EMBA-2527-110-Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Societal Challenges

Name of lecturer(s) & Email	Phase, Status, Timing	ECTS*, CH & SDL**
Alexander HAHN alex@return-on-digital-innovation.com	Navigate Compulsory Between 30/5/2026 and 21/6/2026	3 24 66

Description of the course

This course is designed to equip aspiring entrepreneurs and progressive business professionals with essential tools and strategies for creating sustainable, customer-centric enterprises that foster positive societal impact.

Acquire an in-depth comprehension of the fundamental principles underpinning successful entrepreneurship through the exploration of pivotal frameworks including the Golden Circle, Lean Startup, and Design Thinking. Harness these methodologies to lay a robust foundation for effective business ideation and innovation.

Navigate the intricate landscape of introducing sustainable and digital solutions to contemporary markets by understanding human information processing within digital contexts. Develop the acumen to effectively negotiate the challenges inherent in combining sustainability and technology, while ensuring meaningful customer experiences.
Understand and cultivate the art of crafting customer-centric prototypes tailored for diverse contexts encompassing B2B, B2C, and digital-physical service interactions. Through a series of hands-on exercises and collaborative projects, learn to quickly create prototypes that deeply resonate with target audiences, capturing their needs and aspirations.

Foster the ability to design and implement comprehensive testing and evaluation strategies for business prototypes. Gain insights into the nuances of data collection, results analysis, and iterative refinement of prototypes based on constructive customer feedback, market insights, and emergent trends.

Understand customer reactions to prototypes, mastering the art of feedback interpretation. Develop the competency to decode feedback, anticipate potential obstacles, and make informed decisions that enhance the viability and relevance of business concepts.
Immerse yourself in the persuasive power of storytelling to effectively present your business concepts to diverse stakeholder groups. Cultivate the skill of crafting compelling narratives that resonate with investors, collaborators, consumers, and other vital stakeholders, facilitating resource acquisition and enterprise expansion.

This course employs a dynamic pedagogical blend encompassing interactive lectures, real-world case analyses, group discourse, immersive prototyping exercises, and experiential learning engagements. Collaborate closely with a diverse cohort of motivated peers and benefit from tailored mentorship provided by experienced faculty members who are ardently committed to responsible entrepreneurship.

Course units

1. Startup: Build, Measure, Learn (pre-course online video) - Build: Prototyping
2. Measure: Testing
3. Learn: Iterating Product, Market and Business Model
4. Guest Speaker(s)
5. Scale: How to build, measure and learn faster
6. Stakeholder-oriented storytelling to Investors, Co-Founders, Corporate, Employees,…

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

By the end of the course, you will be able to...

1. Evaluate entrepreneurial models that generate economic, social, and environmental value.
2. Design startup-driven innovation processes using Design Thinking and Lean Startup.
3. Apply the Build-Measure-Learn cycle to prototype, test, and refine scalable solutions.
4. Craft compelling narratives to engage mission-aligned stakeholders.
5. Systematize entrepreneurial practices to navigate uncertainty and drive lasting impact.

Notice: The information available in the course outline is subject to change. Please keep yourself informed at all times by regularly checking Canvas.

*ECTS - European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (1 ECTS = 30 hours of learning)
**CH - Contact Hours in class or online, SDL - Self-Directed Learning including readings, homework, group work, preparation to assessment, etc
***PLO - Programme Learning Objectives are available on the curriculum page

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Contribution to Programme Learning Objectives (PLOs)***

PLO 1.1. Design and communicate a compelling strategic vision that motivates and aligns cross-functional teams to achieve organisational goals.	**Mastery**
PLO 1.2. Demonstrate collaborative leadership skills, effectively resolving conflicts, negotiating, and engaging diverse teams to reach optimal outcomes.	**Reinforcement**
PLO 1.3. Communicate the strategy to make it understandable to anybody in the organisation and to the stakeholders.	**Mastery**
PLO 2.1. Apply critical thinking and data-driven decision-making to detect, assess megatrends and technological disruptions (diagnose).	**Mastery**
PLO 2.2. Develop a set of clear and motivated decisions about the key element of the corporate strategy in response to market shifts: purpose, vision, missions, business model, portfolio, scopes, values & culture, digitalisation, innovation, organic and non-organic growth strategy.	**Reinforcement**
PLO 2.3. Plan the implementation of the corporate strategy and digital transformation enabling teams to adapt smoothly to evolving business environments and technological advancements.	**Mastery**
PLO 3.1. Assess the long-term implications of business decisions on ESG factors and create strategies that balance profitability with social and environmental responsibility.	**Mastery**
PLO 3.2. Lead cross-cultural teams effectively and incorporate global perspectives into business strategies, demonstrating empathy and adaptability to diverse stakeholder needs to foster an authentic corporate citizenship.	**Mastery**
PLO 3.3. Use the entrepreneurial toolbox and mindset to shape innovative scalable solutions responding to new societal challenges.	**Mastery**

Contribution to the Environmental, social and governance (ESG)

Course Contribution to ESG: Yes
Contact Hours are dedicated to ESG: 4
Contact Hours containing climate solutions for how organisations can reach net zero: 0
Description of contribution: By integrating foundational frameworks such as the Golden Circle and Lean Startup, participants learn how to conceptualize and scale business models that directly address today's environmental and societal challenges. These methodologies guide learners in identifying purpose-driven value propositions and systematically testing scalable solutions that align with long-term sustainability goals.

A central tenet of the course is the development of customer-centric prototypes grounded in ethical design principles. Participants engage in iterative testing and feedback interpretation, fostering a culture of responsiveness and responsibility in product and service innovation. This ensures that solutions not only meet consumer needs but do so in a way that respects individual dignity, cultural diversity, and ecological constraints.

The course also emphasizes the importance of persuasive, transparent storytelling to secure stakeholder buy-in. By training students to communicate with clarity and integrity—whether to investors, partners, or customers—the program reinforces strong governance practices and nurtures trust-based stakeholder relationships. This skillset is essential for cultivating accountability and ethical leadership in complex, high-stakes environments.

🌳This course contributes to the [Sustainable Development Initiative](#) at the Solvay Brussels School of Economics & Management

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Assessment methodology / Learners Use of Time and Load

Evaluation scale
0-20

Pre-Assessed Task: Action Based Testing
- <u>Value of pre-assessed task</u>: x%
- <u>Type of assessment</u>: In-group
- <u>Deadline</u>: due June 13 2026
- <u>Guidelines</u>: The assessment guidelines will be shown in the class on Day 1 and Day 2
- <u>Feedback Provision</u>: In class personal feedback

Key-Assessed Task: Ideating, Prototyping and Testing a Corporate or Startup Idea Seed
- <u>Value of pre-assessed task</u>: 50%
- <u>Type of assessment</u>: Individual
- <u>Deadline</u>: due 21 June 202
- <u>Guidelines</u>: The assessment guidelines will be shown in the class on Day 2 and Day 3 (students would be confused without having done the group work on Day 1 and Day 2)
- <u>Feedback Provision</u>: Rubrics posted on Canvas

Learning Materials

Readings

Cases (available in Canvas)
- N26
- Icaros
- Auto1
- Limehome
- OMMAX
- Lineage
- Partner

Other Learning Materials
Other resources will be made available in Canvas.

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