

# Course Syllabus – Spring 2026



**Course**  
**ENTP 4340.501**  
**IMS 4335.501**

**Course Title**  
**Social Sector Entrepreneurship & Community Engagement**

**Instructors**  
 Robert Wright, Professor of Practice  
 MaryBeth Fickel, Program Manager  
 Aryan Hegde, Graduate Teaching Assistant

**Meetings**  
 Tuesdays 7:00 p.m. – 9:45 p.m.  
[JSOM 1.118](#)

## Instructor Contact Information

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## General Course Information

<b>Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and other restrictions</b>	At least Senior level standing and <b>BCOM 4300</b>
<b>Course Description</b>	<p>Social Sector Entrepreneurship &amp; Community Engagement is a decision-centered, project-based course that prepares students to analyze and advise nonprofit and social-sector organizations facing real decisions under conditions of uncertainty, constraint, and accountability. Students work in teams with live nonprofit clients and are expected to think and communicate as professional advisors to executives and boards of directors.</p> <p>Class sessions are conducted as extended 165-minute studio-style working sessions, not lectures. Each class begins with a topical, real-world problem that students must analyze immediately. Through structured discussion, students surface tensions, test assumptions, and discover principles embedded in the assigned readings. These principles are then applied directly to students’ nonprofit clients during the same class session.</p> <p>Rather than emphasizing memorization or coverage, the course prioritizes analysis, judgment, and application. Students work with imperfect information, evaluate tradeoffs, and make defensible recommendations while engaging consistently with teammates and clients. Preparation, participation, and sustained engagement across the full class session are essential.</p> <p>This course is demanding by design. Students who approach it with curiosity, discipline, and a willingness to think publicly will develop professional skills applicable across nonprofit, public, and private-sector contexts. Students who attempt to approach the course passively or treat class time as optional will struggle.</p> <p>This course is structured as a 165-minute working session requiring sustained engagement throughout each class. If you plan to arrive late, leave early, or disengage midway through, this course will not work for you. The course concludes with public, board-level presentations in</p>

	which students are evaluated on their ability to integrate analysis into responsible, defensible recommendations under real-world constraints.
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p>By the end of the course, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Analyze complex social-sector problems</b> by distinguishing between mission, activities, outcomes, and constraints, using problem-first analysis rather than pre-defined frameworks.</li> <li>2. <b>Interpret nonprofit financial and governance documents</b> (including Form 990) as credibility and risk signals from the perspective of boards, funders, and other external stakeholders.</li> <li>3. <b>Evaluate nonprofit governance structures</b> for accountability, decision authority, and exposure to organizational risk.</li> <li>4. <b>Assess nonprofit business models</b> for coherence, sustainability, and vulnerability under conditions of financial and operational stress.</li> <li>5. <b>Evaluate revenue and scaling decisions</b> by identifying tradeoffs, incentives, and risks to mission, capacity, and governance.</li> <li>6. <b>Diagnose human capacity and partnership dynamics</b> that affect execution, growth, and organizational resilience.</li> <li>7. <b>Design and critique impact measurement approaches</b> that inform continuation, redesign, or termination decisions when evidence is incomplete or contested.</li> <li>8. <b>Communicate recommendations credibly and responsibly</b> to skeptical stakeholders by integrating evidence, uncertainty, and consequences into clear professional narratives.</li> <li>9. <b>Advise on advocacy and public policy engagement</b> by evaluating legal, reputational, and strategic risks alongside potential impact.</li> <li>10. <b>Demonstrate professional judgment and accountability</b> through sustained preparation, team-based problem solving, and reflective self-assessment in extended, discussion-driven class sessions.</li> </ol> <p>Learning outcomes are assessed through in-class analysis, team presentations, decision briefs, and client-facing work.</p>
<b>Required Texts, Viewings and Materials</b>	Required Texts, Viewings, and Materials: Listed by session in the Course Outline
<b>Supplemental Texts &amp; Materials</b>	Worth, M. J. (2021). <i>Nonprofit Management: Principles and Practice</i> . (6 <sup>th</sup> Edition) Sage. <a href="#">UTD Bookstore – print, digital; rent and buy options</a>

## Major Assignment Categories

1. *Team Charter and Project Plan.* Early-semester deliverables that establish team norms, roles, expectations, and a structured approach to the client engagement. These documents are treated as professional operating agreements and may be referenced later in the semester if team performance issues arise.
2. *In-Progress Presentations (In-Class and Outside Class).* Teams will present work-in-progress analyses multiple times during the semester, both in class and in scheduled meetings with the instructors. These presentations are intended to surface assumptions, test judgment, and receive feedback – not to showcase polished conclusions. Teams are expected to incorporate feedback iteratively.
3. *Decision Briefs and Analytical Memos.* Throughout the semester, teams will submit short, focused written deliverables (typically one page) addressing specific decision questions (e.g., governance risk, business model coherence, revenue tradeoffs, impact evidence). These briefs emphasize clarity of recommendation, supporting evidence, acknowledgment of uncertainty, and anticipation of objections.
4. *Final Project Presentation.* At the conclusion of the semester, teams will deliver a formal, board-style presentation synthesizing their analysis and recommendations for the client. Presentations must demonstrate professional judgment, coherence across topic areas, and the ability to communicate tradeoffs credibly and concisely.
5. *Project Closure Summary.* Teams will submit a comprehensive project summary documenting their work, including research conducted, analyses performed, recommendations developed, and deliverables provided to the client. This serves as both a record of work completed and a professional handoff document.
6. *Peer Review and Self-Assessment.* Each student will complete confidential peer evaluations and a self-assessment reflecting on their own contributions and professional conduct. Peer feedback may be used to adjust individual grades on team-based assignments, reflecting the reality of professional accountability.

