

Consulting to Meet Small Business Needs

Fall 2024

Course Numbers

This course is cross-listed as multiple different sections:

- BUSI 4336-01 (24479) – Consulting to Meet Business Needs
- FINA 4336-01 (24486) – Consulting to Meet Business Needs
- FINA 7397-02 (21338) – Selected Topics in Finance
- GENB 5336-01 (24490) – Consulting to Meet Business Needs
- GENB 7335-01 (24496) – Research & Application of Emerging Innovations in Microfinance

Instructor

- Charlie Becker – cdbecker@cougarnet.uh.edu
- Office Hours – by Appointment via email any time or on [Calendly](#)

The contents of this syllabus are subject to change at any time per the instructor's discretion. It is your obligation as a student to make sure that your UH email is properly set up, and to routinely check both your UH email and the course website (on Canvas).

Learning Objectives

This course is designed for students who want to explore entrepreneurship and small business opportunities to expand their career options. Through a variety of exercises, guest speakers, and hands-on projects, students who complete all coursework will:

1. Identify challenges faced by small businesses and factors contributing to their success.
2. Develop practical skills in recognizing, vetting, and capitalizing on small business opportunities.
3. Gain confidence in launching and marketing entrepreneurial ventures or side projects.
4. Learn the importance of personal branding, networking, and continuous learning in entrepreneurship.
5. Explore diverse paths to entrepreneurial success through real-world examples and guest speaker insights.

Class Format and Schedule

Because this course is hands-on and involves a lot of activities and guest speakers, there are three potential class delivery methods:

- **In-Person Activity** is a class where you come to the classroom and it will not be streamed.
- **Online Asynchronous** is a class where materials are posted on Canvas for you to read or watch on your own time. You will have homework, but you do NOT have to attend a class lecture in-person or on Zoom.
- **Guest Speakers** can either be in-person or online. If the class is online, it will be at the same day and time on Zoom. In-person guest speakers will not be broadcast on Zoom.

Class Schedule

Date	Day	Class Format
August 19	Mon	In-Person Activity
August 21	Wed	In-Person Activity
August 26	Mon	In-Person Activity
August 28	Wed	In-Person Guest Speaker
September 02	Mon	Holiday
September 04	Wed	Guest Speaker (TBD)
September 09	Mon	Online Asynchronous
September 11	Wed	Guest Speaker (TBD)
September 16	Mon	Online Asynchronous
September 18	Wed	Guest Speaker (TBD)
September 23	Mon	Online Asynchronous
September 25	Wed	In-Person Activity
September 30	Mon	Online Asynchronous
October 02	Wed	In-Person Presentations
October 07	Mon	In-Person Presentations
October 09	Wed	In-Person Presentations
October 14	Mon	Online Asynchronous
October 16	Wed	Guest Speaker (TBD)
October 21	Mon	Online Asynchronous
October 23	Wed	Guest Speaker (TBD)
October 28	Mon	Online Asynchronous
October 30	Wed	Guest Speaker (TBD)
November 04	Mon	Online Asynchronous
November 06	Wed	Guest Speaker (TBD)
November 11	Mon	In-Person Presentations
November 13	Wed	In-Person Activity
November 18	Mon	In-Person Activity
November 20	Wed	In-Person Activity
November 25	Mon	Flex/TBD

The location of Guest Speaker classes will be announced as soon as they are booked via a Canvas announcement and email. **It is your responsibility to check Canvas and make sure that you come to campus or attend on Zoom.** “I didn’t know it was in-person” will not get change your attendance grade.

List of Topics

Monday class lessons' readings and materials and speaker details will be posted at least two weeks in advance. This is a non-exhaustive list of topics to be covered:

Consulting and Entrepreneurship:

- Starting and scaling a consulting business
- Developing a pricing strategy (e.g., luxury pricing, premium pricing, lowest cost provider)
- Importance of branding and marketing in consulting
- Client management, including identifying good vs. bad clients
- Trust and transparency in business partnerships
- Diversifying revenue streams and managing risks in entrepreneurship
- Importance of personal branding and business positioning
- The distinction between freelancer, solopreneur, and entrepreneur roles

Strategic Business Concepts:

- Developing and executing business strategies
- The balance between strategy and execution in business operations
- Market perception and its impact on pricing
- Managing overhead costs and understanding business profitability
- Tactical growth steps: acquiring clients, expanding services, and increasing prices
- Identifying and working with target customers for profitability

Workplace Dynamics:

- Remote work and its advantages
- Finding work-life balance, particularly in remote settings
- The concept of designing one's life and career to match personal preferences

Business Growth and Scaling:

- Strategies for growing a consulting or entrepreneurial business
- Importance of seizing opportunities and leveraging small wins
- Managing business growth, including scaling services and pricing
- The journey from broad to niche customer bases as businesses grow

Psychology and Philosophy of Business:

- The importance of passion and doing what you love in business
- The role of perception in pricing and business success
- The concept of survival bias and its implications for long-term success
- The balance between quality and quantity in business offerings

Practical Business Applications:

- Real-world examples and case studies shared by guest speakers
- Personal anecdotes and experiences from entrepreneurs in managing business challenges
- The importance of adaptability and learning from mistakes in business

Miscellaneous Topics:

- The impact of celebrity branding and market perception on product pricing
- The significance of transparency in promoting other small businesses or competitors

Assignments and Grades

You will be graded on participation, classwork, and a project. Excluding the first day to go over the syllabus, there are 27 class sessions, including the online asynchronous sessions.

