

# Course Outline for Communication and Entrepreneurship

Dept. of Communication Studies  
COMM 495-02

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Office Hours: Mon. 330 pm – 5 pm; Weds. 330 pm – 430 pm; Fri. 10 am – 11 am; Or by appointment.

Class Meetings: Mon. & Wed. (2:10 – 3:30 pm)  
LA 306

## Recommended Text (Not required)

Shane, Scott A. *The Illusions of Entrepreneurship: The Costly Myths That Entrepreneurs, Investors, and Policy Makers Live By*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008. (Amazon = \$12.24)

**Required readings will be available on Blackboard or distributed in class.**

## General Description

Drawing on interpretive and institutional theories and methods of communication, we will explore and study the processes through which entrepreneurial opportunities are rhetorically and narratively constituted, discovered, and adopted (or abandoned) by actors within various social contexts (e.g., marketplace contexts, for-profit and not-for-profit contexts, and geographic contexts). The course will begin with a critique of traditional theories of entrepreneurship, then explore entrepreneurship theories at the individual-opportunity nexus, and conclude with readings of entrepreneurship as a socio-cultural phenomenon. We will especially focus on evocative objects that are constitutive of entrepreneurial praxis. Students with a focus in organizational communication and rhetoric, and especially those interested in organizational and community development, leadership, and consulting, will find this course insightful.

## Course Goals: By the end of this course, students will have

- a broad understanding of theories of entrepreneurship;
- discussed the benefits, limitations, and criticisms of entrepreneurship in society;
- explored the communicative processes in the foundation (and maintenance) of organizations;
- engaged in creative activities, business plan consulting, and qualitative inquiry to enhance understanding of entrepreneurial processes;
- explored the constitutive role of objects in opportunity creation and identification;
- applied communication theories to the study of entrepreneurial opportunities and practices;
- written either the non-financial sections of a business plan or a co-authored publishable paper.

## Methods of Instruction

- Lecture
- Film
- Discussions
- Intensive reading
- Short writing assignments
- Student presentations
- In-class activities
- Creative activities

## Course Policies

**Attendance:** I expect that students will learn from each other. This requires that students come to class ready to participate in a discussion about the assigned readings. Your participation (or lack of) in discussions will be noted and evaluated. In addition to discussions, we may have some in-class activities (including quizzes) that will help you to explore and share your knowledge, experiences, and resources with colleagues.

**Blackboard:** In an effort to reduce student/university expenses and environmental waste, this course will conduct most of its document distribution via Blackboard. You MUST have a Blackboard user name, know how to use Blackboard, have a functioning email address, and have access to a computer with a word processor and Adobe Acrobat Reader. Assignment guidelines will ONLY be uploaded to Blackboard. Some student work may be submitted to Blackboard in Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf). These assignments will be returned with instructor feedback as a PDF document. (<https://onestop.umt.edu/>)

**Writing:** Professional success in organizations demands quality writing. The quality of your writing, therefore, matters. Improving your writing is part of the content of this course. Evaluation of your writing includes assessments of presentation outlines, paper organization, sentence structure, word choices, typographical mistakes, spelling, and basic grammatical errors. If you feel, or we discover, that you have trouble writing up to the standards required for this course, please consider consulting with a tutor at the UM Writing Center (Liberal Arts 144, 406.243.2266, [growl@mso.umt.edu](mailto:growl@mso.umt.edu)). You must work with a tutor at the UM Writing Center if I ask you to do so.

for additional resources visit the UM website → (<http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter/>)

**Academic Dishonesty:** I welcome you to this classroom community with the assumption that the work you do will be your own. However, distinguishing your work from the work of another can be tricky at times, for both you and your instructor. You should know that presenting another's work as your own, even if by accident, is a serious violation of the *University of Montana Student Conduct Code*, which identifies the following, among other things, as acts of academic misconduct: "Plagiarism: Representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as one's own; ... Submitting false information: Knowingly submitting false, altered, or invented information, data, quotations, citations, or documentation in connection with an academic exercise; ... Submitting work previously presented in another course: Knowingly making such submission in violation of stated course requirements..." (p. 6).

University Policies Available @ → ([http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student\\_conduct.php](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php))

**Please no food or electronic devices.**

#### **Reasonable Accommodation:**

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

#### **Assignments & Grading Policy:**

All assignments will receive a raw numerical score, but I cannot know these in advance of teaching the course. Contingencies arise during the course of a semester. Under my grading regime, I start with general weights for activities, which I use to calculate final grades.

| <b>Activities / Assignments</b>             | <b>% of Final Grade</b> |
|---|-------------------------|
| Reading, attendance, & in-class activities  | 20%                     |
| Creative exercises & business plan advising | 20%                     |
| Major project                               | 50%                     |
| Final                                       | 10%                     |
|   | <b>100%</b>             |

**Please note:** In advance of each assignment, I will provide specific information about an assignment's goals and grading criteria. You must keep a file of all of the handouts and your own papers (originals, those with my comments, and your revisions), and bring this file with you (on a portable USB drive, disk, or emailed to [craig.engstrom@umontana](mailto:craig.engstrom@umontana) prior to meeting) when you want to discuss any of your papers or your general progress in the course.

