# Social Entrepreneurship Incubator & Practicum

New York University, Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service  
Spring 2017, Thursdays, 4:55 - 7:25 PM, 60 Fifth Ave., Room 202

**Instructor:** Abby Feuer, [aef285@nyu.edu](mailto:aef285@nyu.edu), please allow up to 48 hours for a reply  
**Office Hours:** Email to schedule. After class will often work with an appointment

## Semester Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1</th>
<th>January 26</th>
<th>What does it take to be a social entrepreneur?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DUE DATE</strong></td>
<td>January 30</td>
<td>Introductory survey due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 2</td>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>Identifying a market opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 3</td>
<td>February 9</td>
<td>Finalizing your mission and pitching your project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 4</td>
<td>February 16</td>
<td>Canvas-ing your business plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 5</td>
<td>February 23</td>
<td>Will your business model scale?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DUE DATE</strong></td>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>Case Study in Social Innovation paper due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 6</td>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>Measuring efficacy and success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 7</td>
<td>March 9</td>
<td>Iteration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No classes during spring recess (March 13 - 19)*

| **DUE DATE** | March 23 | Midterm Report due |
| WEEK 8 | March 23 | Marketing your social venture |
| WEEK 9 | March 30 | Peer, funding and government partnerships |
| WEEK 10 | April 6 | Fundraising and budgeting |
| WEEK 11 | April 13 | Leadership |
| WEEK 12 | April 20 | Next steps after graduation |
| **DUE DATE** | April 27 | First refined draft of Pitch Deck |
| WEEK 13 | April 27 | Practice pitching with experts |
| WEEK 14 | May 4 | Presentation of final projects, wrap-up and resumes |
| **DUE DATE** | May 4 | Final Report and Pitch Deck due |
Required Books (available at NYU Bookstore):

- *Social Entrepreneurship for the 21st Century: Innovation Across the Nonprofit, Private, and Public Sectors* by Georgia Levenson KeoHane.

Weekly Class Schedule

WEEK 1: What does it take to be a social entrepreneur?

January 26
In this first class, we'll get acquainted and then explore an overview of the historical development of social entrepreneurship. Through examples, we'll talk through a variety of organizational structures, from nonprofit to joint venture, that fit the term today.

Readings for NEXT class:

- From course books:
  - Read chapters 1 & 2 of *Social Entrepreneurship for the 21st Century*.
- Articles
  - *This is Water*, David Foster Wallace, Purdue commencement speech. May 21, 2005.

Assignments for next class:

- Complete introductory survey
- Before or during next class, I’ll let you know your project teams

WEEK 2: Identifying a market opportunity

February 2
In this class, we'll talk about approaches for identifying a real user problem and gap in the market. We'll introduce problem finding techniques and then break out into your newly assigned project teams to get to know one another and begin workshopping your initial project ideas to ensure they address a real market opportunity.

Readings for next class:

- From course books:
Identify your ‘customer’

- Age, gender, location, profession, etc.
- Characteristics and personality traits
- What challenges is this person facing?
- What is your person motivated by?
- Why do you hypothesize this person would want or need your product or service?

- The problem your product or service will seek to solve for that user (as we know, this is a hypothesis!).
- The social enterprise or nonprofit you hope to build (feel free to edit from your survey submission)

Agree on an interview guide to validate your audience and hypothesis and begin to think about how you'll source interviewees so you don't have a problem completing interviews the following week.

WEEK 3: Finalizing your mission and pitching your project

February 9

Perhaps the most important skill of the start-up social entrepreneur is to articulate a clear, concise, and compelling vision of how — and for whom — s/he will create a better future. To do this, we will discuss and practice the art of public speaking. During class, each student will workshop his/her notes on mission and vision into a perfected mission statement and then share it with the class. You'll also agree on objectives for the class and future goals.