## Submission and Professional Standards

All assignments must be submitted by the stated deadlines through the designated platforms (eLearning and/or EduSourced). Late submissions are not accepted and will receive a grade of zero. This policy reflects professional expectations in client-facing environments, where missed deadlines affect not only individual credibility but also team performance.

Assignments are evaluated on:

- Quality of analysis and judgment
- Use of evidence and acknowledgment of limitations
- Clarity and professionalism of communication
- Responsiveness to feedback
- Alignment with the decision-centered objectives of the course

Students are expected to manage their time, coordinate with teammates, and resolve issues proactively. Failure to do so will negatively affect both team and individual outcomes.

Assignments, their due dates, slide limits, and their relative weights in determining your final grade are summarized in the table below:

Work Assignment	Due Date	Team/ Ind	Format / Deliverable Length	Weight
Team Charter	by 9am Monday, Feb 2	One charter per team	Template found in eLearning Upload completed charter to EduSourced and eLearning	5%
Project Plan	by 9am Monday, Feb 16	One plan per team	Template found in eLearning Upload completed project plan to EduSourced and eLearning	5%

In-Progress Presentations (in class)	Feb 3 – late April  Seven or eight teams will be selected each week to present project progress to date.	One slide deck per team	Presentation Length: 12 minutes total, including questioning. (Typically, 5 minutes to present and 7 minutes for discussion and Q&A). In-progress presentations are time-constrained decision check-ins, not final recommendations.	15%
In-Progress Presentations (outside class)	Feb 3 – late April  Team will sign up for two 12-minute appointments.	One slide deck per team	Presentation Length: 12 minutes total, including questioning. (Typically, 5 minutes to present and 7 minutes for board-style discussion and Q&A).	10%
Participation	ongoing	Individual	Participation is evaluated based on consistent preparation, active engagement, and professional contribution throughout the semester. Attendance is recorded through required in-class and pre-class written submissions. Physical presence alone does not constitute participation.	20%
Final Project Presentation (in class) Week 15 & 16	Week 15 & 16	Team	<p>Presentation Length: 20 minutes total, including questioning (typically 8 minutes to present and 12 minutes for board-style discussion and Q&amp;A). Final presentations are extended, board-level conversations intended to test integrated judgment, clarity of recommendation, and responsibility under sustained questioning.</p> <p>Teams must upload their final slide deck to eLearning prior to their scheduled presentation time. All students are expected to attend and participate fully in all scheduled final presentation sessions, regardless of whether their team is presenting on a given day. Final presentations are evaluated using the same Presentation Rubric as in-progress presentations, with higher expectations for integration, judgment, and accountability.</p>	25%
Peer Reviews and Self-Assessment	May 2 @ 11:59pm	Individual	Completed in EduSourced	5%
Project Closure Summary	May 12 by 9am	Team	All deliverables uploaded to Edusourced, including a written report. Summary template on eLearning	5%

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**Team Charter and Project Plan.** Each team will be responsible for a team charter and project plan accounting for ten percent (10%) of your grade (5% for each) using the templates provided.

**In-Progress Presentations.** 3 in-class presentations + 2 outside meetings = 5 total scored events = 25%. Standard Length: 12 minutes total per team, including questioning (typically 5 minutes to present and 7 minutes for discussion and Q&A). Two forms of in-progress presentations are used to provide both public, in-class feedback and focused, small-group review of each team's work over the course of the semester.

**Final Presentation.** Each team will be responsible for a final team presentation accounting for twenty-five (25%) percent of your grade in a slide deck with oral presentation. Standard Length: 20 minutes total per team, including questioning (typically 8 minutes to present and 12 minutes for board-style discussion and Q&A). Final presentations are intentionally longer to allow for fully integrated recommendations, deeper questioning, and explicit discussion of tradeoffs and risk.

**Participation.** Participation in this course is evaluated based on demonstrated professional engagement, not personality, volume of speaking, or general enthusiasm. Students are expected to participate as advisors to nonprofit and social-sector leaders—preparing carefully, engaging substantively, and contributing responsibly to decision-making under uncertainty. Because the course is discussion-driven and decision-centered, preparation is a prerequisite for participation. Students are expected to arrive having completed all required pre-class work and prepared to engage meaningfully with the issues under discussion. Participation is assessed continuously throughout the semester based on the following components:

- **Preparation and Readiness:**  
Timely completion of required pre-class activities (such as brief written responses, polls, or other preparatory submissions) that demonstrate engagement with assigned materials and readiness to contribute.
- **In-Class Engagement:**  
Substantive contributions to class discussions, team-based analysis, and decision exercises, including thoughtful participation when called upon individually or as part of a team.
- **Professional Presence:**  
On-time arrival, sustained presence for the full class session, and active attention during discussions, presentations, and guest interactions. Attendance is recorded through required in-class participation artifacts; physical presence without submission of required in-class work does not constitute attendance.
- **Client Engagement:**  
Responsible, timely, and professional interaction with the assigned client, including responsiveness, follow-through, and respect for the client's time, constraints, and priorities.
- **Team Contribution:**  
Consistent and constructive participation in team work, including preparation for meetings, contribution to shared deliverables, and engagement in peer feedback processes.

