

Course Syllabus
Starting a Nonprofit or Social Enterprise
Spring 2025
Dr. Elizabeth Searing

Course Information

Title: Starting a Nonprofit or Social Enterprise
Number: PA 4356.001.25S (28405)
Term: Spring 2025
Meetings: Monday & Wednesday 4:00-5:15p, FO 1.502

Professor Contact Information

Office Location: GR 3.818
Email Address: Elizabeth.Searing@utdallas.edu
In-Office Hours: In person: Monday & Wednesday 5:30-6:30p
Online or in person: By appointment

Course Modality and Expectations

Instructional Mode	The course will be taught using a traditional, in-person format.
Course Platform	This course will be delivered using four mechanisms: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In-person lecture and discussion;2. Resources posted on eLearning (including assignments, readings, and required learning materials);3. Microsoft Teams or Zoom for meetings between the students and the professor
Expectations	Diligence, engagement, and respect for the opinions of others are essential. Doing the assigned readings and coming to class prepared for the discussion is the most important task of a student/potential entrepreneur. Further details are in the grading and assignment section below.

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

There are no formal course pre-requisites or co-requisites (other than a desire to be a change-maker)!

Course Description

This course provides an in-depth exposure to starting a new nonprofit or social enterprise, as well as creating new ventures within an existing nonprofit organization. The course focuses on the process for creating successful new ventures within a nonprofit context, including comparisons with traditional and low-profit corporate forms. Students will critically engage in the discourse surrounding social entrepreneurship in order to more successfully become change-makers.

In this course, students will:

- Differentiate between different types of social economy start-ups;
- Understand the relationship between the different components of the social business plan and how it works to create change;
- Analyze and critique the way society talks about nonprofits, social entrepreneurship, and philanthropy;
- Produce professional quality materials, including commentaries, portfolios, and presentations;
- Create the blueprint for a social economy start-up that is presented in a competitive pitch session

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Objective 1: Students will develop knowledge of the major issues in starting a nonprofit or social enterprise.

Objective 2: Students will acquire and develop research and writing skills related to the knowledge of nonprofits and social enterprises.

Objective 3: Students will orally communicate the complex issues associated with nonprofit and social enterprise concepts through interpretation and analysis.

Class Materials and Technology

Class Materials

The Instructor may provide class materials that will be made available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. These materials may be downloaded during the course, however, these materials are for registered students' use only. Classroom

materials may not be reproduced or shared with those not in class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Required Textbooks and Materials

- Peri Pakroo. *Starting and Building a Nonprofit*, 10th ed., Berkeley, CA: NOLO, 2024, ISBN 978-1413331516. There are many version of this, but since we are using it as a textbook in class, please purchase this version.
- Rasheda Weaver. *Social Entrepreneurship: A Practical Introduction*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2023, ISBN 9781003226963.
- Any additional readings will be provided online.

Textbooks and some other bookstore materials can be ordered online or purchased at the [UT Dallas Bookstore](#).

Technical Requirements

In addition to a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable a successful learning experience. Please review the important technical requirements on the [Getting Started with eLearning](#) webpage.

Course Access and Navigation

This course can be accessed using your UT Dallas NetID account on the [eLearning](#) website.

Please see the course access and navigation section of the [Getting Started with eLearning](#) webpage for more information.

To become familiar with the eLearning tool, please see the [Student eLearning Tutorials](#) webpage.

UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The [eLearning Support Center](#) includes a toll-free telephone number for immediate assistance (1-866-588-3192), email request service, and an online chat service.

Communication

This course utilizes online tools for interaction and communication. Some external communication tools such as regular email and a web conferencing tool may also be used during the semester. For more details, please visit the [Student eLearning Tutorials](#) webpage for video demonstrations on eLearning tools.

Student emails will be answered within 3 working days under normal circumstances.

Distance Learning Student Resources

Online students have access to resources including the McDermott Library, Academic Advising, The Office of Student AccessAbility, and many others. Please see the [eLearning Current Students](#) webpage for more information.

Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties

The University is committed to providing a reliable learning management system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and also contact the online [eLearning Help Desk](#). The instructor and the eLearning Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

Class Participation

Regular class participation is expected. Students who fail to participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. A portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class, including both engaging in group or other activities during class that solicit your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures (and/or labs). Class participation is documented by faculty. Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to University requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Assignments & Academic Calendar

All assignments due by the start of class on Monday		
<i>Dates (M/W)</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Activities for the Week (readings provided separately)</i>
Week 1 *Jan 22 * Only W	Introduction to the Course	
Week 2 Jan 27 & Jan 29	What are Nonprofits?	Time Magazine Assignment Due
Week 3 Feb 3 & 5	Designing for Impact	Find Your Why Assignment Due
Week 4 Feb 10 & 12	Mapping the Social Economy	Three Start-Up Ideas Due Guest Speaker from Outside the U.S.
Week 5 Feb 17 & 19	Making Mission	Reading Summary #1 Due Workshop Topic: Mission Statements
Week 6 Feb 24 & 26	Explaining Change	Mission Statement Due Workshop Topic: Theory of Change
Week 7 Mar 3 & 5	Governance & Legal Needs	Mission Statement & Theory of Change Due Workshop Topic: Incorporation Exercise
Week 8 Mar 10 & 12	How to Do What We Do	Reading Summary #2 Due Workshop Topic: Program Design Exercise
Mar 16 - Mar 22	Making Plans	Logic Model Assignment Due Workshop Topic: Budget Exercise
Week 9 Mar 24 & 26		SPRING BREAK!