Readings for next class:

- From course books:
  - Read “Canvas” (pp. 12-50) and “Patterns” (pp. 54-119) in Business Model Generation

- Articles:
  - Optional: If you're interested, this is worth skimming (but not required): The Open Book of Social Innovation by Geoff Mulgan and Robin Murray.

Assignments for next class:

- Conduct 4-5 interviews per team to validate your initial idea
- Summarize your interview findings
• Get ahead: Think about what social entrepreneur you’d like to write about in your “Case Study in Social Innovation” and begin researching that person’s work.

WEEK 4: Canvas-ing Your Business Plan
February 16
The business model canvas is one of the most effective tools in an innovator’s tool belt. It is an immensely creative exercise that brings everyone’s ideas in view to strengthen a venture, whether it is a seasoned business or a plan for the future. We will spend the class creating canvases for your ventures, then each group will present its completed version to the class.

In addition to mapping the venture, the canvas is also a visual “To Do” list of all the pieces that must get done and fall into place to make the system work.

Readings for next class:
• Read “Strategy” (pp. 196-239) in Business Model Generation

Articles:

Assignments for next class:
• Finish your first version of the Business Model Canvas (work will feed into Midterm Report)

WEEK 5: Will your business model scale?
February 23
The benefit of the canvas is that it visually demonstrates every possibility of how the business runs. The downside is that it doesn’t tell you which option will work best. Starting with this class, we’ll launch into a series of sessions focused on honing each element of the Business Model Canvas and running a business. We’ll have a guest speaker in this class to talk about operationalizing an idea and how to build for scale from the start.

Readings for next class:
• From course books:
  ○ Read chapter 4 of Social Entrepreneurship for the 21st Century.
• Articles:
  ○ Getting to Outcomes: 10 Steps for Achieving Results-Based Accountability, Shelley H. Wiseman, Matthew Chinman, Pat A. Ebener, Sarah B. Hunter, Pamela Imm, Abraham Wandersman and the RAND Corporation, 2007.
  ○ The Hyper-Efficient, Highly Scientific Scheme to Help the World’s Poor, Jessica Benko, Wired.com, November 12, 2013.

Assignments for next class:
• Case Study in Social Innovation paper due before next class (March 2)
WEEK 6: Measuring Efficacy and Success
March 2

In this class we will define efficacy within the social enterprise world, including how various organizations measure impact and key players in evaluating the organization’s success and structure against its peers. Team leaders will also use today’s exercise to assign roles, delegate tasks, and create a project timeline of deadlines and deliverables for their teams.

Readings for next class:
- Articles
  - Watch this video: The Marshmallow Challenge.

Assignments for next class:
- Discuss and determine key performance indicators (KPIs) for your proposed business and how you'd plan to collect that data.
- Continue work on Midterm Report

WEEK 7: Iteration
March 9

Almost every successful startup began with a product that has changed tremendously with customer insights and iteration. For example, Airbnb founders thought they were creating a site for conference attendees to find a place to stay and Instagram started without a visual feature. Now that we're close to the midway point, it's time to look back at your original idea. After we discuss how companies iterate, each teams will work to finalize a new version of its Business Model Canvas that takes into account our coursework to date.

Readings for next class:
- Articles
  - Understanding the Marketing Funnel, Liz Willits, aweber.com, February 2016.

Assignments for next class:
- Use your prototype and conduct 4-5 more interviews using the prototype as a tool
- Make sure you have at least two versions of your Business Model Canvas with notes on how you iterated between them (work will feed into Midterm Report)
- Midterm Report is due on Thursday, March 23

WEEK 8: Marketing your venture
March 23

In this class we'll think through the psychology of marketing, introduce a variety of marketing frameworks and learn from the strategies employed by successful social ventures. Each project team will think through a business story and tactics they should explore for marketing their venture.