Physical attendance alone does not constitute participation. Students who attend class but are unprepared, disengaged, or absent from substantive interaction should expect their participation grade to reflect that reality.

Because participation is cumulative and behavior-based, it cannot be “made up” at the end of the semester. Students who disengage early or repeatedly will find it difficult to recover lost participation credit. Participation is documented through required in-class and pre-class participation artifacts. These may include short entry or exit writings, preparatory submissions, written questions or critiques during presentations, peer feedback forms, or other brief documentation specified for a given session. Students are counted as present only when required participation evidence is submitted for that class session.

**Peer Review and Self-Assessment.** Each student will be responsible for the completion of EduSourced's peer review and self-assessment for each teammate accounting for five percent (5%) of your grade. The peer review and self-assessment process will be employed to adjust individual grades on group assignments (maximum range of twenty percent (20%) of the group grade). EduSourced will distribute survey links via email in late April with an anticipated due date (set by EduSourced) of May 9.

**Project Closure Summary.** Each team will be responsible for a project closure summary (template in eLearning) that details the team's work undertaken, including research conducted, performance experienced, metrics developed and tabulated, documents prepared, and recommendations made. Summaries and deliverables uploaded will account for five percent (5%) of your grade.

## Reports and Documents

- a. This course will use a web-based system called EduSourced that is designed for activities in project-based courses. All key course documents or materials *related to your course project* will be available through EduSourced and/or eLearning. Assignments (deliverables) *related to your course project* will be submitted through these systems as well.
- b. It is your responsibility to ensure you have internet access to submit deliverables by the scheduled due dates. **Deliverables must only be submitted via EduSourced and/or eLearning as appropriate. Email submission of any assignment, deliverable, or document to an instructor receives a grade of zero, no exception.**
- c. **A late assignment will receive a grade of zero or “F”, and there will be no make-up. If an assignment is a team assignment, all team members will receive a grade of zero or “F”, and there will be no make-up.** This policy is

strictly enforced because it is an integral part of developing skills expected in the professional community. Teams are advised to have a process in place to make sure that team deliverables are submitted on time.

- d. Computer problems, lack of network access, and extended upload times for large documents are not acceptable excuses for late submissions. Do not submit documents a few minutes before the deadline, instead, allow yourself enough time in case there is an issue with your system, internet, or document. Submitting deliverables well ahead of deadlines is the best way to avoid complications due to unexpected, last-minute problems.
- e. It is your responsibility to ensure submitted documents have been uploaded properly and are available online to stakeholders. If you have difficulty in uploading your documents to EduSourced, then try changing the browser, clearing cookies and cache, and turning off pop-up blockers. If you are still unable to upload your documents, then contact JSOM helpdesk at (972) 883-5800. Lastly, you may want to ask one of your team members to upload the document on time.
- f. **Due to diversity of projects and activities in this course, team members are expected to communicate to their instructor any issues which they feel may affect their performance in this course (e.g., difficulties/issues with team members or your nonprofit client). If you are fired by your team or if your team is fired by your client, you will not pass this course (no exception).**
- g. **Emails that do not include your name, class name, and group number in the subject line will not be answered.**

### Useful Links

- UTD Library: [database tutorials, research guides, library liaisons for JSOM](#).
- [JSOM Business Communication Center](#): Presentation workshops, professional communication skills, ESL tutoring.
- [EduSourced training](#): student overview, student wiki guide, client tutorial.

### Rubrics

The following rubrics will be used for assessing the overall quality of deliverables:

#### 1. Decision Brief / Written Work Rubric

(Used for Form 990 brief, Governance brief, Business Model diagnostic, Revenue brief, Impact brief, Advocacy brief)

#### Purpose

Evaluate quality of judgment, not writing length or formatting flair.

#### Standard Length

1 page, single-spaced (or equivalent)

#### Decision Brief Rubric

Dimension	Exemplary (A)	Competent (B)	Weak (C or below)
<b>Clarity of Recommendation</b>	Clear, specific, and decisive	Present but hedged	Vague or absent
<b>Use of Evidence</b>	Relevant evidence directly supports recommendation	Evidence present but loosely connected	Evidence missing or superficial
<b>Recognition of Tradeoffs</b>	Explicitly names real tradeoffs	Mentions tradeoffs abstractly	Ignores tradeoffs
<b>Acknowledgment of Uncertainty</b>	Clearly identifies limits of knowledge	Implied but not explicit	Overstates certainty
<b>Professional Framing</b>	Board-ready tone and structure	Generally professional	Student-like or informal

#### Scoring Guidance

- A-range: Would be credible in a real board packet
- B-range: Thoughtful but incomplete
- C-range: Descriptive, cautious, or avoidant

This rubric rewards courage + restraint, not polish.

#### 2. Participation Rubric

(Applied periodically and at semester end)

#### Purpose

Replace “gut feel” with observable behavior.

## Participation Rubric

Dimension	Consistently Demonstrated	Inconsistently Demonstrated	Rarely Demonstrated
<b>Preparation</b>	Prep prompts always completed	Occasional misses	Frequent misses
<b>Engagement</b>	Contributes when called upon; engaged in teamwork	Passive but responsive	Avoidant or disengaged
<b>Professional Presence</b>	On time, stays engaged through class	Minor lapses	Regular early exits / distraction
<b>Client Responsibility</b>	Proactive, responsive, reliable	Reactive	Avoidant or unreliable
<b>Team Contribution</b>	Trusted, accountable teammate	Uneven	Burden on others

### 3. Presentation Rubric

(Applied to all participations)

#### Purpose

Evaluate the quality of judgment, integration, and responsibility under questioning—not polish, slide design, or performance flair.

