

AP/ADMS 3920
NEW VENTURE AND
SMALL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
Fall 2026
Section A

INSTRUCTOR Jon Kerr (jonkerr@yorku.ca)
Office hours by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course examines the entrepreneurial processes of new venture creation and issues associated with small business management from both a theoretical and practical perspective. The emphasis is on issues that affect the success of the entrepreneurial venture, including opportunity recognition and assessment, the development of the business plan, harnessing of resources, and other entrepreneurial, managerial and leadership challenges. The functional areas of business are also explored as they relate specifically to planning for new ventures (including intrapreneurship) and small business management.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, it is expected that the following learning objectives will have been achieved. Students will:

- be able to explain the current state of entrepreneurship in Canada, including its economic and social impact.
- know the characteristics of individuals who engage in entrepreneurial activities and the different motivations for doing so.
- be able to identify and critically assess entrepreneurial ideas and opportunities.
- understand the advantages and disadvantages of alternate business models, business strategies, modes of entry to small business, and organizational forms.
- know the critical stages and accompanying issues/risks associated with the small business lifecycle.
- have developed a framework for analysis of the strategic challenges of new ventures and small businesses and be familiar with theory and practice in the functional areas of marketing, operations, human resources management, finance, IT, etc.
- know the purposes and importance of a business plan and have prepared a business plan for an enterprise of their choice utilizing appropriate research, analysis, and thought processes.
- be able to identify the early warning signs of trouble in new ventures, the costs of failure, and be familiar with generic turnaround and exit strategies.
- have gained experience and insight from being part of a team developing and pitching a new business proposal.

COURSE FORMAT

This course is scheduled to be offered by way of in-person learning, although there will be elements of the course administered via eClass (i.e., quizzes, mini lectures, and assignment/exam submissions). Attendance in class is *strongly* encouraged as our sessions will not be recorded (slides will be posted to eClass with partial notes). There is also a class activity component in the grade structure.

Note: any session that cannot be delivered in person will be delivered via Zoom during our regularly scheduled class time or delivered asynchronously if necessary.

To build our knowledge, we will be relying on three primary sources of information: weekly instructor-led sessions (lectures, activities, cases, Q&A, etc.); a textbook as an optional but recommended reference tool; and a series of student-led 'mini lectures'.

RECOMMENDED TEXT

Balderson, W., Mombourquette, P., Farley, P., Boivin, M. (2026) Canadian Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management. McGraw Hill Publishing. (\$69 – 180 days)

COURSE STRUCTURE

Session 1 – September 10th

Lecture: Course information; entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship
Text: Chapters 1 & 2

Session 2 – September 17th

Lecture: Opportunity identification/creation and evaluation; small business strategies; competitive advantage; business models (business model canvas)
Text: Chapter 3

Session 3 – September 24th

Lecture: Small business basics; modes of entry – build, buy, franchise; family business; legitimacy; networks and networking
Text: Chapter 5
Due: Student led mini lectures as per schedule to be posted
Due: Quiz #1 (In class - covers sessions 1 and 2)
Due: Group information

Session 4 – October 1st

Due: Group business case presentations and business cases

Session 5 – October 8th

Lecture: Organizational forms; business planning; market research
Text: Chapter 4
Due: Student led mini lectures as per schedule to be posted
Due: Individual assignment – group business case critiques
Due: Group confirmation I

Session 6 – October 22nd

Lecture: Marketing strategies; e-commerce; globalization
Text: Chapters 7 & 8
Due: **Student led mini lectures as per schedule to be posted**
Due: **Quiz #2** (In class: covers sessions 3 and 5)

Session 7 – October 29th

Lecture: The entrepreneurial team; human resource management
Text: Chapter 11
Due: **Student led mini lectures as per schedule to be posted**
Due: **Group market research and preliminary marketing plan**
Due: **Group confirmation II**

Session 8 – November 5th

Lecture: Operations management; location selection; quality and control
Text: Chapter 10
Due: **Student led mini lectures as per schedule to be posted**
Due: **Quiz #3** (In class: covers sessions 6 and 7)
Due: **Group declaration of responsibilities form**
Business plan consultations

Session 9 – November 12th

Lecture: Accounting basics; financial management; financial statements and *pro formas*
Text: Chapters 6 & 9
Due: **Student led mini lectures as per schedule to be posted**
Business plan consultations