Readings for next class:
- Articles:

Assignments:
- Write out a 1-3 page marketing plan for your project (work will feed into Final Paper & Pitch Deck)

WEEK 9: Peer, funding and government partnerships

March 30

Partnerships can serve your business in variety of ways. You can partner with corporations to help fund your business or distribute your products; you might work with the government to incentivize use of your service; or you might build a collaborative network of peers that benefits every member. In this class, we'll have a guest speaker join to talk about a variety of partnership models. Then, you'll break out into your project teams to research and discuss how partnerships might fit into your marketing, revenue or business model.

Guest Speaker: Julie Schoenthaler

Readings for next class:

From course books:
- Chapters 3, 5, 6 and 8 of *Social Entrepreneurship for the 21st Century*.

Articles:
- *The Untold Story Behind Kickstarter Stats*

Assignments:
- Continue work towards Final Paper & Presentation

WEEK 10: Fundraising and budgeting

April 6
Today we discuss fundraising and budgeting. What are the possibilities for fundraising, especially at the beginning of a venture? How do you project out a year of costs based on your funding? We will also discuss the ethics of financial management, business and fundraising.

Readings for next class:

Articles:
- Good to Great Fast Company article, Jim Collins, October 2001.

Assignments:
- Work on a draft fundraising plan and budget for year 1 of your venture (work will feed into Final Paper & Pitch Deck)

WEEK 11: Leadership

April 13

Building and leading an organization is about much more than just sound business know-how. As a leader, you need to build a strong team and cultivate an organizational culture. What are the best practices for hiring and building a strong team? We'll discuss this question in today's class.

Readings for next class:

- Articles:

Assignments:
- Continue work towards Final Paper & Pitch Deck

WEEK 12: Next steps after graduation

April 20

As we near the end of our time together, we'll use this class to review key course themes and to begin to discuss how you might bring your projects to the next level — or pursue other impactful careers — after the end of class and graduation.

This will be our final class where you break out to work in your project teams. You'll take one last look at your Business Model Canvas and make the needed edits for a final version. You'll also workshop your final presentations as a group.
Readings for next class:

- None! Practice your presentations and work on finalizing your papers.

Assignments:

- Work on Final Paper & Pitch Deck; have a polished (what you see as final) version of your pitch deck ready to share with experts at our next class

WEEK 13: Practice pitching with experts

April 27

Today we will have various experts available to hear students pitch and present their project! We'll continue class by hearing their personal reactions and business lessons and with a networking opportunity. Teams will receive feedback on their presentations that they can incorporate into the final versions.

Readings for next class:

- None! Work on finalizing your papers and pitch deck

Assignments:

- Work on Final Paper & Presentation

WEEK 14: Presentation of final projects, wrap-up and resumes

May 4

Last Class! All papers and materials are due. Each group will share its final pitch deck with the class, we'll reflect on what we've learned and I'll stay behind for resume workshopping for those interested. You'll complete your peer evaluation forms in class.

Grading Breakdown:

- 25% Class Participation & Teamwork (includes general, discussion and team exercise participation and peer ratings)
- 5% Introductory Survey
- 15% Case Study in Social Innovation paper
- 20% Midterm Project Report
- 35% Final Paper and Pitch Deck

1. Class Participation & Teamwork (25%)

Students are expected to attend every class. You must let me know at least 12 hours ahead of time — with a valid reason such as a health or family emergency — if you will not be able to make it.

Class Participation

The success of this course depends on the active, enthusiastic participation of each student. Students ought to display great initiative, motivation, and a passion for learning. It is essential that students be in attendance for class. It's also imperative that you come to class on time and come to
class prepared. Please do the assigned readings before class (as listed for that day's class period) and work consistently on your project. In order to have the greatest chance of successfully influencing other people and changing the world, you need to be professional!

There are required readings for each class session as listed in the detailed class outline below. Readings are drawn from the two books for purchase and relevant articles that are available for download on the course website.

Students are expected to be prepared and will be graded on their participation, contribution to discussions, and contribution of team exercises.

**Teamwork**

Project teams can be comprised of 2 or more people from inside the class. Learning and practicing successful project completion will require some meetings with your team outside of class and holding one another accountable to deadlines and deliverables throughout the semester. This grade is determined by self-evaluation, anonymous team member evaluations, and grading by the teaching team.