#### Standard Length

12-minute presentation slot per team, including questioning.

### Presentation Rubric (In-Progress and Final Presentations)

Criterion	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
<b>Decision Clarity</b>	States a clear, specific decision or recommendation appropriate to the organization’s context; the audience understands exactly what action is being advised.	Decision or recommendation is identifiable but somewhat vague, incomplete, or insufficiently framed as a choice.	No clear decision is presented; presentation relies on description, analysis, or background without advising action.
<b>Analytical Integration</b>	Integrates relevant considerations (e.g., mission, business model, revenue, governance, capacity, impact, power) into a coherent line of reasoning supporting the recommendation.	Addresses some relevant considerations, but integration is partial, uneven, or loosely connected to the recommendation.	Analysis is fragmented, superficial, or disconnected from the recommendation.
<b>Tradeoffs &amp; Risk</b>	Explicitly identifies meaningful tradeoffs and risks and treats them seriously as part of responsible decision-making.	Acknowledges tradeoffs or risks, but minimizes their significance or treats them superficially.	Avoids, ignores, or dismisses tradeoffs and risks; presents the recommendation as low-cost or inevitable.
<b>Responsiveness to Questioning (Q&amp;A)</b>	Responds thoughtfully and directly to questions; acknowledges uncertainty where appropriate and adjusts reasoning when challenged.	Responds adequately to questions but defensively, narrowly, or without depth.	Evades questions, relies on unsupported assertions, or becomes defensive when challenged.
<b>Professional Judgment &amp; Credibility</b>	Demonstrates maturity, restraint, and credibility appropriate for advising nonprofit or social-sector leaders making consequential decisions.	Demonstrates general professionalism, but judgment under pressure is uneven or underdeveloped.	Displays overconfidence, carelessness, or insufficient grounding in evidence and context.

#### Important Notes for Students

- Presentation polish, slide design, and speaking style are not primary evaluation criteria.
- The quality of thinking, judgment, and response to questioning matters more than performance.
- Strong presentations may acknowledge uncertainty and still score highly.
- Polished presentations that avoid real decisions, risks, or tradeoffs will not.

#### Scoring Guidance (All Presentations)

- A-range:  
Judgment and integration would be credible in a real board or senior leadership setting; tradeoffs and risks are named and handled responsibly.
- B-range:  
Work reflects serious effort and thoughtful analysis but remains incomplete, unevenly integrated, or insufficiently decisive for real-world use.
- C-range (or below):  
Work is primarily descriptive, overly cautious, or avoidant of real decisions, tradeoffs, or risks.

### Guidelines for Written Assignments

**Due Dates.** Written assignments (*other than project-related assignments*) will be due no later than 9 a.m. on the day the assignment is due and should be submitted through eLearning and EduSourced, as instructed. **A late assignment will receive a grade of zero or “F”, and there will be no make-up. If an assignment is a team assignment, all team members will receive a grade of zero or “F”, and there will be no make-up.**

**Format.** Your name (or the group identification and names of all group members), the course number, and the date should appear in a header at the beginning of each page of the document. The file name should identify the course, assignment number, and the group ID. For example, “ENTP 4340\_2\_Group A5.doc” would identify Group A5’s written assignment 2.

**Presentation Format and Submission.** Use PowerPoint where indicated. Keep it simple (limited video, sound effects, etc.). Limit animation to that required for an effective presentation. Submit an electronic copy at the time and to the destination indicated in this syllabus.

**Writing.** Effective written and oral communication is important in the business world. Poor organization, convoluted sentences, mangled grammar, and misspelled words will be considered in the evaluation of your work and ideas. [The Business Communication Center](#) in JSOM 12.106 offers free in-person and online coaching to JSOM students for improving written and verbal communication skills. Students can schedule up to three 40-minute appointments per week for class assignments, resumes, cover letters, and English as a Second Language services. Visit [bcc.utdallas.edu](http://bcc.utdallas.edu) to make an appointment or to refer to additional resources for improving business communication skills.

### How to Read the Course Outline

The Course Outline is organized around decisions rather than topics. Each session is built to move you toward making and defending responsible recommendations under real-world constraints. For each class, you will see a decision theme, required preparation, a short, written thinking task, and a structured in-class activity. Class discussions are not pre-scripted or lecture-driven; they emerge from student preparation and in-class analysis. The outline is cumulative – later sessions assume you are carrying forward the judgments, tradeoffs, and lessons from earlier weeks.

### Course Outline

SESSION DATE	SESSION TOPIC/PREPARATION	ASSIGNMENT
	<b>Phase I – FRAME &amp; COMMIT</b>	
<b>Week 1</b> 1/20/26	<p><b><u>WHAT PROBLEM ARE WE REALLY SOLVING?</u></b></p> <p><b>Decision Theme:</b> Problem vs. activity</p> <p><b>Class Format:</b> Problem-first, discussion-driven, no lecture</p> <p><b>Required Reading / Viewing:</b> Note to students: These readings are not background information. They are the first “case” in the course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Syllabus</li> <li>▪ How to Succeed in This Course</li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Activity:</b> Structured discussion and application of pre-class preparation, including brief individual writing, team discussion, and selected team presentations or progress reviews.</p> <p><b>Written Assignment Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>What you’ll write:</b> A short in-class reflection distinguishing the <i>problem</i> an organization is trying to solve from the <i>activities</i> it performs.</li> <li>▪ <b>What I’m looking for:</b> Your ability to separate purpose from action and to resist describing work instead of diagnosing the underlying problem.</li> </ul>	<b>Individual Entry Reflection</b> (½ - 1 page, in class)

