and in references at the end) a minimum TWO readings, each from different chapters in the reader in their analysis.

Groups' analysis should be detailed and illustrate how a specific opportunity, problem or issue is addressed by analyzing the situation and making the appropriate recommendations for creative tools to solve the problem.

Note on the Project: Experience suggests that frequently the best projects shy away from “major” firms everyone has heard of—better (sometimes) to research a small/medium-sized firm and analyze their strategy. Data is often easier to get and one can talk to founders and other top executives. Boutique industries (e.g., Tech. startups, energy drinks, haut couture, antiques, framing shops, restaurants, small hotels, etc.) are often more interesting to one's fellow students. That said, the choice of firm remains up to each group (subject to instructor consultation and approval). Caveat: access to data is an issue, which sometimes is more challenging for smaller firms (but not always). You are encouraged to consider one of your group members' firms as a possible candidate “problem-firm.”

In grading all elements of the class, emphasis will be placed on quality of work, including content excellence, critical thinking and communication skills. Group assignments, and hence group-related skills are an important fraction of the total grade.

VIII. Schedule

Schedule

All sessions except sessions 1 and 9 are student-driven (PBL method—will be discussed in first class)

4/22: Session 1

Topics: *Introduction, Exercises*

- About BH
- About You (origin, education, current job, future plan)
- Syllabus in brief (you MUST read it later)
- Group selection (same group all semester)
- PBL in brief
- Exercise(s): Is creativity real?, Brainstorming: an introduction
- Wrap-up

4/29: Session 2

Topics: *Defining Creativity; Creativity and Design*

- Reader, Sections 1 and 2
 - Summary
 - Critique
 - Case
 - Exercise

5/6 - Session 3

Topics: *Individual Creativity Skills, Conceptual Blocks*

- Reader Section 3, Text Ch. 1-3
 - Summary
 - Critique
 - Case
 - Exercise

Notes: A good exercise is a must here.

5/13 - Session 4:

Topics: *Group Creativity Skills, More Conceptual Blocks*

- Reader Section 4, Text, Ch. 4-5
 - Summary
 - Critique
 - Case
 - Exercise

5/20 - Session 5

Topics: *Globalization of Creativity, Advanced Blockbusting*

- Reader, Section 5, Text, Ch. 6-7
 - Summary
 - Critique
 - Case
 - Exercise

5/27 NO CLASS

6/3 - Session 6

Topics: *Leadership, Groups, Organizations and Creativity*

- Reader, Section 6, Text, Ch. 8-9
 - Summary
 - Critique
 - Case
 - Exercise

6/10 Session 7

Topics: *Technology and Research in Creativity*

- Reader, Sections 7, 8
 - Summary
 - Critique
 - Case
 - Exercise
 - FINAL PROJECT UPDATE: 1 person (from your group), 1 minute, 1 transparency.

6/17 Session 8

- Topics: *International and Best Practices in Creativity, Project Workshop*
- Reader, Sections 9, 10
 - Summary
 - Critique
 - Case
 - Exercise
- Time permitting:
 - Students meet with Instructor for advice on projects
 - Students have time to work in class on projects

6/24 **Session 9**

- Topics: *The Next Big Thing, Workshop*
- Reader, Section 11
 - Summary
 - Critique
 - Case
 - Exercise
 - Students meet with Instructor for advice on projects
 - Students have time to work in class on projects
 - Possible early project presentations (as needed)

Note: No class 7/1

7/8 **Session 10**

- Topics: *Final Presentations*
 - 10 Minutes per group. Demonstrations/exercises encouraged/rewarded.
 - Think of substantive (constructive) critical remarks for your classmates as they present.
 - Final Project papers are due by 1:30pm Saturday, 8 July 2006.

IX. IMPORTANT DETAILS:

IT IS **REQUIRED** TO MEET WITH OR OTHERWISE INTERACT WITH THE INSTRUCTOR PRIOR TO ALL IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS IN ORDER TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE APPROACHES/REFINEMENTS FOR YOUR PRESENTATIONS. OFFICE HOURS (RECOMMENDED), BY APPT. (IN PALO ALTO), EMAIL, PHONE, ARE ALL OK.

Critical Notes. By the end of the course, you need to have turned in 2 critical notes, each regarding an aspect of a reading, which we are studying. You choose the readings for which you will write a note. Each critical note should be 1 page long, and meet the requirements noted above. Each note should remark on at least one major assertion of the text that you believe is in error, or with which you disagree. Justify your views briefly, but in a convincing manner. Use supporting evidence from the material we have read, outside readings or your own personal experience to support your views. Outside readings are allowed and encouraged. Cite all sources (in-text and reference list). Each critical note must be submitted BEFORE the session, which discusses the chapter begins (at the beginning of class). Critical notes are graded 0-10. These notes give me an impression of your written communications skills and your ability to think critically (an essential attribute of a competent strategist).

Note for Presenters: An important part of this presentation is your ability to offer relevant critical reflections on the material in the text (the critique): What is wrong with the material? How could it be better? What element(s) does it fail to take into account? Are there any/many counter-examples to the text's assertions?

Internationally-focused analysis/discussion is particularly interesting, (this is an International Business class, after all). If you come from a place that is interesting to the other students, or have some particular in-depth interest/experience/strength on which you can draw, you are encouraged to use this for the benefit of the other students' learning experiences.

Assigned Reading. Assigned reading material MUST be read before class. This will not only enhance your understanding and retention of class presentations, but will equip you to participate in class discussions and team activities. Students are responsible for having a solid command of all assigned materials.

Use of overhead transparencies and other media is allowed and encouraged. Notify the instructor as early as possible of any special requirements (e.g., 35 mm slides, other accessories). Equipment resources are often scarce, but with enough notice, we can often get what we need. Guidelines will be discussed further in class.

Attendance at every class is expected. If you are unable to attend on a particular day due to illness or emergency, please inform the instructor in advance by e-mail or in writing. Business-related travel is NOT a basis for an excused absence. Poor attendance WILL affect grades. Under no circumstances should students miss more than 1 class. Differently-abled students should contact the instructor if these evaluation procedures are not appropriate. If you miss a class, contact your group members for the material you missed.

Guidelines for Written Material

The written material submitted is expected to show a level of scholarship appropriate for advanced executive business courses. Syntax, spelling and other grammatical problems should be corrected prior to submission, and material should be carefully reviewed for clarity. Style guidelines for the main written assignments will be discussed in detail in class. Generally, students will be held to a strict professional writing standard; it is acceptable to ask a fellow student or friend to review written submissions.

Policy on re-grading material.

Any material may be submitted for re-grade (except presentations). The conditions of the re-grade are as follows:

0. Before you submit something for re-grading, you should be aware, that once you submit it for a re-grade, the original grade might go UP OR DOWN. Your original grade is not “safe.”
1. Submit original work with instructor comments on it (if any). Also submit attached to the original work, a 1-page, typed, explanation of why the grade should be changed. No emails, faxes, orals, etc.
2. Instructor will review materials submitted in this format. No material will be reviewed unless it conforms to this format for review.
3. Instructor will notify you of the results of the re-grade.

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