JOMC 463: News Lab

Mondays and Wednesdays: 9:05 – 10:20 a.m.
11 Carroll Hall (Reese New Lab)
Spring 2015
http://reesenewslab.org/jomc463

Desirability / Feasibility / Viability
Does anyone want/need it? Can it be done? Can it be sustained?

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Description

This is not a typical journalism school class. It is structured like a VERY early (or even pre-) start-up where the focus is on exploring and developing a sustainable media product or service.

This course is designed to help students develop an idea for a media product and explore its feasibility, viability and desirability. It combines elements of journalism, technology, marketing, public speaking and business to form a framework for developing a sustainable media product or service.

Students should be prepared to:
- **Face extreme uncertainty**
- Make quick decisions with limited information
- Work on competing priorities
- Receive direct (painful and pleasant) feedback
- Have all actions and decisions challenged and questioned
- Find answers to their own questions with the assistance of the instructor

Successful students will be naturally curious and will not expect to be told exactly how something must be done.

This document sets the schedule, but we recognize that this industry changes rapidly –

particularly in a startup setting. We will respond to changes as necessary, and *we reserve the right to amend this document and assignments as needed.* Any changes will be made with advance notice to you.

Everything you do may be published. However, you have the option of not making your work publicly available IF you communicate that in writing to the instructor.

Have fun, work hard, be creative, take risks and challenge the status quo.

Objectives
- Develop and publish a well-researched and tested proposal for a feasible, viable and desirable media product.
- Pitch and answer questions about the proposed media product
- Learn and follow a process for developing new products. You are not evaluated on the product. You are evaluated on the process of developing a new product.
- Exhibit a working knowledge of:
  o Listening to customers
  o Market research
  o Basic business modeling
  o Prototyping
  o Public presentations
  o Working in a highly-effective team
  o Basic journalistic practices

Structure
It takes more effort than most people realize to develop a concept into a desirable, feasible and viable media product idea. Ideas are easy. News Lab is divided into separate units. While the units build on one another, they are not chronological stages and will overlap.

Units
- Ideation:
  o **What** is your media product and what makes it a good idea?
- Desirability:
  o **Who** wants your product and **where** are they? **What** is the specific problem that your product solves for a specific group of people? **What** are you doing for this group of people? **What** value are you providing?
- Feasibility
  o **How** does your product work?
- Viability
  o **When** and **how** will your product be self-sustaining?

- Presentation
    - **Why** should this product be developed?
- Reflection
    - **How** did the process work? **What** should be done differently?

Evaluation

You are NOT being evaluated on the product/service idea you create. You are being evaluated on the process you follow to test for desirability, feasibility and viability. If your process is solid, you may find that your idea is terrible. That's not failure. That's structured, entrepreneurial-based learning.

Teams

You will work in teams of 3 to 5 people all semester. *The team will not succeed without you and you will not succeed without your team.* TRUST ME when I say the key to having a positive and successful team experience is to physically work together. Some tasks can be completed individually on your own time, but you will develop a better product, strengthen your understanding of the process and receive a higher grade if you work together.

Reese News Lab Access

The Reese News Lab (Carroll 11) is available to you 24/7 via OneCard access at the outer door in order to facilitate your working together.

Attendance

You should approach this class as you would a job at a startup. Only a death in your immediate family (or your own demise, obviously) or a physician-noted illness will be accepted as an excused absence. Two (2) unexcused absences are allowed. For each unexcused absence after the first two, you will lose 0.2 points from your final grade (a 3.9 will become a 3.7; a 3.0 will become a 2.8 and so on). Being late is the same thing as being absent.

Late Assignments

Although late assignments may be accepted at the discretion of the instructor, **you will be given a 0 for any late assignment**. Deadlines will be enforced.

Schedule

Class	Date	Topic	Assignment
1	January 7	Introduction to News Lab	Client Study Innovation Report
2	January 12	Brainstorming Ideas with the client	Pitching Ideas
3	January 14	Brainstorming Ideas	Talking to People
	January 19	HOLIDAY	
4	January 21	Brainstorming Ideas	Talking to People
5	January 26	Brainstorming Ideas	Talking to People
6	January 28	Choosing An Idea	Pitch Your Idea Expert Interview
7	February 2	Prepare to Pitch Your Idea	
8	February 4	Pitch Your Idea	
9	February 9	*Innovation Report Due* Introduction to Desirability - The Value Proposition	Idea Memo Team Bios
10	February 11	Customers & Stakeholders	Stakeholder Map
11	February 16	Personas Market Sizing	Persona Interview Market Sizing
12	February 18	Market Pitch & Q&A	Desirability Summary
13	February 23	Prototypes & MVPs	Prototype Draft