Grades will be assigned on the following scale: 94% and above = A; 93-88% = A-; 87-86% = B+; 85-83% = B; 82-78% = B-; 77-76% = C+; 75-73% = C; 72-68% = C-; 67-66% = D+; 65-63% = D; 62-58% (D-); 57% and below = F.

## Explanation of Assignments

**In-class Activities:** We'll have a variety of in-class activities (ICA) to help discuss and concretize learning of key concepts, ideas, and methods. Expect that these activities are always being evaluated and scored. Activities include, but are not limited to, group activities, short quizzes, brief presentations, and class discussions. You must read the assigned articles in advance of class, and it is highly recommended that you take notes or bring articles with you. I will be taking attendance, but just for record keeping purposes. However, if you miss several classes or appear unprepared for course discussions, then your grade will be changed to reflect your participation in the course. I will maintain a "class participation" column in Blackboard and will update the score weekly so you can track my impressions of your course participation. While this grade will be qualitatively assigned, it will be based on concrete observations. If you miss any part of a scheduled film day, it is your responsibility to obtain a copy of the film, watch it, and write a well-written five page, double-spaced reflective paper that connects course readings to the film content. This paper will be due within 14 days. If you do not submit this paper, your participation score will be permanently reduced by 5%.

**Creative Exercises and Business Plan Advising:** As part of the learning process, students are required to engage in at least three of out-of-class learning exercises. To show participation in the activity, you are required to take a snap of the activity and write a short reflective paragraph describing the outcomes of the creative process: provocations, ideas, frustrations, etc. and what this means for your entrepreneurial self. We will work out the specifics of these activities during the first two weeks of the semester. I think that the best use of time is to arrange an activity that works toward the final project and invites other students to participate.

We will be working with the Prison Entrepreneurship Program ([www.pep.org](http://www.pep.org)), a Houston-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, as business plan advisors. Established in 2004, the Prison Entrepreneurship Program (PEP) "[is] pioneers of innovative programs that connect the nation's top executives, MBA students and politicians with convicted felons. [PEP] entrepreneurship boot camp and re-entry programs are proven solutions for reformed inmates who thrive on challenge and accountability. [PEP is] on a mission to stimulate positive life transformation for executives and inmates, uniting them through entrepreneurial passion, education and mentoring."

Working in groups of 2-3 students each, we will advise ten PEP Class XV participants. You will receive a series of assignments and will have between one to two weeks to complete the assignment (this is determined by PEP, not your instructor). This activity will take place between Feb. 22 and May 3, 2011. While there will be one team leader, it will be up to the group to decide how to complete each assignment.

Please visit the following webpage to learn more about the requirements of this activity:

<http://pep.org/advisors/current-instructions.aspx>

**Final Project:** At the beginning of the semester (around the end of the second week), you will choose to either write a business plan or work on a co-authored creative paper. You should choose the option that is most practical for you. Both projects will focus on the narrative dimensions of entrepreneurship. The business plan will focus on specifying a narrative of your future business and projected business image. A good model to follow is the Small Business Administration's "business plan template," but I hope you'll be creative and tailor your business plan to your business narrative and image. The business plan will likely be 15 pages or more. If you choose to work on this project, I will assign you additional reading.

The co-authored paper will draw upon qualitative inquiry into entrepreneurial practices within a particular field in general and a specific object(s) in particular. The paper will be between 12 and 15 pages, follow the writing guidelines of the *American Psychological Association Writer's Manual* (6<sup>th</sup> edition), be written in an academic tone consistent with autoethnographic writing, and copyright assignable. The goal of this activity is to produce publishable work that could be included in an edited book on "evocative objects" and "entrepreneurial creativity." This is a potential publication opportunity for many of you. I will be seeking

Edward Elgar Publishing to publish this book. I will write the front matter and the section introductions. I hope to have at least 10 publishable essays.

**Final:** We will have a final, which will evaluate your reading and retention of the assigned materials.

### Course Reading Schedule (Tentative)

*Week 1 (Jan. 24 & 26):* Introductions / Beyond heroic entrepreneur

Mon.

Introductions, syllabus overview, and begin film 1: *Helvetica* (2007; dir. Gary Hustwit)

Weds.

