JOMC 463: News Lab

Tuesdays and Thursdays: 9:30 – 10:45 a.m.
11 Carroll Hall (Reese New Lab)
Fall 2014
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.
- Publically 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
- Exhibit a working knowledge of:
  - Listening to customers
  - Market research
  - Basic business modeling
  - Prototyping
  - Public presentations
  - Working in a highly-effective team
  - 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:
  - **What** is your media product and what makes it a good idea?
- Desirability:
  - **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
  - **How** does your product work?
- Viability
  - **When** and **how** will your product be self-sustaining?

- Presentation
    - o **Why** should this product be developed?
- Reflection
    - o **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, entrepreneurship-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 and proposal 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 one-third of a letter grade from your final grade (an "A" will become an "A-," an "A-" will become a "B+," and so on). Being late is the same thing as being absent.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will be accepted the discretion of the instructor, but **you will be given an F for any late assignment**. Deadlines will be enforced.

Schedule

Class	Date	Topic	Assignment
1	August 19	Introduction to News Lab	Pitching Ideas
2	August 21	Brainstorming Ideas with Kelly Wolff	Talking to People
3	August 26	Brainstorming Ideas	Talking to People
4	August 28	Choosing An Idea	Pitch Your Idea Expert Interview
5	September 2	Pitch Your Idea	
6	September 4	Introduction to Desirability - The Value Proposition	Idea Memo Team Bios
7	September 9	Stakeholders	Stakeholder Map
8	September 11	Personas Market Sizing	Persona Interview Market Sizing
9	September 16	Market Pitch & Q&A	Desirability Summary
10	September 18 (Knight)	Prototypes & MVPs	Prototype Draft
11	September 23	Prototype I	Testing Prototypes
12	September 25	Prototype II	Testing Prototypes
13	September 30	Basic Business	Basic Business Feasibility Summary
14	October 2	Spreadsheets	Spreadsheets
15	October 7	Prototype III	Testing Revenue

			Prototypes
16	October 9	Business Model	Basic Business Model
17	October 14	Pitch Your Business	First Pitch Viability Summary
	October 16	FALL BREAK	
18	October 21	Gut Check - Your First Pitch	Gut Check
19	October 23	Pitching	Pitch Outline
20	October 28	Pitching with Q&A	Revised Pitches
21	October 30	Extras	Extras
22	November 4	Pitching with Q&A	Revised Pitches
23	November 6	Pitching with Q&A	Revised Pitches
24	November 11	Final Preparations	Final Preparations
25	November 13	Dress Rehearsal	
	November 14	PITCH DAY	
26	November 18	Final Documentation	Overall Report
27	November 20	Reflection	Reflection Paper Self / Peer Review
28	November 25		
	November 27	THANKSGIVING	
29	December 2	Team Evaluations	

	December 9	FINAL EXAM 4 p.m.	

Team Deliverables:

Desirability Summary - 10%
- A 500-word summary that clearly states your value proposition and outlines your consumer market and problem you are solving. It must clearly identify your target market, how big that target is, **why** you are targeting this market. The summary must include data and feedback from your potential customers to prove or disprove this is a desirable product or service.

Viability - 10%
- A 500-word memo to your angel investor (me) that succinctly summarizes why and how your product will generate revenue. You must also include a basic spreadsheet that shows appropriate calculations over time to support your memo. This memo must include data and feedback from your potential customers to prove or disprove this is a viable product or service.

Feasibility - 5%
- A working prototype that demonstrates your product and how consumers would interact with it. You must include data and feedback from your potential customers about this prototype and how AND why you've changed the prototype/idea because of this feedback.

Overall - 15%
- Your final report about your product or service idea including ALL data and customer feedback you've collected and how that changed your approach through the semester.

Presentation - 10%
- The public presentation (and Q&A) of findings and recommendations for your media product. It must be well prepared, well rehearsed, and you must be able to answer all questions appropriately, honestly and sincerely.

Individual Deliverables

Instructor Evaluation – 20%
- The instructor will evaluate each student at the end of the semester based on the

News Lab Evaluation Criteria listed below.

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

Reflection – 25%
- Students will demonstrate understanding of media entrepreneurship by describing the process as it relates to your project. Students will tell the story of how they managed the process. Use your team's process as an example of how you tested for desirability, feasibility and desirability, how your prepared for the pitch and why you did the things you did and their significance. 1,500 words or less.

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
- A = 97
- A- = 93
- B+ = 89
- B = 86
- B- =83
- C+ = 79
- C = 76

- C- = 73
- D+ = 69
- D = 66
- D- = 63
- F   = 0

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 Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates

should be aware of certain core values and competencies. The values directly addressed in this class are:

- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity
- Think critically, creatively and independently
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work