<p><b>Week 2</b> 1/27/26</p>	<p><b>THEORY OF CHANGE AS A HYPOTHESIS</b>  <b>Decision Theme:</b> What must be true for this work to succeed?  <b>Class Format:</b> Problem-first, discussion-driven, no lecture  <b>Required Reading / Viewing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">“Stop Raising Awareness Already”</a></li> <li>▪ Framing for Students: This article critiques a common nonprofit strategy by questioning its underlying assumptions about how change actually happens.</li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Activity:</b> Structured discussion and application of pre-class preparation, including brief individual writing, team discussion, and selected team presentations or progress reviews.</p> <p><b>Written Assignment Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>What you’ll write:</b> A brief analysis identifying one causal assumption embedded in a nonprofit’s approach and explaining what must be true for that assumption to hold.</li> <li>▪ <b>What I’m looking for:</b> Clear causal thinking, not agreement with the mission or enthusiasm for the work.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ToC Assumption Check</b> (Individual, 1 page, pre-class)</p>
<b>Phase II: CREDIBILITY &amp; RISK</b>		
<p><b>Week 3</b> 2/3/26</p>	<p><b>FORM 990: CREDIBILITY SIGNALS</b>  <b>Decision Theme:</b> Would a skeptical outsider trust this organization?  <b>Class Format:</b> Problem-first, discussion-driven, no lecture  <b>Required Reading / Viewing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ IRS Form 990 for assigned nonprofit (most recent available year) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Framing for students: This document is not neutral. It is read by people deciding whether to fund, regulate, or avoid an organization.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <i>Stop Raising Awareness Already</i> (review concepts only; no new article)</li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Activity:</b> Guided analysis of a shared case through individual entry writing, team alignment, and full-class discussion, with teams presenting and defending work-in-progress judgments.</p> <p><b>Written Assignment Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>What you’ll write:</b> A one-page team decision brief assessing whether a skeptical outsider should trust the organization, based on evidence found in its Form 990.</li> <li>▪ <b>What I’m looking for:</b> Your ability to read formal documents as <i>signals</i> of credibility, risk, and governance—not as compliance artifacts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Form 990 Decision Brief</b> (Team, 1 page, pre-class)</p>
<p><b>Week 4</b> 2/10/26</p>	<p><b>GOVERNANCE: POWER &amp; ACCOUNTABILITY</b>  <b>Decision Theme:</b> Who is responsible when things go wrong?  <b>Class Format:</b> Problem-first, discussion-driven, no lecture  <b>Required Reading / Viewing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Selected excerpts from a nonprofit’s bylaws and board governance policies (Board Authority Clause, Officer Roles &amp; Delegation, Board Meetings &amp; Information Flow, Conflict of Interest Policy (Excerpt), Strategic Oversight Language)</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">BoardSource – “Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards”</a> (Selected pages on fiduciary duties)</li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Activity:</b> Guided analysis of a shared case through individual entry writing, team alignment, and full-class discussion, with teams presenting and defending work-in-progress judgments.</p> <p><b>Written Assignment Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>What you’ll write:</b> <u>A short team brief identifying a governance vulnerability and explaining who would be accountable if something went wrong.</u></li> <li>▪ <b>What I’m looking for:</b> <u>A realistic understanding of power, responsibility, and decision-making—not a description of board structures.</u></li> </ul>	<p><b>Governance Risk Brief</b> (Team, 1 page, pre-class)</p>

<p><b>Week 5</b> 2/17/26</p>	<p><b>BUSINESS MODELS: ORGANIZATIONAL COHERENCE</b>  <b>Decision Theme:</b> Does this organization actually work?  <b>Class Format:</b> Problem-first, discussion-driven, no lecture  <b>Required Reading / Viewing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">The Nonprofit Starvation Cycle</a></li> <li>▪ Case Snapshot: “Community Pathways Initiative – Programs &amp; Revenue Overview</li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Activity:</b> Guided analysis of a shared case through individual entry writing, team alignment, and full-class discussion, with teams presenting and defending work-in-progress judgments.</p> <p><b>Written Assignment Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>What you’ll write:</b> A concise team diagnostic assessing whether the organization’s activities, revenue sources, and beneficiaries fit together coherently.</li> <li>▪ <b>What I’m looking for:</b> Your ability to analyze organizational logic without relying on formulas, frameworks, or jargon.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Business Model Diagnostic</b> (Team, 1 page, pre-class)</p>
<p><b>Week 6</b> 2/24/26</p>	<p><b>REVENUE &amp; SCALE: CHOOSING MONEY UNDER CONSTRAINT</b>  <b>Decision Theme:</b> What money will we accept – and at what cost??  <b>Class Format:</b> Problem-first, discussion-driven, no lecture  <b>Required Reading / Viewing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Finding Your Funding Model</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">How Nonprofits Get Really Big</a></li> <li>▪ Case Snapshot: “Community Pathways Initiative – Revenue Options Memo</li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Activity:</b> Guided analysis of a shared case through individual entry writing, team alignment, and full-class discussion, with teams presenting and defending work-in-progress judgments.</p> <p><b>Written Assignment Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>What you’ll write:</b> A team revenue options memo recommending one dominant funding path and explicitly naming the tradeoffs that choice creates.</li> <li>▪ <b>What I’m looking for:</b> Evidence that you understand money as a strategic constraint, not a neutral resource.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Revenue Options Memo</b> (Team, 1 page, pre-class)</p>
<p><b>Phase III – EXECUTION &amp; CONSEQUENCES</b></p>		
<p><b>Week 7</b> 3/3/26</p>	<p><b>CAPACITY, PEOPLE &amp; PARTNERSHIPS</b>  <b>Decision Theme:</b> What can this organization actually sustain?  <b>Class Format:</b> Problem-first, discussion-driven, no lecture  <b>Required Reading / Viewing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Funding Strategies of Large US Nonprofits</a> – Read to understand how revenue concentration and funding choices influence organizational priorities, incentives, and capacity demands. Think about how the funding strategy you chose for Community Pathways Initiative might increase pressure on staff, partnerships, and systems.</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">The Case for Funding Capacity Building</a></li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Activity:</b> Guided analysis of a shared case through individual entry writing, team alignment, and full-class discussion, with teams presenting and defending work-in-progress judgments.</p> <p><b>Written Assignment Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>What you’ll write:</b> A short team memo identifying where strategy and revenue choices place strain on people, systems, or partnerships.</li> <li>▪ <b>What I’m looking for:</b> Attention to human and organizational limits—and willingness to acknowledge them honestly.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Capacity Stress Memo</b> (Team, 1 page, pre-class)</p>
<p><b>PHASE IV – INTEGRATION &amp; RECOMMIT</b></p>		