*Helvetica*, cont'd

Read:

Gartner, William B. "Entrepreneurship-Hop." *Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice* 32, no. 2 (2008): 361-68.

Gladwell, M. (2008). Chapter 2: "The 10,000 hour rule" in *Outliers*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

Optional

Bijker, Wiebe E. "Introduction." In *Of bicycles, bakelites, and bulbs: Toward a theory of sociotechnical change*. (pp. 1-17)

Gladwell, M. (2008). Chapter 1: "The Matthew effect" in *Outliers*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

*Week 2 (Jan. 31 & Feb. 2):* Beyond the heroic entrepreneur

Mon.

Gartner, William B. "'Who Is an Entrepreneur?' Is the Wrong Question." *American Journal of Small Business* 12, no. 4 (1988): 11-32.

Turkle, Sherry. "The things that matter." In *Evocative objects*. (pp. 3-10)

Reference only

Shane, Scott A. *The Illusions of Entrepreneurship: The Costly Myths That Entrepreneurs, Investors, and Policy Makers Live By*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008. (Chapters 1, 3-4)

Weds.

Holmquist, Carin. "Is the Medium Really the Message?: Moving Perspective from the Entrepreneurial Actor to the Entrepreneurial Action." In *New Movements in Entrepreneurship*, edited by Chris Steyaert and Daniel Hjorth, 73-85. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2003.

Machover, Tod. "My cello." In *Evocative objects*. (pp. 14-21)

Reference only

Nicholson, Louise, and Alistair R. Anderson. "News and Nuances of the Entrepreneurial Myth and Metaphor: Linguistic Games in Entrepreneurial Sense-Making and Sense-Giving." *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 29 (2005): 153-72.

*Week 3 (Feb. 7 & 9):* E-ship Individual-Opportunity Nexus

Mon.

Shane, Scott A. *A General Theory of Entrepreneurship: The Individual-Opportunity Nexus*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2003. (Chapter 1-2)

McMullen, Jeffery S., Lawrence A. Plummer, and Zoltan J. Acs. "What Is an Entrepreneurial Opportunity?" *Small Business Economics* 28, no. 4 (2007): 273-83.

Weds.

Plummer, Lawrence A., J. Michael Haynie, and Joy Godesiabo. "An Essay on the Origins of Entrepreneurial Opportunity." *Small Business Economics* 28, no. 4 (2007): 363-79.

**Week 4 (Feb. 14 & 16): E-ship Individual-Opportunity Nexus**

Mon.

Begin film 2: *Objectified* (2009, dir. Gary Hustwit)

Read:

Shane, Scott A. "Prior Knowledge and the Discovery of Entrepreneurial Opportunities." *Organization Science* 11, no. 4 (2000): 448-69.

Newitz, Annalee. "My laptop." In *Evocative objects*. (pp. 88-91)

Weds.

*Objectified*, cont'd

Read:

Gartner, William B., Nancy M. Carter, and Gerald E. Mills. "The Language of Opportunity." In *New Movements in Entrepreneurship*, edited by Chris Steyaert and Daniel Hjorth, 103-24. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2003.

Alvarez, Sharon A., and Jay B. Barney. "Discovery and Creation: Alternative Theories of Entrepreneurial Action." *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal* 1 (2007): 11-26.

**Week 5 (Feb. 21 & 23): Eship from New Movement Perspectives: Narrative, Discursive, and Rhetorical**

No class Monday - Washington-Lincoln Day Holiday

Weds.

Handley, S. "Introduction" and "'N-Day: The Dawn of Nylon" in *Nylon: The story of a fashion of revolution*. (pp. 6-9; 31-51)

Beinart, Julian. "The radio." In *Evocative objects*. (pp. 104-109)

McLaughlin, Irene Castle. "The bracelet." In *Evocative objects*. (pp. 112-116)

Spilecki, Susan. "Dit da jow: Bruise wine." In *Evocative objects*. (pp. 128-134)

**Week 6 (Feb. 28 & Mar. 2): Studying E-ship from Qualitative-Communications Perspective (Qualitative communication research)**

Mon.

Fisher, Walter R. "The Narrative Paradigm: In the Beginning." *Journal of Communication* 35, no. 4 (1985): 74-89.

Foss, Sonja K. *Rhetorical criticism: Explorations and practice*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press. (Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 3-20)

Weds.

Gartner, William B., and Sue Birley. "Introduction to the Special Issue on Qualitative Methods in Entrepreneurship Research." *Journal of Business Venturing* 17, no. 4 (2002): 387-95.

Venkataraman, S. "A Qualitative Methodology for Process Studies of Entrepreneurship." *International Studies of Management & Organization* 27, no. 3 (1998): 13-33.

