



## Social Entrepreneurship (BUSI-2500W)

Course Syllabus / Winter 2025-26, Tuesdays 6-8.45 PM, F344

Materials/announcements will be posted at [agoraacademy.io/socent](http://agoraacademy.io/socent)

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Office hours: Tuesdays 1-6 PM in D290 (DeFehr Hall, North Side)

**Course Description:** Social entrepreneurs are motivated by a desire to make a social impact in business while recognizing the need to balance financial realities. This course examines the role of blended value or "triple bottom line" strategies in particular social, political, economic, or ecological contexts. We will explore the unique management issues confronting social business structures and critically review their impacts. In particular, we will consider examples designed to address environmental degradation and inequality. We will also consider the value of the "entrepreneurial" approach, including attitudes towards risk tolerance, experimentation, and problem-solving.

**Objectives:** The course is designed to introduce students to social entrepreneurship and its potential to produce social impact. Social entrepreneurship is fundamentally about three key communication skills: framing problems and solutions in compelling ways, persuading diverse stakeholders to support your vision, and critically analyzing both your own ideas and others' ventures.

As a designated writing course, students will be given opportunities to improve their writing practice across multiple business genres that develop these skills, including executive summaries, stakeholder communications, pitch presentations, and critical analysis. Students will develop their written "voice" and explore different genres of business writing. In terms of course content, students will be expected to understand:

- Various institutional contexts for social entrepreneurship (social, political, economic, ecological)
- Various business structures, roles, and purposes
- How to identify promising opportunities and prototype them in applied settings
- Unique legal and financial mechanisms for social entrepreneurs
- Manitoba-based social enterprises

**Deadline for withdrawal without academic penalty:** March 20

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## Reading List

Cannon, Shiela, and Galadon, Conception (2024). *Promise, Pitfalls, and Potential of Social Entrepreneurship*. Routledge.

*Supplementary texts available on the website at [agoraacademy.io/socent](http://agoraacademy.io/socent)*

**AI & Writing Tools (Visible AI):** This course uses Visible AI to help you develop effective AI collaboration skills while maintaining academic integrity. All small writing assignments must be submitted through Visible AI, which allows me to see how you're working with AI tools. You're encouraged to use AI as a thinking partner, but you must understand and be able to explain every part of your work. The goal is to learn how to use AI responsibly in professional contexts while developing your own voice and critical thinking—particularly around framing problems, persuading stakeholders, and critically analyzing claims.

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## Assignments and Grades

Letter	Percentage	Grade Points	Descriptor	An “excellent” assignment (A) would display:
A+	90–100	4.5	Exceptional	1. Original thinking and a superior grasp
A	85–89	4.25	Excellent	2. A highly developed capacity for critical evaluation, synthesis, and creativity
A-	80–84	4.0	Great	3. Appropriate descriptions and quotations
B+	77–79	3.5	Very Good	4. Organizing and subordinating information well; writing and/or speaking clearly
B	73–76	3.25	Good	5. The use of research sources using <i>any</i> recognized style format. See: Hacker, Diana. <i>A Pocket Style Manual</i> . Eighth edition. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2018
B-	70–72	3.0	Satisfactory	
C+	67–69	2.5	Competent	
C	63–66	2.25	Acceptable	
C-	60–62	2.0	Adequate	
D	50–59	1	Marginal	

Assignment	Weight
Class participation	10%
Learning prompts / attendance (ongoing)	5%
Chapter presentations (individ/group)	10%
Small writing assignments (5 total)	30%
— 1. Problem framing statement (1 page)	6%
— 2. Stakeholder persuasion deck	6%
— 3. Critical analysis of SE case (2 pages)	6%
— 4. Impact theory of change (1 page)	6%
— 5. Critical peer analysis (2 reviews)	6%
Case study OR Feasibility study (4-5 pages)	25%
Final pitch presentation	20%

**Class participation / “attention”:** Your participation grades will be posted at the same time as your mid-term grade; each grade is worth 5%. You will be graded on the quality and quantity of interaction – that is, not only the volume of interaction, but the quality and thoughtfulness of your contributions. Notes will be taken by the instructor throughout the course as an informal means of evaluating your engagement (vs. time spent looking at screens / phones, etc.). Please bear this in mind if you’re routinely doing other things in class time. The instructor will also integrate your grading of peer presentations.

**Learning prompts:** As prompted, students will briefly write and share their understanding of a topic as a means of catalyzing conversation about the academic reading. At the end of class, students will be expected to reflect on their initial entry and consider whether your understanding has changed. This will also serve as a means of evaluating attendance, in addition to notes taken by the instructor.

**Chapter presentations:** For each assigned reading, one group will prepare a synopsis in point form that outlines the main argument of the reading. Following the discussion, the group will be tasked with preparing a half-page written summary of the reading and discussion. Be sure to sign up early for your timeslot. Note: Periodically, class time will be allocated to reading in class, but students should not rely on this time to integrate the topic matter.