Session 10 – November 19th

Lecture: Managing growth; crisis management; exit strategies
Text: Chapter 13
Due: **Student led mini lectures as per schedule to be posted**
Assigned: **Take-home case study exam (Due 24 hours after start time)**
Business plan consultations

Session 11 – November 26th

Due: **Quiz #4** (In class: covers session 8, 9 and 10)
Due: **Pitch competition**
Business plan consultations

Session 12 – December 3rd

No formal class
Due: **Group business plans**
Business plan consultations

EVALUATION

In-class activities	5%
Student-led mini-lecture	8%
Individual critique assignment	7%
Group work	
Part 1: Business case	10%
Part 2: Market research & preliminary marketing plan	10%
Part 3: Business plan & pitch competition	25%
Quizzes (4)	20%
Take-home exam	15%
	100%

For particulars, please see below. Any marks that will need to be redistributed as a function of Senate policy will be done so on a pro rata basis to components other than in-class activities.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

During each scheduled session, we will be engaging in certain in class activities that provide us with the opportunity to explore aspects of the course material in greater depth. Typically, these activities will be done in small groups but on occasion there will be activities done individually. These activities typically entail a brief submission of some sort (via eClass or hard copy). Our in-class activities will begin in session one and occur in most sessions throughout the term. The number of activities per session usually ranges between one and three each of which may include separate parts.

Collectively, your engagement with the class activities will represent 5% of your overall grade. In effect, for each session in which you engage in class activities you can earn up to 1 mark towards your final grade. However, simply engaging does not ensure that you get full marks. Each class activity is graded on its own merits and assigned a simple alpha grade. I then take your FIVE BEST sessions' activity grades into consideration when determining your mark (i.e., if you miss a class or two or three, there are no lost marks). Even though frequency of engagement is important, the quality of your engagement is perhaps more critical. Students who engage in a meaningful way can expect to do quite well!

STUDENT-LED MINI-LECTURES

Each student will be responsible for developing ONE mini lecture during the term. Your mini lecture will be worth 8% of your overall grade. The first round of mini lectures will commence in session 3. The schedule for the mini lectures will be posted after session 1.

You will each be assigned a session and a series of topics around which you must develop and deliver a mini lecture of no more than 5 minutes duration. Your mini lecture **must** be posted to eClass prior to the start of the session for which it is due, or a late penalty of 5% per day or part thereof will apply. No mini lectures will be accepted if they are more than three days late.

For your mini lecture, you must i) source an interesting and relevant article published in the past ten years from one of the following journals – *Journal of Business Venturing*; *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*; *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*; *Family Business Review*; *International Small Business Journal*; *Journal of Small Business Management* or, *Small Business Economics*, ii) summarize the article for us (e.g., background, method, findings, etc) and explain its relevance to the course; iii) identify the three key learning insights we should take away from the article/your mini lecture; iv) summarize the practical implications for entrepreneurs and/or introduce a real world example to illustrate its applicability; v) as a means of reviewing things, identify one or two multiple choice questions pertaining to your mini lecture that we *might* be able to include in a quiz; and, vi) attend to the quality of your mini lecture presentation vis-a-vis clarity, visuals, etc. Your mini lecture will be evaluated against these six criteria.

For consistency across mini lectures, you should deliver yours using PowerPoint and its 'record narration' tool and then post it to the appropriate session in eClass. With a little effort and imagination, this is another element of the course on which you can do quite well.

INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT

This assignment involves you critically reviewing (i.e., 'critique') the business ideas/cases presented by your classmates in class on October 1st. You will be assigned one specific group to critique in advance of that date.

Your reviews should evaluate the new venture idea described by the group you have been assigned to critique. This includes identifying things you like about it and concerns that you may have, as well as providing value-added suggestions that might guide the group as they move forward in developing their business plans. Because you might want to ask questions of the group you have been assigned, you will be advantaged by being in attendance for their presentation.

This assignment is worth 7% of your overall grade. Your review is to be done in Word and is to be a maximum of 750 words in length and presented double-spaced with minimum font size = 12.

Due Date: This assignment must be submitted October 8th. You will submit one copy via eClass prior to the start of our regularly scheduled class that day **AND** one hard copy in class which will be distributed to the group you critiqued. You can make these anonymous (do not put your student number on it). Late papers are subject to a 10% penalty and will not be accepted after noon on October 15th.