At the end of the semester, you'll each fill out this [peer evaluation form](#) for one another. I'll combine that with my grades on the following [professor rubric](#) for this percentage of your grade.

**2. Introductory Survey (5%)**

DUE: January 30

Complete survey distributed by professor

This survey was crafted to learn more about your ideas, skillsets and interests. I'll use the information from this survey to finalize projects and teams for the semester.

**3. Case Study in Social Innovation paper (15%)**

DUE: March 2

3-5 pages

Students select one entrepreneur, social entrepreneur, or other innovative member of society to analyze as an exemplary innovator. Describe:

- who is this person, what do they do and why is it important?
- what market need is he/she addressing?
- what is the business model of his/her venture and why does that structure make sense?
- what strategies has he/she employed that have worked?
- how could he/she have done things differently? What challenges does he/she face?

Use at least three readings from class to thoroughly complete your assignment.

**4. Midterm Project Report (20%)**

DUE: March 23

7-15 pages
This paper outlines the progress you have made on your project. This should at least include:

1. your project's mission and vision for social innovation
2. a research report that supports your project’s purpose and usefulness and includes an interview guide, a summary of interview findings and secondary research and a note on future testing needed
3. your business model canvas; show at least 2 versions to demonstrate your learnings throughout the course
4. an outline of team project deadlines and deliverables completed and to come

5. Final Paper & Pitch Deck (35%)

DUE:
- April 27: First refined draft of Pitch Deck
- May 4: Finalized Paper and Pitch Deck

The Final Paper for this course is an Executive Summary of the project and your plan for after graduation. This paper should be 10-20 pages and should include:

- updated versions of all the materials from the Midterm Report
- a strategic marketing plan
- A summary or where you'll get funding for your business and a draft budget for year 1
- A final version of your business model canvas

In addition to your written paper, please prepare a PowerPoint pitch deck to be presented to the class and potential funders and then handed in.

Here's a [pitch deck outline](#) to guide you as you create your deck.

Note: Because this is a project-based class, your grade will be determined primarily by the effort you put into getting the most out of class time and the effort and progress you show on your social change projects in and outside of class. The reading is to support this change process and will greatly enhance your learning experience, but you are not expected to memorize every detail of the texts. For this reason, there are no tests in this class. Homework assignments, however, are meant to enhance and strengthen your project development.

**Grading policies:**

There is no curve in this course. Everyone may receive an A or everyone may receive an F. This course will abide by the Wagner School's general policy guidelines on incomplete grades, academic honesty, and plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with these policies.

All students are expected to pursue and meet the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity.

Incomplete Grades: [http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/incompletes](http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/incompletes)

Academic Honesty: [http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies](http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies)
Late Policy for assignments: Extensions will be granted only in case of emergency. This is out of respect to those who have abided by deadlines, despite equally hectic schedules. Papers handed in late without extensions will be penalized one-third of a grade per day.

Outline of a Typical Class Session

Classes will often follow this structure:

4:55-5:00pm  Thought prompt  *Students will be given a prompt to think through individually in preparation for that day's topic and discussion.*

5:00-5:15pm  Discussion  *Students will participate in a discussion to think through or debate a topic together. This discussion will lead into my lecture for that class.*

5:15-6:15pm  Lecture  *Presentation on that week's class topic.*

6:15-7:15pm  Group time  *You'll get together with your project team and work through a new area of your business idea.*

7:15-7:25pm  Concluding remarks  *We'll pull together some of the key points, highlight ongoing areas of debate, and frame the readings for the next class.*

Over the course of the semester we may alter the proportion of lecture and group time as projects progress. Lectures will not summarize what is in the readings. Class participation will constitute a significant percentage of the final grade.