<p><b>Week 8</b> 3/10/26</p>	<p><b>MID-SEMESTER INTEGRATION &amp; RESET</b>  <b>Decision Theme:</b> What do we now know – and what have we been avoiding?  <b>Class Format:</b> Synthesis, reflection, recommitment (no lecture)  <b>Required Reading / Viewing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ None</li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Activity:</b> Synthesis and reflection across prior weeks, including individual and team writing, full-class pattern recognition, and recalibration of expectations for the remainder of the course.</p> <p><b>Written Assignment Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>What you'll write:</b> An individual integration memo reflecting on what has changed in how you think A team statement identifying the single most important unresolved decision facing your client</li> <li>▪ <b>What I'm looking for:</b> Synthesis, self-awareness, and seriousness about the second half of the course.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Personal Integration Memo</b> (Individual, 1 page, pre-class)</li> <li>2. <b>Team Integration Statement</b> (Team, 1 page, pre-class)</li> </ol>
<p><b>Week 9</b> 3/17/26</p>	<p><b>Spring Break</b>  <b>What's next?:</b> We have been learning how to think. When we return, we will shift to being responsible for recommendations.</p> <p>The second half of the course asks what responsible action looks like when evidence is imperfect and tradeoffs are unavoidable.</p> <p>Rest. Then come back ready to decide.</p>	
<p><b>Phase V – RECOMMENDATION &amp; ACCOUNTABILITY</b></p>		
<p><b>Week 10</b> 3/24/26</p>	<p><b>IMPACT &amp; MEASUREMENT: WHAT DO WE ACTUALLY KNOW</b>  <b>Decision Theme:</b> What evidence is enough to act responsibly?  <b>Class Format:</b> Problem-first, discussion-driven, no lecture  <b>Required Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Ten Reasons Not to Measure Impact — and What to Do Instead</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Plotting Impact Beyond Simple Metrics</a></li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Activity:</b> Guided analysis of a shared case through individual entry writing, team alignment, and full-class discussion, with teams presenting and defending work-in-progress judgments.</p> <p><b>Written Assignment Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>What you'll write:</b> A team critique of the organization's impact claims, identifying which claims are defensible and which should be qualified or reconsidered.</li> <li>▪ <b>What I'm looking for:</b> Judgment under uncertainty and resistance to overclaiming.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Impact Claims Critique</b> (Team, 1 page, pre-class)</p>
<p><b>Week 11</b> 3/31/26</p>	<p><b>STORYTELLING &amp; PERSUASION: COMMUNICATING UNDER UNCERTAINTY</b>  <b>Decision Theme:</b> What story can we responsibly tell – and to whom?  <b>Continuity Statement:</b> Last week you disciplined what you could claim. This week you decide how to persuade without overclaiming.  <b>Class Format:</b> Problem-first, discussion-driven, no lecture  <b>Required Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">What Is Impact Measurement and How Can Organizations Use It?</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Prioritizing Impact Measurement in the Funding of Social Innovation</a></li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Activity:</b> Guided analysis of a shared case through individual entry writing, team alignment, and full-class discussion, with teams presenting and defending work-in-progress judgments.</p> <p><b>Written Assignment Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>What you'll write:</b> A short team draft of an audience-specific message that persuades responsibly while acknowledging limits and uncertainty.</li> <li>▪ <b>What I'm looking for:</b> Ethical persuasion—clarity without exaggeration.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Audience-Specific Message Draft</b> (Team, 1 page, pre-class)</p>

