

This is a living document—it will change forms through the semester.

DES430 - ENTREPRENEURIAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT I—UIC FALL 2014/SPRING 2015

—Thursdays 1pm-6:40pm

—Architecture & Design Studios rm 2410

—Credit Hours: 4

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—Office Hours: Arranged

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Typically courses on “**entrepreneurship**” are found in **business schools** and focus on conventional models of business-building, treating the goods or services as commodities that can be “**strategized**” and “**managed**” towards success. The focus is usually on **business and marketing plans**, aggressive **growth models**, and are often concerned with **raising start-up capital**. These are ventures that demand significant time, attention, risk, expertise and capital investment—all with an eye toward significant growth and financial return.

In this studio, students will be exposed to a new form of “**design-entrepreneurship**” which puts more emphasis on “**ideas**” and “**making**” to create brands and launch products. A culmination of modern-day movements has given **product designers** the ability to bring **their own ideas** to market, allowing them to more directly **control** their work and reap direct **benefits** from the success—in the end giving them more **autonomy** in how they want to work.

New media forms such as video, interactive websites, and even GIFs have allowed designers to share ideas in more compelling ways—and more importantly—ways that can be shared easily. **Blogs** have allowed early product concepts to spread rapidly, delivering niche ideas to their audiences, and giving the designer real world feedback and a sense of the scale of interest. **Rapid prototyping** has allowed designers to inexpensively prototype ideas. **Small-scale & localized manufacturing** has allowed smaller runs of objects to be produced affordably. **Contemporary perspectives on craft** have given makers a new audience of people interested in handmade goods. **Social media** has allowed designers to promote their work in authentic ways and build “followers” that help spread the word and give feedback. **Crowdfunding** has sprouted a new model for raising capital, while building an audience through storytelling—a designer’s most potent tool.

This course will explore this new world of opportunity, celebrating an ideal of **authorship in design**—whether it be manifested as a “side project” along with full time employment or defining an alternative professional path for design altogether.

OBJECTIVES & GOALS

The persistent goal of this course will be to explore the ethos, philosophy, and driving spirit behind independent design models—paired with actionable guidance on how to build an independent design practice.

Semester 1: Make

The first semester of EPD will focus on the “DIY” element of self-initiated work. Students should emerge from the first semester understanding the risks and rewards of pursuing design entrepreneurialism, along with the competency to identify opportunities and ideas for self-driven projects, authentically promote their ideas, produce saleable work, set up a crowdfunding campaign, and create a financially sustainable project.

Students should:

- understand the basic models of design entrepreneurship
- understand the entrepreneurial opportunities of new technology platforms
- develop a self-initiated product & crowdfunding campaign (to be launched and run in Spring semester)
- understand issues of sourcing, manufacturing, branding, and marketing a product

Semester 2: Scale

The second semester of EPD will focus on scaling design entrepreneurship. Students should emerge from the first semester understanding how a project turns into a business.

Students should:

- understand possibilities for medium-scale manufacturing
- get a sense of how to navigate retail, wholesale sales, and trade shows
- learn a process for developing royalty-based projects
- gain exposure to co-working models
- learn about the start-up and VC community
- launch and run a crowdfunding campaign for their self-initiated product

As a senior-level, professional development course, students are transitioning from more scholastic- to professional-concerns and as such there will be an overarching philosophy, tone, and emphasis on business practice and results.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Generally each 6 hours class meeting will have 3 modes:

1. **Education** - lectures and discussions about topics related to entrepreneurial design

2. **Inspiration** - guest presentations/interviews/studio tours with designer-entrepreneurs
3. **Application** - studio time for developing student project

FALL 2014

Aug 28 - Class cancelled due to a baby being born (sorry/not sorry)
Sep 04 - Models for independent design — Craighton Berman of Manual
Sep 11 - Developing your POV — Tony Ruth of Vessel/Lunchbreath/etc
Sep 18 - Find your niche/Landscape of tools — Joey Roth of Joey Roth
Sep 25 - Sourcing - **Concept Critique** — Kristen Wentrcek of Wintercheck Factory
Oct 02 - CLASS STARTS LATE - Flashpoint Kickstarter panel
Oct 09 - Business modelling — Don Lehman of MoreReal/Fireside/Core77
Oct 16 - PR — Jill Singer of Sight Unseen
Oct 23 - Creating a campaign **Product Critique** — Martin Kastner of Crucial Detail
Oct 30 - CLASS STARTS LATE — Branding/Photography
Nov 06 - Storytelling/Video workshop
Nov 13 - **Campaign Critique** — Max Temkin of Cards Against Humanity
Nov 20 - Working session — Michael Una of Inventables
Nov 27 - Thanksgiving, no class
Dec 04 - **Final presentation of Kickstarter campaigns** (launch in 2nd semester)

SPRING 2015

1/15 - Charles Adler of Kickstarter
1/22 - John Kestner of Supermechanical
1/29 - **Kickstarter campaign launch**
2/05 - TBA (possible Kickstarter event)
2/12 - Catalyze Chicago tour
2/19 - TBA
2/26 - **Kickstarter campaign ends**
3/05 - Trade shows
3/12 - Small scale manufacturing
3/19 - Royalties
3/26 - SPRING BREAK FOREVER
4/02 - Retail
4/09 - Start up/VC
4/16 - New biz models
4/23 - TBA
4/30 - TBA

READINGS & MATERIALS

Self-reflection and inspiration are major components of design entrepreneurship. Each student will be required to take copious sketchnotes of guest lectures and class content in a bound-sketchbook. Students will also use the same sketchbook to document their own process for the project, from research to implementation. Students should share this work by posting photos/scans of their sketchnotes to their Tumblr as well.