My lectures are typically interactive and I have the right to call on anyone during class. If for some reason you have not been able to do the readings or do not feel able to respond to being called on in a specific class, please let me know. It is understandable that on a rare occasion this will be the case. If it becomes a regular event, it will severely affect your participation grade.

Other Class Rules

Generally: please bring a sketchpad, for drawings and other design thinking exercises and a notebook to each class session (no computers allowed without special permission).

As your professor, I would be happy to connect with you on LinkedIn and Twitter, but not on Instagram, Facebook or other social media platforms.

Out of respect to the professor, guest lecturers, and your classmates:

1. Cell phones must be turned off and students are strongly encouraged not to use computers in class. If students are unable to take notes by hand, they are allowed to use their computers but it is preferred that any notes be taken by hand so that other features of computer use do not distract students from participating in class discussion.

2. Please arrive on time to the start of class and return from breaks in a timely manner. POLICY ON DISABILITIES: I encourage students with disabilities, including “invisible” disabilities, to come talk with me after class or during my office hours to discuss appropriate accommodations that might be helpful.
Terms and Limitations: By enrolling in this class, you agree to all the terms and limitations of the syllabus, which serves as a legally binding contract between the party of the first part (hereinafter referred to as "the professor") and the party of the second part (hereinafter referred to as "the students."). This contract will be in accordance with all federal and state regulations, pursuant to the rules set forth by New York University, and any applicable statutes of the United States or the county of New York, except where the professor decides otherwise. The rules, requirements, and benefits of this contract are subject to change at the end of the first week of classes, or at any other time by the University or other governing authorities, including, but not limited to, the professor and the administrators of the educational department under which this course is offered. The professor reserves the right to change the terms of the contract at will, and may exercise his personal discretion in revoking all rights of the students without just cause. No person is authorized nor entitled to refute the terms of this contract, nor subject the policies described herein to any form of strict scrutiny or critical questioning.

Professor Bio

Abby Feuer

Abby leads the Marketing & Community Team at DonorsChoose.org, overseeing initiatives that empower teachers to advocate for their classroom needs and individual donors to support them.

Prior to this role, Abby led the Seller Retention and Engagement team at Etsy, helping sellers connect with one another and open and run their own entrepreneurial enterprises. She has her MBA from the Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley and her BA in Psychology from Harvard University.

Abby is passionate about social entrepreneurship, joining DonorsChoose.org (for the first time) early in her career, then participating in Etsy's b-corporation initiatives and running the Global Social Venture Competition at Berkeley. She believes wholeheartedly in the power of combining business principles with social good and has been an avid reader and participant on the topic of social entrepreneurship for the past 10 years.

Course Description

This course is designed for upper-class undergraduates who have a social innovation project, entrepreneurial business, or CSR idea to develop or implement. Also welcome to the course are students who would like to learn and practice success skills and employment strategies, and are willing to participate in class teams with other students who have project ideas. To bring the dynamic world of social innovation fully into the classroom, this course will provide: business leadership training and the skills to develop a clear social vision and values, viable business-modeling practices and feasible financial projections—i.e. how to structure an organization for different funding strategies, practice in pitching and promoting an idea, and tips on launching a startup with social impact.

Classes are enhanced with expert guest teachers and speakers, case studies and experiential exercises. This course will help students develop their individual or team projects, workshop how to create maximum social impact after graduation, build their resumes and develop critical skills for the process of finding or creating their future jobs.
Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course each students should:

1. Be as prepared as possible for success after graduation as an effective social entrepreneurs, either by developing his/her own business, contributing to corporate social responsibility efforts, or working well in the nonprofit sector.
2. Have received enough individual & team coaching in leadership, communication, and business applications to be competent across core business skills. Each students will end the course with a business plan and innovative experience, making him/her stronger candidates in the job market.
3. Have built and begun to foster a strong peer network in the social enterprise space, to support him/her after graduation as he/she exercises and continues to develop successful leadership skills and their business ideas.
4. Feel connected to the importance of social entrepreneurship and committed to being a changemaker, regardless of his/her job or place in life.