MEJO 725 Media Innovation in Practice – Spring 2023
Asynchronous/online
Instructor: Kate Sheppard
kateshep@email.unc.edu / kateshepUNC@gmail.com (for sharing docs)
Office hours by appointment

Course Description

The goal of this class is to get you thinking creatively about how we develop the media products and services of the future. We will be learning an iterative, design-thinking approach to entrepreneurship and innovation. Our goal is to practice thinking creatively about solving problems.

Using elements of marketing, journalism, technology, public speaking, and business, engage in a direct experience where you will learn how to:
- face extreme uncertainty;
- make quick decisions with limited information;
- fail early and often, and learn from those failures;
- receive and give direct feedback;
- and assess the viability and sustainability of digital products and services.

Successful students will be curious, self-starters and will not expect to be told exactly how to do something. Instead, the goal is to learn some of the processes and frameworks for innovation, and tools we can use to guide our decision making. We will have fun, work hard, be creative, take risks and challenge the status quo.

Framework and Objectives

This class is asynchronous and online, but I will offer several live sessions that you can either join or watch later. I do think that class dynamics benefit from a little digital face-to-face time, plus I want to give you opportunities to interact with some professionals in the field who will join us as guest speakers.

This syllabus sets the schedule for the semester. I will alert you to changes and additions at least a week in advance. Class documents are linked within the syllabus and in Sakai.

Our objectives for the semester:
- Understand the concepts of desirability, feasibility and viability
- Apply entrepreneurial thinking to pressing problems
- Explore the challenges and promises of new ideas in media and journalism
- Develop a well-researched and tested proposal
- Construct and deliver a high-quality presentation

You will be evaluated on the process you follow to test for desirability, feasibility and viability. If your process is solid, you may find your assumptions didn't hold up. That's not failure! That's structured, entrepreneurial-based learning. I want to know what you learned, how you learned it, and what you plan to do with that information. That includes:

- Listening to, and understanding, your audience
- Conducting market research
- Applying principles of sustainability
- Prototyping and iteration

Course Materials

- Ferrier, Michelle and Elizabeth Mays, *Media Innovation and Entrepreneurship*
- Christensen, Clayton, *The Innovator's Dilemma*
- Lupton, Ellen, *Design Is Storytelling*
- I will post other readings, videos, and podcasts throughout the semester, which you can find in the week-by-week schedule.

Week-by-Week

Here and in Sakai.

Assignments

All assignments should be turned in via Google Docs at the date and time specified. Please share them with both my Gmail and my UNC email (at the top of this page), and make sure you have set the permissions so I can edit and comment. You can also just email me the link. I will put feedback and grades directly in the document.

Deadlines in the class are firm. If you think you are going to miss a deadline, please contact me at least 24 hours in advance so we can discuss how to address it.

Memos - 20%
There are five memos due in the first part of the semester. These are due by 11:59 p.m. on the Monday of the week for which they are posted. (See assignment sheet for specific dates.)

Forum posts - 20%
I will post a weekly forum prompt that touches on our readings, assignments and your own professional experience. You will be expected to write one response to my question, and to respond to two of your classmates' responses. Responses should be

thoughtful and coherent, but they don't have to be lengthy. Aim for 100-150 words each. These are due by 11:59 p.m. on the Friday of the week for which they are posted.

Midterm – 20%

Will be posted by March 10

Final Pitch -- 20%
Due by May 9 (by appointment)
The presentation of findings and recommendations. It must be well prepared, rehearsed, and presented. You must be able to answer questions appropriately, honestly, and sincerely using any and all data and feedback you've collected over the course of the semester. The pitch and Q&A session will be evaluated based on how well you articulate what you have learned.

Final Report - 20%
Due May 9
A written/visual presentation that shows more of the work that went into your pitch. The report will be evaluated based on how well you prove the desirability, feasibility and viability of your recommendations. The report should include detailed research and supporting evidence, as well as a clear proposal for action. I'll be distributing a more thorough description of what this needs to include later in the semester.

Grade Scale

- HP - 90 and above
- P - 80-89
- LP - 70-79
- F - Below 70

Communication and Seeking Help

The world continues to be wild and somewhat unpredictable. I hope we can all continue to be flexible, compassionate and communicative. If you are having a hard time with something, tell me! The time to ask for help is before you are in crisis mode or have missed a deadline. I am very responsive on email and easy to meet for a phone or Zoom call.

Diversity and Anti-Racism

The official school note is below, but I feel it is important to set out my expectations for class conduct and discussion -- both my own and yours. I do so in accordance with the main purposes of both academia and journalism: to distinguish between valid and

invalid knowledge and judgments, and to broaden our perspective on the world and the experiences of others.

In my class, I expect students to:

- Refrain from judging individuals according to the collective groups they may belong to (e.g. race, gender, class, sexual orientation, disability status, etc.);

- Assess ideas and arguments according to the evidence and not based on the identities of the individual who created them;

- Acknowledge and seek to better understand the historical and contemporary systems of racism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism that have created real disparities in people's lives, how they see the world, and the opportunities that are available to them;

- And consider the often invisible systems of power at play in a given situation and the perspective of those who do not have that power.

Honor Code

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself 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. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean C. A. Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

Syllabus Changes

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS)

UNC-Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities.

Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with

applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: https://ars.unc.edu or email ars@unc.edu. More info here.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: https://caps.unc.edu/ or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

Title IX

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim – titleixcoordinator@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

University Policy On Non-Discrimination

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at safe.unc.edu) or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office, or online to the EOC at https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/.

University Policy On Diversity

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions. More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements with accompanying goals. These complement the University policy on prohibiting harassment and discrimination. 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. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or 919-966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies.

ACEJMC Core Values and Competencies

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media'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.

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