*Week 7 (Mar. 7 & 9): Studying E-ship from Qualitative-Communications Perspective*

Mon.

Langsdorf, Lenore – Hermeneutic phenomenology method

Seymour, Richard G. "Hermeneutic Phenomenology and International Entrepreneurship Research."

*Journal of International Entrepreneurship* 4 (2006): 137-55.

Weds.

Johnstone, Bruce A. "Ethnographic Methods in Entrepreneurship Research." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Entrepreneurship*, edited by Helle Neergaard and John Parm Ulhøi, 97-121. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2007.

Lindh de Montoya, Monica. "Driven entrepreneurs." In *Narrative and discursive approaches in entrepreneurship*. (pp. 57-79).

*Week 8 (Mar. 14 & 16): Eship from New Movement Perspectives: Narrative, Discursive, and Rhetorical*

Mon.

Steyaert, Chris, and Daniel Hjorth, eds. *New Movements in Entrepreneurship*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2003. (INTRO)

Hjorth, Daniel, and Chris Steyaert, eds. *Narrative and Discursive Approaches in Entrepreneurship: A Second Movements in Entrepreneurship Book*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2004. (INTRO)

Weds.

Holt, Robin, and Allan Macpherson. "Sensemaking, Rhetoric and the Socially Competent Entrepreneur." *International Small Business Journal* 28, no. 1: 20-42.

Reference only:

Johansson, Anders W. "Narrating the Entrepreneur." *International Small Business Journal* 22, no. 3 (2004): 273-93.

*Week 9 (Mar 21 & 23): E-ship from New Movement Perspectives: Narrative, Discursive, and Rhetorical*

Mon.

Anderson, Alistair R. "Enacted Metaphor: The Theatricality of the Entrepreneurial Process." *International Small Business Journal* 23, no. 6 (2005): 587-603.

O'Connor, Ellen. "Storytelling to Be Real: Narrative, Legitimacy Building and Venturing." In *Narrative and Discursive Approaches in Entrepreneurship*, edited by Daniel Hjorth and Chris Steyaert, 105-24. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2004.

Weds.

Buffer day -- TBD

*Week 10 (Mar. 28 & 30): Institutional Contexts*

Mon.

Begin film 3: *Startup.com* (2001; dirs. Chris Hegedus and Jehane Noujaim)

Read:

Minniti, Maria. "The Role of Government Policy on Entrepreneurial Activity: Productive, Unproductive, or Destructive?" *Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice* 32, no. 5 (2008): 779-90.

Weds.

*Startup.com* Cont'd

Read: Aldrich, Howard E., and C. Marlene Fiol. "Fools Rush In? The Institutional Context of Industry Creation." *Academy of Management Review* 19, no. 4 (1994): 645-70.

*Week 11 (April 4 & 6): SPRING BREAK*

No class -- Spring Vacation

*Week 12 (April 11 & 13): Spatial and geographic contexts*

Mon.

Steyaert, Chris, and Jerome Katz. "Reclaiming the Space of Entrepreneurship in Society: Geographical, Discursive and Social Dimensions." *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development* 16, no. 3 (2004): 179-96.

Weds.

Johnstone, Harvey, and Doug Lionais. "Depleted Communities and Community Business Entrepreneurship: Revaluing Space through Place." *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development* 16, no. 3 (2004): 217-33.

*Week 13 (April 18 & 20): Illegitimate & Prosaic Contexts*

Mon.

Webb, Justin W., Laszlo Tihanyi, R. Duane Ireland, and David G. Sirmon. "You Say Illegal, I Say Legitimate: Entrepreneurship in the Informal Economy." *The Academy of Management Review* 34, no. 3 (2009): 492-510.

Weds.

Rehn, Alf, and Saara Taalas. "'Znakomstva I Svyazi' (Acquaintances and Connections)--Blat, the Soviet Union, and Mundane Entrepreneurship." *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development* 16, no. 3 (2004): 235-50.

Engstrom, Craig. "A Prosaic Account of Entrepreneurship." *Journal of Critical Organizational Inquiry* (forthcoming, 2011).

*Week 14 (April 25 & 27): The context of identity*

Mon.

Bruni, Attila, Silvia Gherardi, and Barbara Poggio. "Doing Gender, Doing Entrepreneurship: An Ethnographic Account of Intertwined Practices." *Gender, Work and Organization* 11, no. 4 (2004): 406-29.

Weds.

Buffer day – TBD.

*Week 15 (May 2 & 4): Reflections*

Mon.

Begin film 4: *Beer Wars* (2009, dir. Anat Baron)

Weds.

*Beer Wars*, cont'd

*Week 16 (May 9 & 11): Finals Week*

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 11, 1:10-3:10 for one final activity (TBD)