There will be various readings, which may include excerpts from, but not limited to:

[Steal Like An Artist. Austin Kleon](#) (purchase)

[Show Your Work. Austin Kleon](#) (purchase)

[It Will Be Exhilarating. Studio Neat](#) (free on web or purchase)

[Kern and Burn. Jessica Karle Heltzel & Tim Hoover](#) (download from teacher)

COMMUNICATION

The class Tumblr will be the major source for disseminating information. Each student will also be required to set up a Tumblr for the class to openly share their process.

Tumblr: always-be-hustling.tumblr.com

Email: cberman1@uic.edu

Dropbox: TBD

Students will be notified during class of assignments and any changes or supplements to the syllabus. The professor will also communicate through email as issues may arise during non-class times. Students will be required to document their work on their Tumblr or load their classwork onto Dropbox—in the respective folder—before class.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance in class is required and recorded. It is expected that students will be learning from the instructor, but also through interactions with other students. When absent, the opportunity is missed to learn from fellow students (something that cannot be made up later), but also to contribute. Studio culture in the Industrial Design program demands both the presence and participation of all students. This is the rationale behind the attendance policy.

One unexcused absence is permitted. Upon the second unexcused absence, 10 points will be deducted (one full letter) from the final course grade. Three unexcused absences will result in course failure; students are welcome to continue participating in the remainder of the course, but will not receive a passing grade. An excused absence is one that is due to emergency, sickness, or other prearranged situation with the instructor. It is expected that under most circumstances students will notify instructors through email prior to the beginning of the class about an expected absence. Upon request of the instructor, students are required to provide substantiating proof (e.g., doctor's note) for an excused absence.

Students are also expected to show up on time and to stay for the duration of the class. Missing more than 30 minutes throughout a class (coming late, leaving early, returning late from breaks) is counted as one-half (1/2) absence.

With any absence—excused or unexcused—students are accountable for what was missed from lectures, assignments, revisions to assignments, and revisions to due dates, etc. Students should request course content (e.g., lecture notes) from fellow students; instructors are not required to repeat lectures or review missed material. Students should not expect a response to emails such as: “What did I miss in class today?” Further, an excused absence does not excuse students from completing any required assignments.

It is each student's responsibility to verify his or her attendance record with the instructor.

For offsite studio visits and guest speakers: busy professionals are graciously donating their time to us, and we must show them the utmost of respect for their time. Plan to arrive 15 minutes ahead of schedule for these special occasions, but do not interrupt the studio until the scheduled start time, unless the instructor is present.

Grading:

Grading is an important aspect of the educational process. Students are assessed throughout the course on many factors that culminate in a final letter grade: A, B, C, D, or F (no plusses or minuses). Taken into account is the ability to achieve certain standards, but relative position to peers as well. Grades will fall along a general distribution curve with few A-grades. Merely completing all assignments in full and on time does not constitute exceptional (A-grade) work. While a final cumulative score of 89 is indeed close to an A-grade, it is ultimately a B-grade.

Final Project 60 points

Class Participation 20 points

Documentation & Development 20 points

Academic Integrity Policy:

UIC is committed to providing an environment in which research, learning, and scholarship can flourish and in which all endeavors are guided by academic and professional integrity. All members of the campus community—students, staff, faculty, and administrators—share the responsibility of insuring that these standards are upheld so that such an environment exists. Instances of academic misconduct by students will be handled pursuant to the Student Disciplinary Policy: uic.edu/depts/dos/studentconduct.html

Academic Deadlines:

Deadlines to add, drop, or withdraw from a course and other important academic deadlines can be found at: <http://www.uic.edu/ucatalog/catalog/CA.shtml>

Religious Holidays:

Students who intend to observe a religious holiday shall notify their instructor of the date when they will be absent by the tenth day of the semester. The faculty member shall make every reasonable effort to honor the request, and not penalize the student for missing the class.

Disability Policy:

The University of Illinois at Chicago is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in a course must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). You may contact DRC at 312-413-2183 (v) or 773-649-4535 (VP/Relay) and consult the following: uic.edu/depts/oaa/disability_resources.

Grievance Procedures:

UIC is committed to the most fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity involving students and employees. Freedom from discrimination is a foundation for all decision making at UIC. Students are encouraged to study the University's "Nondiscrimination Statement." Information on grievance policies and procedures is available on the University web pages of the Office of Access and Equity: www.uic.edu/depts/oea.

Campus Security:

UIC is strongly committed to public safety. Students should learn what programs and services are available in case of an emergency. You are always DISCOURAGED from staying in university buildings alone after hours and are ENCOURAGED to use the police/student patrol escort if you are uncomfortable traveling anywhere on campus. You may request an escort to accompany you to a campus destination on foot by calling 312.996.2830, and between 11:00pm and 7:00am, if you are alone and need to leave the building, you can dial the Red Car service

312.996.6800. You can subscribe your cell phone to receive text message alerts. An immediate SMS text alert will be sent in case of emergency (<http://sms.accc.uic.edu>). By dialing 5-5555 from a campus phone, you can summon Police or Fire for any on-campus emergency. Set up the complete number, 1-312-355-5555, on speed-dial. For more information contact: uic.edu/uic/studentlife/campus/safety.shtml