<p><b>Week 12</b> 4/7/26</p>	<p><b>POWER, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DECISION-MAKING</b>  <b>Decision Theme:</b> Who actually decides – and what does influence really mean?  <b>Continuity Statement:</b> Last week you learned to persuade responsibly. This week you confront the reality that persuasion operates inside systems of power. This signals a shift from communication skill to political judgment.  <b>Class Format:</b> Problem-first, discussion-driven, no lecture  <b>Required Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">A New Framework for Understanding Power Building</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">The Pursuit of Influence</a> (Executive Summary)</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">How Nonprofits Shape Policy: The Power of Advocacy vs. Lobbying</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Trends and Policy Issues</a></li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Activity:</b> Guided analysis of a shared case through individual entry writing, team alignment, and full-class discussion, with teams presenting and defending work-in-progress judgments.  <b>Written Assignment Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>What you'll write:</b> A team memo identifying a public or policy decision the organization does not control and recommending a realistic response.</li> <li>▪ <b>What I'm looking for:</b> Power-aware thinking and acceptance of constraints, not advocacy slogans.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Public Decision Constraint Memo</b> (Team, 1 page, pre-class)</p>
<p><b>Week 13</b> 4/14/26</p>	<p><b>INTEGRATED RECOMMENDATIONS: ADVISING UNDER REAL CONSTRAINTS</b>  <b>Decision Theme:</b> Given everything you now know, what should be done?  <b>Continuity Statement:</b> You now understand how strategy, money, capacity, evidence, persuasion, and power interact. This week you must decide what advice you are willing to stand behind.  <b>Class Format:</b> Recommendation, interrogation, accountability (no lecture)  <b>Required Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ None. This is intentional. You are now responsible for integrating everything you've learned and standing behind a recommendation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Preparation:</b> Review your team's integrated recommendation memo and be prepared to defend it under questioning.  <b>In-Class Activity:</b> In-progress presentations current through immediately preceding class  <b>Written Assignment Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>What you'll write:</b> A two-page team memo delivering a single, board-level recommendation, including rationale, tradeoffs, and risks.</li> <li>▪ <b>What I'm looking for:</b> Integration across the semester and willingness to make – and own – a real decision.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Integrated Recommendation Memo</b> (Team, 2 pages, pre-class)</p>

<p><b>Week 14</b> 4/21/26</p>	<p><b><u>DECISION REHEARSAL AND FAILURE ANALYSIS</u></b>  <b>Decision Theme:</b> How could this advice fail – and who would pay the price?  <b>Continuity Statement:</b> Over the past several weeks, you have learned how to analyze organizations, choose under constraint, communicate responsibly, and navigate power. This session asks you to confront the hardest part of advising: understanding how your own recommendations could fail, and who would bear the cost if they do.  <b>Class Format:</b> Interrogation, realism, recommitment (no lecture)  <b>Required Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ None. This session intentionally includes no new readings in order to emphasize responsibility, judgment, and ownership of advice. Students engage in structured failure analysis of their own recommendations, examining risk, assumptions, and potential consequences in preparation for final board-level presentations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Preparation:</b> Students should prepare by interrogating their own advice, not by consuming anything new.  <b>In-Class Activity:</b> Structured interrogation of team recommendations through failure analysis, cross-examination by peers, and reflection on risk, assumptions, and consequences.  <b>Written Assignment Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>What you'll write:</b> A one-page team failure analysis examining how your recommendation could fail and who would bear the cost.</li> <li>▪ <b>What I'm looking for:</b> Intellectual humility, risk awareness, and responsibility.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Failure Analysis Memo</b> (Team, 1 page, pre-class)</p>
<p><b>Week 15 &amp; 16</b> Multiple Class Sessions as Scheduled</p>	<p><b><u>FINAL BOARD PRESENTATIONS</u></b>  <b>Decision Theme:</b> What advice are you willing to stand behind – publicly and completely?  <b>Continuity Statement:</b> Over the past several weeks, you have learned to analyze organizations, integrate strategic, financial, operational, and political constraints, and interrogate the risks of your own recommendations. This final session requires you to deliver and defend board-level advice as if real decisions will be made, owning both the recommendation and its consequences.  <b>Class Format:</b> Board simulation, public defense, accountability (no lecture)  <b>Required Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ None. This final session intentionally includes no new readings. Students are expected to rely on the full body of work developed throughout the semester and on the refinement of their recommendations following the Decision Rehearsal &amp; Failure Analysis sessions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Preparation:</b> Students should prepare by finalizing and rehearsing their integrated board-level recommendations, incorporating insights from prior questioning and failure analysis. Preparation should focus on clarity, tradeoffs, risk acknowledgment, and decision-readiness—not persuasion tactics or polish.  <b>In-Class Activity:</b> Teams will deliver final recommendations to a simulated board, followed by questioning and deliberation. Each presentation requires students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ State a clear recommendation</li> <li>▪ Explain the rationale and tradeoffs</li> <li>▪ Explicitly name key risks and constraints</li> <li>▪ Respond to board-level questioning without retreating into ambiguity</li> </ul> <p>Presentations are evaluated on judgment, integration, clarity, and responsibility—not on presentation style.  <b>Scheduling Note:</b> Week 15 consists of multiple class sessions dedicated to Final Board Presentations. Presentation schedules will be assigned in advance. <b>Students are expected to attend and participate fully in all scheduled presentation sessions, regardless of whether their team is presenting on a given day.</b></p>	<p><b>Final Board Presentation Materials</b> (Team)</p> <p>Slide deck and supporting materials for board-level presentation.</p>

5/12/26	<b>Project Closure Summary</b> <b>Written Assignment Instructions:</b>	<b>Project Closure Summary (Team)</b>  Comprehensive documentation and handoff.
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### Course Policies