**Small Writing Assignments (initial drafts via Visible AI):** These assignments develop the three core communication competencies of social entrepreneurship: **framing, persuasion, and critical analysis**. **Please select a case study or formulate a case study or prototype idea and then apply each of these frameworks to your idea.**

**1. Problem Framing Statement (half page, 6%):** Frame a social or environmental problem in a way that makes the need for entrepreneurial intervention compelling. This assignment develops your ability to define problems strategically, identify root causes vs. symptoms, and articulate why your framing matters. *Skill focus: Framing*

**2. Stakeholder Persuasion Deck (1-2 pages, 6%):** Write a persuasive pitch to a specific stakeholder (investor, community partner, board member, or potential customer) convincing them to support or engage with your social enterprise. This assignment develops audience awareness, persuasive argumentation, and the ability to tailor your message to different stakeholder interests. You can use a written or slide format. *Skill focus: Persuasion*

**3. Critical Analysis of Social Enterprise Case (1-2 pages, 6%):** Analyze an existing social enterprise, evaluating its theory of change, business model, and claimed impact. Identify strengths, weaknesses, and unstated assumptions. This assignment develops your ability to read critically, question claims, and identify gaps between rhetoric and reality. *Skill focus: Critical Analysis*

**4. Impact Theory of Change (1 page, 6%):** Create a written theory of change that explains the causal pathways from your social enterprise's activities to its intended long-term social/environmental impact. This assignment combines framing (how you define the problem and solution) with persuasion (convincing readers your logic is sound). *Skill focus: Framing + Persuasion*

**5. Peer Analysis (1 review, 6% total):** Write constructive, professional peer reviews of classmates'

case studies or feasibility studies. This assignment develops critical thinking, professional feedback skills, and the ability to analyze others' framing and persuasive strategies. *Skill focus: Critical Analysis*

**Case Study / Prototype Portfolio (6-7 pages):** This portfolio brings together and revises your semester work, demonstrating growth in framing, persuasion, and critical analysis. Choose one option:

Option A: Case Study Portfolio – Revise / integrate your assignments using the lean start-up canvas as a model.

Option B: Prototype Portfolio – Develop a feasibility study for a new social enterprise using the lean start-up canvas.

Both options must include:

- Substantial revision based on feedback received
- Integration of multiple assignments into a cohesive document
- **Add - 1-page reflection on your development in framing, persuasion, and critical analysis: this will inform the basis of grading “revisions”**
- Institutional context appraisal using lean start-up canvas

This is not simply combining previous assignments—you must revise, integrate, and synthesize.

**Case study presentation / social enterprise pitch:** Each individual/group will present their study during the final class of this course. You will be marked on style (5 marks), clarity (5 marks), substance (10 marks), and class engagement (5 marks).

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## Policies

**Final grades:** Grades submitted by instructors become final only after they are vetted by the Dean's Council. That process occurs early in January for fall semester grades and early in May for winter semester grades.

**Academic integrity:** ALL sources in ALL student writing must be appropriately referenced. Plagiarism is a serious matter. Students should be aware of CMU Academic Policies, particularly those regarding academic misconduct (plagiarism and cheating), which apply to all University courses. These are detailed on [CMU's website](#) and in the [CMU Calendar](#). Please note that CMU has adopted the following style guide for all academic writing: Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. Ninth edition. Macmillan Learning, 2021.

For more information on CMU policies regarding grades, academic misconduct, appeals, and other matters, please see [CMU's Academic Calendar](#).

**Accessibility:** CMU strives to provide a fair and supportive learning environment for academically qualified students with disabilities. If you are eligible for these services or have questions about becoming eligible, please contact Sandra Loeppky, Coordinator of Accessibility Programs at [sloeppky@cmu.ca](mailto:sloeppky@cmu.ca) or 204.487.3300 x.340.

In recognition of individuals with asthma, allergies and severe environmental/chemical sensitivities, CMU is striving to become a scent-free campus. Students, staff and guests are asked to refrain from wearing fragrances and scented personal care products at CMU. This includes perfumes, colognes, aftershave and scented hair products. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated by those affected.

**Counselling:** University students face many challenges and at times may benefit from having a trained professional to talk to. There are qualified counsellors at CMU who volunteer their services free of charge to students on the CMU campus. Students wishing to book an appointment with a counsellor are asked to contact the North Side Receptionist at 204.487.3300 or [info@cmu.ca](mailto:info@cmu.ca). Confidentiality is maintained at all times. The counselling office is located at C365 (north side) and is free for CMU students.

**Continuity plan:** Faculty and students should plan to stay home when ill. If students can't come to class, please notify the instructor and undertake to collect notes from the class note-taker. If the instructor is ill, arrangements will be made to conduct the class asynchronously or live online.

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## Schedule

		Social Entrepreneurship <b>Promise, Perils, Potential</b>	Supplementary readings	Assignments
Tuesdays	Ch.			
Jan	6	1 Historical Emergence	The Case for Definition (essential starter kit)	
	13	2 Excitement About SE	When Faced With Progressive Bus., Stay Skeptical	
	20	3 Levers of Positive Change	The Science of What Makes People Care	
	27	4 SE Beyond Heorism: Mgmt Under Stress	SET Mgmt: Ch. 1/2 (Intro, History)	
Feb	3	5 Impact: Trend, Pressure, Reality	SET Mgmt: Ch. 5/6 (Wellbeing, Entrepreneurship)	1: Problem Framing
	10	6 Scaling Wisely: Prioritizing Impact	Beyond Neolib: Resilience... Governing Complexity	
		Reading week		
	24	7 Ecosystems, Somewhat Unstitched	SET Mgmt: Ch. 8/9 (Form, Implement Strategy)	2: Stakeholder Persuasion
Mar	3	8 Social Value Creators	SET Mgmt: Ch. 15/16 (Lead, Teams)	
	10	9 Reporting to Revolution: Choose Your Lens	Quiet Radicalism of Building Lifestyle Business	3: Critcial Analysis
	17	10 Scaling Creatively / Conclusion	SET Mgmt: Ch. 18: Control + Lean Startup (HBR)	4: Impact ToC
	24	11 Presentations/Final Pitch 1		5: Peer Review
	31	- Presentations/Final Pitch 2		
Apr	6	Due date for final Portfolios		