- **Online Asynchronous Classes:** Each will include a brief comprehension quiz (4 points) and a Discussion board + Activity (6 points).
- **In-Person and Zoom Classes:** Each will include an attendance score (4 points) and a Discussion board + Activity (6 points).

Each class session offers a total of 10 points. With 27 classes, this totals 270 points.

Additionally, there is a project worth 30 points, divided into two presentations (15 points each), accounting for 10% of your grade. This brings the total number of points available in this course to 300. Your final grade will be determined based on these points.

Grading Scale

% of available points	Actual Points Cutoff	Grade
94%	282	A
90%	270	A-
87%	261	B+
84%	252	B
80%	240	B-
77%	231	C+
74%	222	C
70%	210	C-
67%	201	D+
64%	192	D
60%	180	D-

Your grades will be updated on Canvas regularly so the grade on there should reflect what you actually have in the course. If you ever have any questions, please email me.

UH Email

Please check and use your CougarNet email for communications related to this course. Faculty use the CougarNet email to respond to course-related inquiries such as grade queries or progress reports for reasons of FERPA. To access your CougarNet email, [login](#) to your Microsoft 365 account with your CougarNet credentials. Visit [University Information Technology \(UIT\)](#) for instructions on how to connect your CougarNet e-mail on a mobile device.

Syllabus Changes

Please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email and on Canvas.

Academic Honesty Policy

High ethical standards are critical to the integrity of any institution, and bear directly on the ultimate value of conferred degrees. All UH community members are expected to contribute to an atmosphere of the highest possible ethical standards. Maintaining such an atmosphere requires that any instances of academic dishonesty be recognized and addressed. The UH Academic Honesty Policy is designed to handle those instances with fairness to all parties involved: the students, the instructors, and the University itself. All students and faculty of the University of Houston are responsible for being familiar with this policy.

Artificial Intelligence

AI tools may be used for brainstorming, proofreading, or basic research, similar to spell-check. However, AI tools are prohibited in any problem-solving, math, accounting, finance, or short answer questions. Failure to disclose AI use will be treated as academic dishonesty. This policy ensures both academic integrity and the development of essential professional skills.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

The University of Houston has a number of resources to support students' mental health and overall wellness, including [CoogsCARE](#) and the [UH Go App](#). UH [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) offers 24/7 mental health support for all students, addressing various concerns like stress, college adjustment and sadness. CAPS provides individual and couples counseling, group therapy, workshops and connections to other support services on and off-campus. For assistance visit uh.edu/caps, call 713-743-5454, or visit a [Let's Talk](#) location in-person or virtually. [Let's Talk](#) are daily, informal confidential consultations with CAPS therapists where no appointment or paperwork is needed.

Need Support Now?

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call CAPS crisis support 24/7 at 713-743-5454, or the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: call or text [988](tel:988), or chat 988lifeline.org.

Title IX/Sexual Misconduct

Per the UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy, your instructor is a "responsible employee" for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and state law and must report incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking) about which they become aware to the Title IX office. Please know there are places on campus where you can make a report in confidence. You can find more information about resources on the Title IX website at <https://uh.edu/equal-opportunity/title-ix-sexual-misconduct/resources/>.

Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids

The University of Houston is committed to providing an academic environment and educational

programs that are accessible for its students. Any student with a disability who is experiencing barriers to learning, assessment or participation is encouraged to contact the Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center (Dart Center) to learn more about academic accommodations and support that may be available to them. Students seeking academic accommodations will need to register with the Dart Center as soon as possible to ensure timely implementation of approved accommodations. Please contact the Dart Center by visiting the website: <https://uh.edu/accessibility/> calling (713) 743-5400, or emailing jdcenter@Central.UH.EDU.

The [Student Health Center](#) offers a Psychiatry Clinic for enrolled UH students. Call 713-743-5149 during clinic hours, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to schedule an appointment.

The [A.D. Bruce Religion Center](#) offers spiritual support and a variety of programs centered on well-being.

The [Center for Student Advocacy and Community \(CSAC\)](#) is where you can go if you need help but don't know where to start. CSAC is a "home away from home" and serves as a [resource hub](#) to help you get the resources needed to support academic and personal success. Through our [Cougar Cupboard](#), all students can get up to 30 lbs of FREE groceries a week. Additionally, we provide 1:1 appointments to get you connected to on- and off-campus resources related to essential needs, safety and advocacy, and more. The [Cougar Closet](#) is a registered student organization advised by our office and offers free clothes to students so that all Coogs can feel good in their fit. We also host a series of cultural and community-based events that fosters social connection and helps the cougar community come closer together. Visit the CSAC homepage or follow us on Instagram: @uh_CSAC and @uhcupbrd. YOU belong here.

Women and Gender Resource Center

The mission of the [WGRC](#) is to advance the University of Houston and promote the success of all students, faculty, and staff through educating, empowering, and supporting the UH community. The WGRC suite is open to you. Stop by the office for a study space, to take a break, grab a snack, or check out one of the WGRC programs or resources. Stop by Student Center South room B12 (Basement floor near Starbucks and down the hall from Creation Station) from 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday.

Recording of Class

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with anyone without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.