Week 10 <i>Mar 31 & Apr 2</i>	Making Money	Reading Summary #3 Due Workshop Topic: Revenue Plan
Week 11 <i>Apr 7 & 9</i>	Motivating Employees & Volunteers	Financial Plan Due Workshop Topic: Human Resource Plan
Week 12 <i>Apr 14 & 16</i>	Boosting Capacity	Reading Summary #4 Due Workshop Topic: Business Model Canvas
Week 13 <i>Apr 21 & 23</i>	Measuring Your Success	Business Model Canvas Due Workshop Topic: Running the Ship
Week 14 <i>Apr 28 & 30</i>	Make It Shine!	Book Report Due Workshop Topic: Pitch Perfect
Week 15 <i>May 5 & 7</i>		Final Start-Up Portfolio Due Final Pitch Session!
		<i>NO FINAL EXAM!</i>

Assignments & Grading Policy

Assignment Type Overview:

A. Individual Performance	
Individual Reading Assignments	25%
Individual Participation	15%
Individual Book Report	10%
 B. Team Performance	
Team Workshop Activities	25%
Final Pitch Presentation	10%
Final Portfolio	10%
 C. Peer Review	
	<u>5%</u>
	100%

Assignment Types Detail:

- 1. Individual Reading Assignments (25%).** These 1-2 page assignments are responses to prompts that allow you to show your mastery of the concepts from the assigned readings. These assignments will be single spaced, reasonable font, and standard margins; there will be between 1-3 questions, depending on the week. All assignments for a particular topic are due by classtime on Monday.
- 2. Individual Participation (15%).** This course rewards thoughtful participation in class discussions. The topics we cover are rich and can certainly be discussed for more than one class period. It is important for the students to prepare for class discussions by reading all assigned materials in advance, to engage in class discussions responsibly, and to contribute to a productive in-class learning environment through their comments, questions, and answers.
- 3. Individual Book Report (10%).** The list of recommended books will be provided, but students may also read a book not on the list with the instructor's approval. The books are often written by or in dialogue with the social entrepreneur, and as such you have an opportunity to see the development of their thinking on a topic and peer into their personal lives in interesting and insightful ways. The student will report on what events lead the main character to live their life in a certain way, what innovations did they bring to society, and what obstacles did they overcome, but there will be some critical review components as well. Mostly it is a chance to read an interesting story about influential people that have shaped our society in important ways.
- 4. Team Workshop Activities (25%), Final Pitch Presentation (10%) and Portfolio (10%).** The class is structured around a project to create a new nonprofit or social enterprise from scratch. Students will join teams and brainstorm which pressing social problem they would like to engage during the project. The team will build a mission statement around the issue, come up with programming that is meant to provide a solution to the problem, and design the necessary organizational components that would allow the nonprofit or social enterprise to pursue the mission. The **Portfolio** will be a collection of sections, and one will be due each week throughout the semester (these are usually the **Team Workshop Activities**). There will be class time provided for group work. The section will be graded and revisions can be made before the full project is due at the end of the semester. **Final Pitch Presentations** of the team project will be made at a pitch session the final day of class. More details on the individual components will be provided each week.
- 5. Peer Evaluation (5%).** Each team member will evaluate the helpfulness of the other members of their team. You will have a set number of points to distribute amongst the rest of your group to assess their contributions, plus will have the opportunity to give written verbal feedback.

6. **Final Grade:** Final grades will be based on the point distribution described above. Final letter grades will be assigned as followed:

Grade	Total Percentage Achieved
A+	97 or more
A	93%-96%
A-	90%-92%
B+	87%-89%
B	83%-86%
B-	80%-82%
C+	77%-79%
C	73%-76%
C-	70%-72%
D+	67%-69%
D	63%-66%
D-	60%-62%
F	Less than 60%

Course & Instructor Policies

Late and Make-up Policy: Since readings are discussed during class, I am unable to accept late Readings Summaries since they are designed to gather your own reactions to the readings.

For other written assignments, if it is turned in within 24 hours of the due date and time, the assignment is eligible for 90% of the original point total. A written assignment submitted between 24-48 hours after it was due is eligible for 80% of the original point total. No written assignments will be accepted more than 48 hours after they are due except for a documented emergency situation. A documented emergency situation is hospitalization (with accompanying paperwork), the death of an immediate family member, or situations of similar magnitude. All emergencies must have documentation, and the treatment of each is totally within the professor's discretion. If you know that you will have

difficulty turning in an assignment at a certain time (travel, work obligations, etc.), you should plan ahead and/or turn in assignments early.

Course Evaluations: Your honest assessment of this course is an important source of feedback for both me and the department. We will have course evaluations both mid-semester and at the conclusion. These are important, so please take the time to fill out the evaluations thoughtfully.

Class Recordings

Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

The instructor may record meetings of this course. These recordings will be made available to all students registered for this class if the intent is to supplement the classroom experience. If the instructor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law.

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

Academic Support Resources

The information contained in the following link lists the University’s academic support resources for all students. Please go to [Academic Support Resources](#) webpage for these policies.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

Please go to [UT Dallas Syllabus Policies](#) webpage for the University’s policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please review the catalog sections regarding the [credit/no credit](#) or [pass/fail](#) grading option and withdrawal from class.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.