<b>Grading (credit) Criteria</b>	<p><b>Grade Scale</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="326 394 1382 751"> <tr> <td>A+</td> <td>&gt; 96.7</td> <td>rare, premium given for superior performance and participation far above the norm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>96.6 – 93.3</td> <td rowspan="2">outstanding performance well above standard</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A-</td> <td>93.2 – 90.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B+</td> <td>89.9 – 86.7</td> <td rowspan="2">fully meets the requirements of the course</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B</td> <td>86.6 – 83.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B-</td> <td>83.2 – 80.0</td> <td>deficient performance and participation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C+</td> <td>79.9 – 76.7</td> <td rowspan="2">significant deficiencies in performance and participation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C</td> <td>76.6 – 73.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C-</td> <td>73.2 – 70.0</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>D</td> <td>69.9 – 60.0</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>F</td> <td>&lt;60.0</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Grading Policy</b></p> <p>Grades will be based on individual written work, presentations, weekly learning updates, and participation, as described above. Advance preparation and enthusiastic participation in class discussions is an important part of the learning experience in this course and will be evaluated. Each student is expected to have read all assigned materials prior to the start of class and be prepared to discuss the ideas, concepts, and issues they raise.</p>	A+	> 96.7	rare, premium given for superior performance and participation far above the norm	A	96.6 – 93.3	outstanding performance well above standard	A-	93.2 – 90.0	B+	89.9 – 86.7	fully meets the requirements of the course	B	86.6 – 83.3	B-	83.2 – 80.0	deficient performance and participation	C+	79.9 – 76.7	significant deficiencies in performance and participation	C	76.6 – 73.3	C-	73.2 – 70.0		D	69.9 – 60.0		F	<60.0	
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<b>Late Work and Deadlines</b>	<p>Meeting deadlines is an essential professional skill and is particularly important in a course built around iterative learning and shared discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assignment deadlines are firm and are designed to ensure fairness and timely feedback.</li> <li>▪ Late submissions generally receive no credit, except in cases of documented emergencies or circumstances communicated in advance.</li> <li>▪ Extensions are uncommon and granted at the instructor’s discretion.</li> </ul> <p>Clear deadlines and consistent standards help ensure fairness and allow the course to function as a collaborative learning environment. Because assignments build on one another, late work can disrupt both individual progress and class discussion. Students who anticipate difficulty meeting a deadline are encouraged to communicate as early as possible.</p>																														
<b>Attendance and Engagement Expectations</b>	<p>This course is discussion-driven and experiential. Much of the learning occurs through in-class conversation, peer feedback, and applied activities that cannot be replicated outside the classroom.</p> <p>Students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attend class regularly and on time</li> <li>▪ Be prepared to engage with readings, discussions, and activities</li> <li>▪ Contribute constructively to the learning environment</li> </ul> <p>Occasional absences are understood. However, repeated absences or chronic lateness will negatively affect both participation and overall learning and may impact course performance.</p> <p>Students are responsible for any material, announcements, or activities missed due to absence.</p>																														

<p><b>Class Recordings</b></p>	<p>Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student Accessibility 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 Accessibility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the <a href="#">Student Code of Conduct</a>.</p> <p>The instructor may, but is not required to, 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.</p>
<p><b>Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools</b></p>	<p>This course acknowledges that artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot, Gemini) are increasingly used in entrepreneurial practice. Students may use AI tools in this class as an aid to learning and productivity, subject to the following guidelines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Transparency: Any assignment, worksheet, or presentation that includes AI-generated material must clearly note where and how AI was used. Example: <i>“The customer persona draft was generated with ChatGPT and then edited by our team.”</i></li> <li>2. Responsibility: Students are responsible for the accuracy, originality, and appropriateness of all submitted work. AI output must be critically reviewed, fact-checked, and revised. Submitting unedited AI content is not acceptable.</li> <li>3. Integrity: Using AI to produce deliverables without disclosure constitutes academic dishonesty under the UTD Student Code of Conduct.</li> <li>4. Skill Development: Since this course emphasizes customer discovery, critical analysis, and creativity, AI tools should supplement – not replace – direct engagement with customers, independent thinking, and team collaboration.</li> <li>5. Instructor Authority: The instructor reserves the right to limit or prohibit AI use for specific assignments where independent student work is essential to learning outcomes.</li> </ol> <p>Bottom line: Treat AI as you would a research assistant — helpful for brainstorming, structuring, or refining work, but never a substitute for your own judgment, creativity, and evidence-based analysis.</p>
<p><b>Use of AI in Assessment</b></p>	<p>Artificial intelligence tools may be used by the instructor to support grading and feedback, including identifying patterns, summarizing student submissions, or providing preliminary assessments aligned with published rubrics. All final grading decisions are made by the instructor, who reviews student work and is responsible for evaluation, feedback, and assigned grades.</p> <p>AI tools are used to enhance consistency and timeliness of feedback, not to replace instructor judgment.</p>
<p><b>Classroom Citizenship</b></p>	<p>Active participation, common courtesy for others</p>
<p><b>Comet Creed</b></p>	<p>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:</p> <p><i>“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”</i></p>
<p><b>Academic Support Resources</b></p>	<p>The information contained in the following link lists the University’s academic support resources for all students. Please go to <a href="http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources">http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources</a>.</p>
<p><b>UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures</b></p>	<p>The information contained in the following link constitutes the University’s policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.</p> <p>Please review the sections regarding the <a href="#">credit/no credit</a> grading option and withdrawal from class.</p> <p>Please go to <a href="http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies">http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies</a> for these policies.</p>

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