UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Laboratory of Entrepreneurship and Business Planning

2627-1-F7603Q020

Aims

The laboratory course is thought of as hands-on training to support students in developing both the mindset and the practical skills needed for entrepreneurial success.
The laboratory course takes an experiential approach, integrating conceptual knowledge with real-world case studies and hands-on activities to foster critical thinking and entrepreneurial decision-making skills. It also explores the psychological and cognitive dimensions of entrepreneurship. Through interactive experiments, students will examine the personal traits and motivations that shape entrepreneurial intention. The laboratory course further instructs regarding the purpose and structure of a business plan, conducting feasibility analysis, and evaluating industry and market conditions. Attention is given to teaching students how to prepare and present a real business plan. To this purpose, the course covers financial projections, providing tools for evaluating profitability of strategic options and attracting investors.

Knowledge and understanding

At the end of the course the student will have a fundamental understanding of:

• importance of competitive business idea;
• market analysis tools;
• strategy development;
• management and operation aspects;
• designing business plans.

Applying knowledge and understanding

At the end of the course the student will be able to:

• develop a business idea;
• conduct market analyses;
• design competitive strategies;

• develop a business plan;
• present a business idea in the form of a pitch presentation.

Making judgements

At the end of the course the student will be able to:

• apply the acquired knowledge in various contexts;
• transfer the concepts and approaches introduced in the module to many fields;
• elaborate critically the concepts discussed in the course.

Communication skills

At the end of the course the student should be able to

• analyse problems in the areas covered by the course in a clear and concise way;
• explain with an appropriate language the objectives, procedures and results of the elaborations carried out.

Contents

The course is structured around two modules: Business Planning, taught by Stefano Calciolari and Massimo Ruberti, and Entrepreneurship Lab, taught by Alireza Ilbeigi.
The Business Planning module provides the strategic, technical and financial foundations necessary for developing a successful business plan. Topics covered include business idea development, market analysis and financial assessment.
The Entrepreneurship Lab module aims to equip students with a practical understanding of entrepreneurship and innovation. Through exploring relevant theories and models, students will gain insight into the entrepreneurial process, typical start-up dynamics and the strategic challenges faced by entrepreneurs.
Additionally, the course provides students with an opportunity for honing public speaking skills and experiencing a (simulated) BP presentation context.

Detailed program

Business planning
• the what and why of a business plan;
• developing the business idea;
• feasibility assessment;
• business plan preparation;
• competitive analysis (industry and market analysis);
• recipe for a successful business (marketing plan, management plan, operation plan);
• financial analysis;
• business plan presentation.

Application of Business Planning concepts to projects

• refining business idea and competitive advantage;
• applying market and industry analysis;
• defining target customer and positioning;
• aligning strategy, operations and financial logic;

• reviewing feasibility assumptions and risks.

Entrepreneurial process and venture development

• opportunity recognition and idea development;
• problem–solution fit and experimentation;
• POC, prototyping and MVP;
• decision-making under uncertainty;
• sustainability considerations.

Project development sessions

• guided team-based refinement;
• feedback on market, strategy and financial coherence;
• pitch preparation and rehearsal;
• integration into the final business plan.

Case studies and entrepreneurial experience

• analysis of successful and failed startups;
• discussion of real entrepreneurial decisions;
• guest entrepreneur session.

Prerequisites

• Basic notions of economics.
• Basic knowledge of financial accounting.
• Basic notions of mathematics.

Teaching form

The course is structured as a laboratory, including both formal lectures as well as practice sessions (in-class activities). Formal lectures are meant to provide the theoretical foundations, the main concepts and techniques. Practice sessions are meant as applications of theory sessions aimed to highlight the implications of theoretical concepts in cases or exemplified situations.
As mentioned above, the course is equally structured around two modules: Business Planning (30 hours) and Entrepreneurship Lab (30 hours). Attendance to lectures and engagement in class activities are mandatory.

Textbook and teaching resource

Module 1
• Barringer, Bruce. Preparing Effective Business Plans: An Entrepreneurial Approach, Global Edition. Pearson Education Limited, 2015. ISBN-10: 1292059338, ISBN-13: 978-1292059334.
• Slides and notes available on eLearning.
Module 2
• Selected readings from:

Barringer, B. R. (2025). Entrepreneurship: Successfully launching new ventures (7th ed.). Pearson
Blank, S., & Dorf, B. (2020). The startup owner's manual (Revised ed.). Wiley.
Torrisi, S. (2019). Strategic management: Selection of readings (Chaps. 8, 13–18). McGraw-Hill Education.
Zacharakis, A., Corbett, A. C., & Bygrave, W. D. (2025). Entrepreneurship (6th ed.). Wiley.
• Slides and notes available on eLearning.

Semester

II semester (March - June)

Assessment method

Assessment is conducted jointly with the Business Planning module and comprises three parts:

1. Group Business Plan and Pitch (60%): Teams develop a complete business plan integrating insights from both modules. Each team presents and pitches its business idea.
2. Individual Oral Exam (40%): Individual assessment of theoretical understanding and ability to discuss entrepreneurial concepts.

Office hours

Students are asked to refer to the indications provided in the syllabi of the modules.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION