



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

**PADM-GP 2249
Scaling Social Enterprises in the Amazon
Spring 2021**

Class Information: Wednesdays, 08:00 AM - 9:40 AM¹
This course will meet exclusively online

All shared resources will be available on a [Google Drive](#).

This version: Jan 25th, 2021

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Office Hours: by appointment

This course will be co-led by Scott Taitel, sbt3@nyu.edu

Prerequisites

CORE-GP 1021 and PADM 2312 are prerequisites but they can also be taken concurrently; students with relevant work or academic experience can reach out to the professor for a waiver consideration

This is a graduate-level course, but undergraduates may be enrolled with the permission of the instructors.

Course Description

This course takes advantage of our newly gained familiarity with video-conference technology (i.e. Zoom) to create a learning experience that could not be obtained in any other way: a collaborative and experiential virtual course abroad, spanning multiple cities and remote locations.

In this course, NYU students work alongside graduate students from three partner universities in Brazil (and their partners in Europe) to investigate the achievements, challenges, and growth opportunities faced by social enterprises engaged in food production in the Brazilian Amazon. The course culminates with teams authoring a business case on their assigned social enterprise and presenting it to the entrepreneurs, potential investors, buyers from large firms, public officials, and other guests.

While the main goal of this course is pedagogical, it also intends to create other beneficial effects. First, it hopes to provide the social enterprises with some of the resources they need to scale up. Second, it will help participants strengthen their professional networks. And third, the best-written cases will be published on a website hosted within the NYU-Wagner domain. They might also might also be

¹ From Feb 3rd to Mar 10th, Brazil-based students will meet from 10:00AM to 11:40AM; from Mar 17th onwards they will meet from 9:00AM to 10:40AM.

assigned to students taking “Managing Financial and Social Returns of the Social Enterprise” (PADM-GP 2312).

The partner universities are:

- Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA), located in Belém, Brazil
- Universidade Federal do Oeste do Pará (UFOPA), located in Santarém, Brazil
- INSPER, located in São Paulo, Brazil

And thanks to INSPER’s partnerships, the course will accept students also from *La Rochelle, EM-Strasbourg*, and *L’Institut des Hautes Etudes Economiques et Commerciales – INSEEC* in France, and the *Frankfurt School of Finance and Management* in Germany.

The social enterprises whose activities will be profiled are devoted to promoting foods that can be produced in harmony with the forest. Their primary suppliers are smallholder farmers and members of traditional communities. Four of the enterprises are women-owned businesses. They were selected on the basis of their track record, commitment to social and environmental justice, and ambition to grow.

Table 1 – Social Enterprises - Spring 2021

| Enterprise | Main Product & Market | Location | Instagram |
|------------------|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 100% Amazônia | Bulk exports of numerous Amazonian products, (eg: açaí); the firm is building its own processing plant; | Belém | @100amazonia |
| Manioca | Subproducts of cassava, local fruits and spices, all packaged for domestic retail markets; | Belém | @maniocabrazil |
| Fazenda Bacuri | Jams, jellies, liqueurs, extracts, and oils of bacuri grown on its own agroforest system; ecotourism; | Outside Belém | @fazendabacuribio |
| Deveras Amazônia | Jams, preserves, and liqueurs using local fruits, for local retail market; | Santarém | @deveras_amazonia |
| Casa de Saulo | Saulo leverages a restaurant in Santarém region and one in a prestigious spot in Belém plus his own public profile to highlight the cuisine of the Tapajós region in the Amazon and to showcase sustainably harvested ingredients. Also tourism. | Santarém | @casadosaulo |
| Ração+ | Pirarucu (a local fish) raised in above-ground tanks; the firm uses discard from other food industries to make fish feed, which it uses and sells in the market; | Presidente Figueiredo, Amazonas | n/a |

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course students will know how to:

1. Interpret the local context of global supply chains, with emphasis on food and the Amazon;
2. Conduct open-ended interviews in the context of qualitative research;
3. Assess opportunities for scaling up a social enterprise;
4. Validate the social impact of a social enterprise;
5. Write and present a compelling case study expounding on these themes.

Course Dynamics

At the outset of the course, each student will be assigned to both a country- and an enterprise-based team. The country-based teams will be composed of students from the same university and each team will be responsible for preparing and delivering one 30-minute presentation on their designated theme (ex: the NY-based retailers of natural food products, such as Whole Foods). This presentation should be structured as an enhanced “virtual tour”, i.e. it should combine audio-visual materials with hard data so students based elsewhere can feel like “they have been there”.

The enterprise-based teams will be composed of students from multiple universities and each team will be responsible for conducting interviews, collecting and analyzing data, writing the case study and delivering the final presentation on a designated social enterprise.

To keep all the shared data well-organized and accessible to all participants, the course will have both a NYU Classes website (accessible to NYU students) and a Google Drive (accessible to all students), with a sub-folder structure that matches the structure of the course. The Google Drive is accessible here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1MZPcLtOsPPGqGjN79RX3JDMoQWE-XcVK>

Assignments and Evaluation

Grades for NYU students will be based on in-class participation (20%), the country-based presentation (30%), a case abstract (10% each), the final case study (30%), and the final presentation (10%).

- In-class participation (20% of total grade) hinges on engagement in classroom activities and personal reflections. The reflections will take the form of personal diary entries. Each student should submit a minimum of 10 entries (no more than one per class session) using the “blog” tool under NYU Classes. These entries are due before the subsequent class. They should cover themes such as (a) team dynamics; (b) your relationship with the designated enterprise; (c) insights from other presentations / “virtual tours”; (d) cross-cultural perspectives, including one’s own “blind spots”; (e) themes or data you want to explore or gather next (i.e. information gaps).
- Country-based presentation (30% of total grade) consists of a 30-min presentation that combines audio-visuals with hard data on their designated theme. These presentations should be structured as a “virtual tour” that gives the other participants in the course the sense that “they have been there” and learned the relevant facts about the theme. Students can be creative and entrepreneurial, combining information that is available online (ex: youtube) with original footage, interviews, audio clips, slides, and personal testimony. The presentation is due immediately before the corresponding class, i.e. April 7 or April 14, depending on the team.
- Case abstract (10% of total grade) consists of short document (about two pages, single-spaced) outlining the main themes that will be discussed in the full case write-up. The abstract should provide a brief description of the enterprise, locate it within its supply chain, and identify some of the opportunities for scaling it up. The abstract is due before class on April 21. Team might submit an informal abstract for feedback before class on March 17.
- Final presentation (10% of total grade) consists of a 10-minute presentation (about 5 slides) showcasing the achievements, challenges and opportunities faced by the designated enterprise, as reported in the case write-up. The audience will be composed of other participants in the

course, the entrepreneurs, and outside guests, including potential investors, buyers from supermarket chains and food industries, policy-makers from the Amazon, environmental activists, and researchers. The presentation is due the night before the last session, i.e. May 11th at midnight.

- The final case write-up (30% of total grade) consists of a 7-12 page document modeled after the cases discussed in “Managing Financial and Social Returns of the Social Enterprise” (PADM-GP 2312). The final case is due on Friday, May 14th at 6:45PM.

Learning Assessment Table

| Graded Assignment | Course Objective Covered |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| In-class participation | All |
| Country-based presentation | #1 |
| Case abstract | #2-5 |
| Final case write-up | #2-5 |
| Final presentation | #2-5 |

Grading Scale and Rubric

All grades will be individual, and they will be composed of two parts: a grade for the work submitted by the group, and an individual adjustment based on peer-assessments and instructors' review.

Grades will be based on the following scale:

(A) Excellent: Exceptional work. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional quality. A = 4.000 points

(A-) Very good: Very strong work. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets standards. A- = 3.667 points

(B+) Good: Sound work; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course. B+ = 3.333 points

(B) Adequate: Competent work even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations. B = 3.000 points

(B-) Borderline: Weak work; meets the minimal expectations for a student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.” B- = 2.667 points

(C/-/+) Deficient: Inadequate work; does not meet the minimal expectations for a student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence. C+ = 2.333 points; C = 2.000 points; C- = 1.667 points

(F) Fail: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive. F (fail) = 0.0 points

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. Each student is required to sign and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated since you have all signed an Academic Oath and are bound by the academic code of the school. Every student is expected to maintain academic integrity and is expected to report violations to me. If you are unsure about what is expected of you, *ask*.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website at www.nyu.edu/csd and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or e-mail mosescsd@nyu.edu for information.

NYU's Policy on Religious Holidays

[University policy](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students do not need to ask the instructor for permission, but they may choose to notify faculty in advance of such an absence. //

Course Overview

| | | |
|----|---------------|---|
| 1 | Feb 3 | Intro to course, expectations, team-building |
| 2 | Feb 10 | Interviewing skills and techniques |
| | <i>Feb 17</i> | <i>National holiday in Brazil - no class</i> |
| 3 | Feb 24 | Pará-led I – The local business environment: markets, roads, boats |
| 4 | Mar 3 | Pará-led II – The local market for açaí, bacuri, cassava, pirarucu, and other foods |
| 5 | Mar 10 | Interview w/ enterprise I |
| 6 | Mar 17 | SP-led I – Business support services & access to capital |
| 7 | Mar 24 | SP-led II – The SP market for chosen Amazonian products |
| 8 | Mar 31 | NYU-led I – NY-based retailers – presentation is due before class |
| 9 | Apr 7 | NYU-led II – US-based Food industries – presentation is due before class |
| 10 | Apr 14 | Interview w/ other agent in supply chain |
| 11 | Apr 21 | Case writing workshop (NYU session only) – abstract is due before class |
| 12 | Apr 28 | Interview w/ enterprise II |
| 13 | May 5 | Presentation workshop |
| 14 | May 12 | Final presentation, with outside guests – presentation is due (the night before) |
| | May 14 | Final case write-up is due at 6:45PM |

CLASS PLAN

Class 1

Intro to course, expectations, team-building

This course has many moving parts; it operates across multiple universities, languages and even time zones. The first session will be dedicated to clarifying the mechanics of the course, making sure expectations are properly aligned, and introducing all participants (students, instructors, staff).

Required reading:

- How to Write a Business Case Study, WDI Publishing, November 23, 2013

Class 2

Interviewing skills and techniques

Interviewing for qualitative research is not as easy as it might seem. This session will be devoted to instructing students how to conduct a good interview in the context of qualitative research.

Required reading:

- Victoria Healey-Etten, Shane Sharp (2010) *Teaching Beginning Undergraduates How to Do an In-depth Interview: A Teaching Note with 12 Handy Tips*. Teaching Sociology.
- Masvati, Amir (2003) *Interviews*. In “Qualitative Research in Sociology”, Sage Research Methods
- Video illustrating a sub-par interview - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4UKwd0KExc>
- Video illustrating a better interview - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNMTJTnrTQQ&t>

Class 3

Pará-led I – The local business environment: markets, roads, boats

What is it like to produce, process, and transport food products in the Amazon? To answer this question, the UFPA and UFOPA country-based teams will host a virtual tour of the local business environment. The presentations and discussion will illustrate how some of the key commodities (e.g.: açai, cassava, fruits, fish) are produced, how they they are processed, and how they are transported to larger urban centers (i.e. boats, trucks, etc). Depending on the circumstances, the teams might want to provide an overview of life in Belém and Santarém, and highlight other aspects of the local infrastructure (rain season, electricity, telecommunications).

Class 4

Pará-led II – The local market for açai, bacuri, cassava, pirarucu, other fruits

What is it like to sell (and buy) food products in the Amazon? To answer this question, the UFPA and UFOPA country-based teams will continue hosting a virtual tour of the region. What do wholesalers, formal retailers (minimarts and supermarkets), greenmarkets (Mercado Municipal and Ver-o-Peso), restaurants, and street vendors look like? Depending on the circumstances, teams might want to include personal testimony, highlight fancy or popular restaurants, and discuss home-cooking as well.

Class 5

Interview w/ enterprise I

During class, each enterprise-based team will use a separate Zoom channel to interview the founders and managers of their designated social enterprises. Participants should have a plan on how they will conduct the interview. They should also remember to briefly introduce themselves, ask permission to record the interview, ask open-ended questions, let the interviewee speak in his / her own words, and ask follow-up questions as needed.

To prepare for the interview, students should read the relevant enterprise fact-sheet (available on the Google Drive). Students can also conduct additional online research on the interviewee, his / her enterprise, its main products, and its market.

Class 6

SP-led I – Business support services & access to capital

One of Brazil's most distinguishing features is regional inequality. As firms located in the North of the country grow, they often look towards São Paulo – the largest and richest city – as a potential source of key resources. During this session, the INSPER country-based team will provide a virtual tour of São Paulo, with an emphasis on business support services (ex: SEBRAE, SENAI) and potential sources of both debt and equity capital (commercial and development banks, angel investors, venture capitalists, bond markets, the stock exchange, etc).

Class 7

SP-led II – The SP market for chosen Amazonian products

Brazil is a huge country with a fairly closed economy. For this reason, smaller enterprises often vie to sell their good and services domestically before they try to export. During this session, the INSPER country-based teams will continue hosting a virtual tour, but this time with an emphasis on the São Paulo market for Amazonian products. For example, the visit can include an overview of supermarkets such as Pão de Açúcar; specialty stores such as Santa Luzia; distributors of Amazonian products; food industries; and restaurants that use Amazonian ingredients.

Class 8

NYU-led I – NY-based retailers (supermarkets, corner stores, restaurants)

It is not always easy for producers who are not fully embedded in a place to have a good sense of what local consumers might want to buy and how much they might be willing to pay. New York is one of the largest and wealthiest cities in the world. During this session, NYU country-based teams will provide a virtual tour of NY-based companies that might sell food products from the Amazon. For example, the teams might want to showcase supermarkets such as Whole Foods, natural food stores such as Lifethyme, Brazilian markets such as the ones located in Astoria (Queens), specialty stores such as Dual Spices or Kalustyan, the ubiquitous bodegas, the new crop of stores that sell juices and açai bowls, and restaurants that might use Amazonian ingredients.

Class 9

NYU-led II – US-based Food industries

Firms that produce packaged or processed foods (eg: canned fish, granola, bottled beverages, hot sauces, packaged snacks, jams, candies, etc) can be important consumers of Amazonian products. What do these products look like, how do these firms operate, how do they develop new products, and what do they look for when they recruit new suppliers? NYU country-based teams will use this class session to answer these questions.

Class 10

Interview w/ other agent in supply chain

During this class, each enterprise-based team will interview an additional agent in the supply chain. This agent could be a supplier of raw materials, a buyer (ex: an exporter, wholesaler, processor, retailer), or someone who provides other important inputs (ex: a supplier of machines, technology, packaging, training, maintenance, quality control, logistics).

Class 11

Case writing workshop (*NYU only b/c it's a national holiday in Brazil, all students welcome*)

During this class, students will review how to write a good case study and they will also work on their research notes and drafts. The instructors will be present to answer questions and provide advice.

Class 12

Interview w/ enterprise II

In this session, enterprise-based teams get a second opportunity to interview the representatives from their designated enterprises.

Class 13

Presentation workshop

Each enterprise-based team will have about 15 minutes to present the highlights of their case to all other course participants so they can practice, receive feedback, iron out details, and fine-tune their presentation prior to the final event.

Class 14

Final Presentation

This event will be a celebration of the course, its students, and the six social enterprises. During this session, each enterprise-based team will present the highlights of their case to the entrepreneurs, and invited guests, including potential investors, buyers, public officials, environmental activists, and researchers.