GROUP WORK (Three separate parts totaling 45% of total course grade)

This course involves substantial group work. You are to form yourselves into groups of between 4 and 6 students (the maximum number of groups we can accommodate is 13). To do this, you will want to be in class interacting with your classmates during the first three weeks of term. The names of group members are to be submitted no later than September 24th. Students not in groups by then will be assigned a group.

PART 1: Business case presentation and the business model canvas (10%)

You are to prepare and present a business case for the opportunity your group has identified using the framework of the business model canvas introduced in session 2. Although at this stage you are only presenting your preliminary idea, you should be using the following headings for your presentation:

- Business Overview - discuss the general nature of the business idea for which you intend to prepare a business plan.
- Customer segment(s) – identify the market needs to be addressed by the business' products/services. Identify your assumptions regarding buyers' wants, willingness and behaviors.
- Value proposition – what you plan to offer your customers and what is compelling about your value proposition (i.e., competitive advantage)
- Channels – how will you promote, sell and deliver your offering to your customer segments.
- Customer relationships – what is the nature of customer interactions you envision?
- Revenue streams – how the business earns revenues through the delivery of its offerings.
- Key activities – what is it that your business must do (and do well) to deliver on its value proposition?
- Key resources – what strategic assets and capabilities are required to support your key activities?
- Key partnerships – not all activities have to be performed by you! Who else might be involved and what activities would they be responsible for?
- Cost structure – what are the major drivers of your venture's cost structure?
- Other - use this heading, if required, to add other information as that relates to your preliminary assessment of the business opportunity. An example of this might be any legislation that guides or restricts the conduct or practices of the business.

Due Date for Part 1: October 1st – soft copy via eClass with In-class presentations – times to be assigned. NO late submissions will be accepted.

You are to submit your business model canvas via eClass at the time of your presentation together with a business case summary structured following the prescribed headings above. That summary is to be a maximum of 1500 words in length (double-spaced, minimum font size = 12) PLUS appendices. If you use appendices, you must make specific and appropriate reference to them in the body of your report. Your presentation is to be a maximum of 10 minutes duration (inclusive of Q&A). That means that the dry run of your presentation must be no more than five minutes!

Your grade will be determined in part by how effectively you use preliminary market research to support your discussion and conclusions, how clearly you convey the feasibility of the idea, and the quality of your presentation. To succeed here, you must push your analysis and

assessment of the environment as far as possible (i.e., inside-out and outside-in analysis *must* be evident).

NOTE: After Part 1 of the group assignment, you will have the opportunity to re-evaluate and alter group membership. This may involve you choosing to leave your group or a group ‘firing’ one or more of its members. If you choose to leave your group, you are responsible for advising your group members of the change and for finding another group to join. Students who are asked to leave a group (i.e., fired) and find themselves without a group after this stage will be organized into a new group. If a student is left with no group at this stage, they will be assigned an alternate assignment of sufficient rigor to warrant a grade weight of 35% of the total term grade. Any changes to group membership after Part 1 must be completed on or before the date specified for ‘Group confirmation I’ in the course schedule. Notification of any group changes must be made via e-mail copied to your instructor.

PART 2: Market research and preliminary marketing plan (10%)

This part of the assignment is intended to ensure that you have collected enough appropriate market information to support the development of your business plan (i.e., Part 3). You are to gather, interpret, and present market research which demonstrates that you understand the industry you will be joining (define the industry, assess its attractiveness, identify industry trends, and estimate the size of the market), provides a thorough competitive analysis (who your direct and indirect competitors are; what, exactly, they offer; what their price structure is; etc.), and identifies your customer’s (and your channel intermediary’s if appropriate) wants, needs, preferences, buying behaviors, etc. You are also to present your *preliminary* marketing plan. This includes your product plan, pricing strategy, promotional plan, and identification of your channels of distribution.

Due Date for Part 2: October 29th – soft copy via eClass. Late submissions are subject to a penalty of 2% per day or part thereof. No submissions will be accepted after November 5th.

Part 2 is to be a maximum of 10 pages in length (double-spaced, minimum font size = 12) PLUS any appendices you like. If you use appendices, you must make specific and appropriate reference to them. Although a grade will be assigned for this component, you will have the opportunity to revise your market research and marketing plan before you submit Part 3, where it will be re-evaluated as part of that assignment.

NOTE: After Part 2 of the group assignment, you will have another opportunity to re-evaluate group membership. This represents ‘Group confirmation II’ in the schedule. Students without a group after this stage will then be organized into new groups, put into an established group, or given an alternate assignment of sufficient length and rigor to warrant it representing 25% of the final grade.