14	February 25	Prototype I	Testing Prototypes
15	March 2	Basic Business	Basic Business Feasibility Summary
16	March 4	Spreadsheets	Spreadsheets
	March 9	SPRING BREAK	
	March 11	SPRING BREAK	
17	March 16	Gut Check - Your First Pitch	Gut Check
18	March 18	Prototype II	Testing Revenue
19	March 23	Business Model	Basic Business Model
20	March 25	Pitching	Pitch Outline Viability Summary
21	March 30	Pitching with Q&A Extras	Extras
22	April 1	Pitching with Q&A	Revised Pitches
23	April 6	Pitching with Q&A	Revised Pitches
24	April 8	Final Preparations	
	April 10	PITCH DAY	
25	April 13	Reflection	Overall Report
26	April 15	NO CLASS	

27	April 20	Wrap Up	Reflection Paper Self Review
28	April 22	Team Evaluations	
	May 4	FINAL EXAM 8 a.m.	

Team Deliverables:

General Assignments - 15%
- Combination of all homework assignments as explained during class turned in on time and according to the assignment instructions.

Final Presentation - 35%
- The presentation (and Q&A) of findings and recommendations for your media product. It must be well prepared, well rehearsed, and well presented. You must be able to answer all questions appropriately, honestly and sincerely using any and all data and feedback you've collected over the course of the semester

Individual Deliverables

Instructor Evaluation – 10%
- The instructor will evaluate each student at the end of the semester based on the News Lab Evaluation Criteria listed below.

Self Review – 5%
- Students will evaluate themselves at the end of the semester based on the News Lab Evaluation Criteria listed below.

Innovation Application – 15%
- Read, review and apply *The Innovator's Dilemma* to the media industry.

Reflection – 20%
- Students will demonstrate understanding of media entrepreneurship by reflecting on the process as it relates to their product. They should explain the most important takeaways they have from their work. 1,500 words or less.

News Lab Evaluation Criteria
- *Resourcefulness & Initiative:* Ability to generate new and improved ideas,

concepts, methods, techniques, processes and practices. Ability to deal with new situations effectively. Extent of efforts at creative problem-solving, anticipating needs and planning accordingly.
- *Collaboration & Attitude*: Effectiveness in working with others to generate ideas, seek mutual purpose/understanding, be receptive to differing ideas and opinions while continuing forward progress.
- *Overall:* How this student performed overall in every aspect of the project.

Evaluation Scale
(Each grade can have a "-" or "+" to allow for more granular evaluation).
- A: Outstanding. Exceptional student. A model for all others.
- B: Exceeds Expectations. Solid effort.
- C: Meets Expectations. Completed the basic assignments.
- D: Needs Improvement. Significant issues with assignments and team.
- F: Below Expectations. Needs to consider a different class/field**.**

Grade Scale *(Final Grade Range)*
A = 4.0 *(3.8 – 4.0)*
A- = 3.7 *(3.4 – 3.7)*
B+ = 3.3 *(3.1 – 3.3)*
B = 3.0 *(2.8 – 3.0)*
B- = 2.7 *(2.4 – 2.7)*
C+ = 2.3 *(2.1 – 2.3)*
C = 2.0 *(1.8 – 2.0)*
C- = 1.7 *(1.4 – 1.7)*
D+ = 1.3 *(1.1 – 1.3)*
D = 1.0 *(0.8 - 1.0)*
F = 0.0 (0.0 – 0.7)

Graduate Grade Scale
H = 3.4 – 4.0
P = 2.0 – 3.3
L = 1.0 – 2.3
F = 0.0 – 0.9

Honor Code:
It is expected that you will conduct yourself within the guidelines of the University honor system (http://honor.unc.edu). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructors' responsibility as faculty members under the Honor

Code, please see the course instructors or Senior Associate Dean Chris Roush.

Seeking Help:

If you need individual assistance, it is your responsibility to meet with an instructor during office hours or to set up an appointment for another time. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability or an illness.

Diversity:

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the Undergraduate Bulletin *http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/.* In summary, UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression or disabilities.

Special Accommodations:

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructors know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Department of Disability Services website at *http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/* or call (919) 962-8300.

ACEJMC Core Values and Competencies

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here:

http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies. Specifically, this course is designed to help you
- Think critically, creatively and independently
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts

- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work