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# Entrepreneurship and Innovation

PROF. ALESSANDRO PALMARIN

## OVERVIEW

**Area:** Business / Entrepreneurship

**Course Code** IB / MG 350

**Dates:** 7 – 17 January 2025

**Term:** Winter

## Course Description

The global economic crisis has threatened the accessibility of youth to easy-to-get and secure job positions in large, multinational companies. Such a rest in the labour market does constitute a major challenge in the Italian context. Within such a difficult context, entrepreneurship is emerging as one of the most powerful responses as an effective and valuable professional career alternative. The entrepreneurial process and its main output – the creation of Small and Medium Enterprises – are at the core of this course. During the course students will discuss case studies of international start-ups and firms to get familiarity with the entrepreneurial ecosystem, initiatives and deepen their understanding of possible business models alternatives. Moreover, in order to get a more intensive experience about entrepreneurship, two guest will be invited to handle webinars around business model innovation and business opportunity identification. This course leverages on great interaction, which is enhanced through in-and-out-of-class-assignments and discussion.

The learning goals of the course are:

- to explore the main dimensions of entrepreneurship;
- to point out the main issues related to running a business, with a specific focus on SMEs;
- to get familiar with the main dimensions of a successful business model.

## Course requirements

- (a) Students are expected to regularly attend class sessions and to actively take part in class debate and case discussions; Students are expected to be prepared on the assigned readings;
- (b) Students are expected to deliver one group assignments and present it to the class.

## Course readings and materials

All the readings and lecturer's slides will be available

## Evaluation and Grading

Class participation	25% of final grade
Individual assignment + presentation	60% of final grade
Assignment delivery in time	15 % of final grade



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## Rules of conduct

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory and no absence/s will be excused. Unexcused absences will prevent students from being admitted to the final exam. In case of health issues, students will need to inform both Cattolica International Office (at [international.advisor@unicatt.it](mailto:international.advisor@unicatt.it)) and the professor and provide a medical certificate.

Should students, for Covid-related issues, be prevented from traveling to Milan and taking in-person courses, but still would like to join the program, Università Cattolica will decide on a case by case basis whether or not the student will be authorized to join virtually.

Attendance will still be mandatory for all classes (exceptions to this rule will only be made for students who find themselves in a time zone that complicates live participation and if the course allows for asynchronous access to course content). Students attending live streaming must activate microphone and camera unless otherwise specified by the instructors.

Company visits (when in-person) will be substituted with an alternative academic activity

**Exam Date:** The exam date cannot be re-scheduled. Unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. In cases of unforeseeable circumstances such as illness or injury on the day of the exams, the student must submit a medical certificate and communicate his/her absence to the Professor and UCSC International Office via email prior to the exam. If the student does not justify his/her absence through sufficient documentation and with adequate notice before the final test, the student will receive an automatic Failed.

## Bio of the instructor

**Alessandro Palmarin** is an entrepreneur and the founder of NIO Cocktails, a company created with the aim of democratizing high mixology through premium quality pre-mixed cocktails, with in an innovative pack designed by him. Under his leadership, the company became international, selling over 2.5 million cocktails in more than 20 countries by 2023, and at the end of the same year he sold control of NIO Cocktails and its shares to one of the giants of the beverage industry, maintaining the role of Board Advisor.

Alessandro graduated in Economics at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, and worked for several international companies (such as Calzedonia Group in Italy and abroad, Levi, Vodafone and Swarovski) in management and leadership positions.

He is a speaker and lecturer at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, SDA Bocconi and USI – Università della Svizzera Italiana, Lugano.

## SCHEDULE

### Lesson 1: Course overview, introduction to entrepreneurship and opportunity recognition

#### Topics:

- Introduction and overview of the course: aims, organization, assessment
- Students' presentation
- The entrepreneurship as a result of the process of human evolution
- The current environment in which an entrepreneur moves.
- Who is an entrepreneur today?
- The nature of entrepreneurial opportunities



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- Sources of opportunity & forms of opportunity
- Industries that favor new firms
- Impact of new technologies and social changes in the emergence new business opportunities

#### **Recommended readings:**

- Cognitive mechanisms in entrepreneurship, by Baron
- Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind, Harvill Secker, 2014

#### **Class assignment:**

- Identify / select among those provided by the lecturer a business opportunity
- List main changes and trends in the industry: demand, customers, technology etc
- Identify how new technologies and social changes might affect these industries

### **Lesson 2: global trends and introduction to business model design**

#### **Topics:**

- Macro-economic and technological trends (Industry 4.0)
- Business purpose: socio-economic integration
- What is a business model?
- How, when, and why we use a business model
- Introduction to business model canvas

#### **Recommended readings:**

- Why the Lean Start-up Changes Everything, by Steve Blank

#### **Group work:**

- Develop the market side of the business model canvas

### **Lesson 3: Value proposition design and customer development process**

#### **Topics:**

- Value Proposition design: Making it sharp, pointy...and laser-like.
- Ensure a product-market fit
- Review of the market side of business model canvas

#### **Recommended readings:**

- Market + Sizing + Overview, by International Finance Corporation
- Value Proposition, by A. Osterwalder and Y. Pigneur
- The Customer Centricity Playbook, by Fader and TomsGroup work:

#### **Group work:**

- Design the value proposition canvas and your customer development process



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### **Guest Speaker:**

Marco Mottolese – CEO Foorban Srl

The importance of being flexible and responsive for an entrepreneur

### **Lesson 4: Business model – product side. Analysis of key activities and teams**

#### **Topics:**

- Activities, resources, partners, and revenue streams
- The difference between the Product Side & the Market side
- Identifying product value: value proposition and competitive advantage
- Structure and roles of key team and operational clarity: challenges, task delivery, roles and responsibilities
- Cross-functional collaboration and integration with corporate strategy
- Measure product performance

#### **Group work:**

- Design the product side of the business model
- Assess your team composition

### **Guest Speaker:**

Mauro Doni – Founder Godivino Srl

How to validate a business idea - Minimum Viable Product

### **Lesson 5: Off-Site Visit**

#### **Topics:**

- Leveraging Generational Transitions for Strategic Business Opportunities

### **Guest Speaker:**

Stefano Toschi, CEO Toschi Vignola, Modena

### **Lesson 6: Blue ocean strategy and competitor analysis**

#### **Topics:**

- Blue ocean strategy: the entry point into the business model canvas
- Positioning map and criteria to identify and monitor competitors

#### **Recommended readings:**

- SWOT and Generic Strategies: Starting with a View from the Top, by Braun and Latham
- Blue Ocean Strategy: From Theory to Practice, by Kim & Mauborgne

#### **Business Case Analysis**

- Premixed Cocktails: an increasingly crowded blue ocean environment

#### **Group work:**

- Design the blue ocean strategy and positioning map



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## Lesson 7: Financial planning and investors overview

### Topics:

- Financial analysis: break-even point
- Income statement
- Cash flow
- Start-up funding
- Investor game

### Guest Speaker:

Mirko Brignani – CEO LabGo Srl  
How, when, and why to raise the funds needed for growth

### Group work:

- Develop your financial analysis

## Lesson 8: From business model to business plan

### Topics:

- How, when, and why we use a business plan
- How to transform a business model in a plan
- Coaching session

## Lesson 9: Off-Site Visit

### Topics:

- Navigating Organizational Disruptions: Managing the Impact of Mergers and Consolidation Dynamics

### Guest Speaker:

Matteo Carini, Head of Category Strategy of ProntoPro

## Lesson 10: Presentation of groupwork and summary of the course

### Topics:

- Students present their work
- Conclusion of the course
- Feedback from student