PART 3: Business plan and ‘pitch’ (22% + 3%)

For this part of the group assignment, you are to prepare a formal business plan for the business of your choice and ‘pitch’ your plan to your classmates. The presentation of your plan should follow the general guidelines presented in the lectures and the text but should be

tailored to fit the nature of the venture and your personal preferences. Having said this, the plan must include the following:

- An executive summary that captures the essence and critical aspects of the entire business plan,
- A mission statement and specific, measurable objectives,
- A discussion of legal and other issues, including your rationale for the selection of a particular organizational form,
- A marketing plan that clearly identifies your marketing strategy (product, price, promotion, place, and people) and is consistent with your analysis of the target market's needs, buying behavior, etcetera and the competition's practices.
- An operating plan which addresses, among other things, location selection, equipment and technological needs, inventory, and quality management, etc.
- A human resources plan covering staffing/skills needs identification, structure, personnel policies (recruitment, training, compensation, etc.), etc.
- A financial plan, including well-supported and detailed projections, an identification of financing sources, accounting systems, etc.,

Essentially, your business plan should consist of a series of inter-related functional area plans, and you will be evaluated for each one individually and for the plan as a whole.

Due Dates for Part 3:

The business pitch = November 26th - in-class presentations – the date is firm; times to be assigned.

Your 'pitch' is to be a maximum of 5 minutes duration. There will also be a maximum of 5 minutes scheduled for Q&A.

The business plan = December 3rd - two copies of your business plan are to be submitted before the end of our regularly scheduled class (one hard copy plus one soft copy). Late papers are subject to a penalty of 2% per calendar day or part thereof (i.e., a 75% becomes a 65% on December 8th). No papers will be accepted after December 8th.

This is to be a comprehensive, stand-alone business plan. It should be a maximum of 25 typed pages in length (double-spaced, TNR, minimum font size = 12, minimum 1" margins) PLUS appendices (you may include as many appendices as you like, but please be sure that they are relevant). If you use appendices, you must make specific and appropriate reference to them in the body of your business plan. You must also include a table of contents and an executive summary, neither of which are not included in the page count.

Your grade will be determined in three ways. First, by how well you refine and support the business concept as evidenced by your formal written plan (22%). The required content identified above represents the bare minimum. Second, by your instructors' assessment of the pitch you deliver to our classmates (1.5%). Third, by the number of classmates' votes your pitch receives (1.5%).

NOTE: Part 3 of the group assignment is subject to both a declaration of responsibility process and a peer evaluation process. Each of these processes may see an individual's grades adjusted up or down by as much as 10% from the group's grade.

QUIZZES

There are four quizzes scheduled to align with sessions 3, 6, 8, and 11. These will be administered in class on the day those sessions are scheduled and will run during the first 15 minutes of class time. You will need access to eClass. Each quiz is worth 5% of your overall grade. Questions are drawn from the weekly lectures/classes and mini lecture material. These time constrained quizzes will be the most challenging graded component in the course. The key to success will be engaging in class, doing to readings, and paying attention to any pre-quiz guidance given.

You may miss ONE quiz without penalty. IF you miss a quiz, the weight of that quiz will be shifted to your remaining/subsequent quizzes (i.e., not to any previously written quiz). The exception to this policy is that nobody can miss Quiz #4. If you miss Quiz #4 for any reason, you will be given ONE opportunity to write an alternate Quiz #4 prior to the end of term. This alternate quiz will be set and graded in a manner that acknowledges the additional preparation time available.

NOTE: for students who write all four quizzes, I will drop the lowest grade from among quizzes 1 through 3. Quiz 4 counts for everyone.

TAKE-HOME EXAM

A take-home exam is scheduled for November 19th and will be worth 15% of your overall grade. The exam will be comprehensive in nature and will be case based. It will focus on application of course concepts. Your responses will be due 24 hours after the exam is assigned even though the exam itself will be set in a manner that should allow completion in approximately three hours. Pre-exam guidance will be given.

If you miss the take-home exam for any reason, you will be given the opportunity to write a make-up exam prior to the end of classes. This exam will be set and graded in a manner that acknowledges the additional preparation time available. Students must notify me within 48 hours of the scheduled exam to be eligible for the make-up exam.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto

has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

SOME RELEVANT UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

Deferred Exams: Deferred standing may be granted to students who are unable to write their final examination at the scheduled time or to submit their outstanding course work on the last day of classes. Details can be found at <http://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/deferred-standing>

Academic Honesty: The Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies considers breaches of the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty to be serious matters. Suspected breaches of academic honesty will be investigated and charges shall be laid if reasonable and probable grounds exist. Students should review the York Academic Honesty policy for themselves at: <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69>
Students might also wish to review the interactive on-line Tutorial for students on academic integrity, at: http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/

Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy: The grading scheme (i.e. kinds and weights of assignments, essays, exams, etc.) shall be announced, and be available in writing, within the first two weeks of class, and, under normal circumstances, graded feedback worth at least 15% of the final grade for Fall, Winter or Summer Term, and 30% for 'full year' courses offered in the Fall/Winter Term be received by students in all courses prior to the final withdrawal date from a course.

Note: Under unusual and/or unforeseeable circumstances which disrupt the academic norm, instructors are expected to provide grading schemes and academic feedback in the spirit of these regulations, as soon as possible. For more information on the Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy, please visit:
<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=86>

Reappraisals: Students may, with sufficient academic grounds, request that a final grade in a course be reappraised (which may mean the review of specific pieces of tangible work). Non-academic grounds are not relevant for grade reappraisals; in such cases, students are advised to petition to their home Faculty. Students are normally expected to first contact the course director to discuss the grade received and to request that their tangible work be reviewed. Tangible work may include written, graphic, digitized, modeled, video recording or audio recording formats, but not oral work. Students need to be aware that a request for a grade reappraisal may result in the original grade being raised, lowered or confirmed. For reappraisal procedures and information, please visit the Office of the Registrar site at:
<http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/grades/reappraisal/index.htm>

Accommodation Procedures: LA&PS students who have experienced a misfortune or who are too ill to attend the final examination in an ADMS course should not attempt to do so; they must pursue deferred standing. Other students should contact their home Faculty for information. For further information, please visit:

<http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/exams/deferred/index.htm>

Religious Accommodation: York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. For more information on religious accommodation, please visit:

<https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs>

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: The nature and extent of accommodations shall be consistent with and supportive of the integrity of the curriculum and of the academic standards of programs or courses. Provided that students have given sufficient notice about their accommodation needs, instructors shall take reasonable steps to accommodate these needs in a manner consistent with the guidelines established hereunder. For more information please visit the Disabilities Services website at: <http://www.yorku.ca/cds/>

York's disabilities offices and the Registrar's Office work in partnership to support alternate exam and test accommodation services for students with disabilities at the Keele campus. For more information on alternate exams and tests please visit <http://www.yorku.ca/altexams/>

Private Third-Party Tutoring Companies, Academic Honesty and Support Resources

Many private, third-party tutoring companies advertise their services to YorkU students. One way you can help eliminate these advertisements is by changing your eClass profile settings to private (see instructions below). Some of these private companies claim to be affiliated with, or recognized and supported by, York University. Some also claim to help you by providing you with quiz and test answers, suggesting that this practice is safe and permitted by York. These claims are not true. York University has not officially recognized or endorsed any third-party tutoring service. When you are provided with quiz, test and exam answers, you run the risk of violating the [university's academic honesty policy](#). Students have been caught using these services to cheat and gain unfair advantage over honest students. The cheating students and "tutors" have received academic dishonesty punishments ranging from failing courses, to being expelled, to losing their YorkU degrees. Officially supported resources to help students learn course material will be provided by YorkU officials, such as your professors and your department. These services are offered at no cost to you as a student. Your professor will likely provide weekly office help hours to meet with students and if you are a first- or second-year student and would like help with course material, make sure you join one of our weekly [Peer Assisted Study Sessions \(PASS\)](#). If you require help with any of your numeracy-related courses that involve math, statistics or Excel, drop in online to meet with one of our peer tutors at the [Student Numeracy Assistance Centre at Keele \(SNACK\)](#). If you are ever unsure of whether a resource is allowable or endorsed by YorkU, please feel free to email the Department of Economics at lapsecon@yorku.ca and they would be happy let you know.

To hide your email address in eClass: Step1: Click your name on the top-right of the eClass website, then click "Profile" on the drop-down menu; Step 2: Under "User details" click "Edit profile"; Step 3: From the "Email display" drop-down menu choose "Hide my email address from non-privileged users"; Step 4: Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the "Update profile" button.