Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has become an important part of the curriculum of top business schools and universities worldwide. MBA students’ demand for entrepreneurship courses remains strong, because it enriches their portfolio of job opportunities, and MBA Deans see entrepreneurship as an integrative topic, which fosters the general management abilities of their students. Although the supply of well-trained entrepreneurship scholars has been increasing, the number of available positions for these academics has outgrown the supply. In other words, there is a clear market opportunity for Ph.D. students who specialize in this young and exciting field of research. And for those who would like to stay focused on their core domains (e.g., finance, accounting, marketing, strategy, organizational behavior, technology management, operations, etc.), entrepreneurship as a phenomenon offers fascinating research opportunities. The purpose of this course is to explore these opportunities.

Content & Objectives

This course is designed to expose you to cutting-edge theoretical and empirical developments, and to appropriate methodological perspectives on entrepreneurship research.

For a solid understanding of the phenomenon, the course will give you a brief introduction to the entrepreneurship field, its foundations and intellectual heritage. We will then focus on the main questions that define the field today and critically examine how researchers are approaching these questions.

Besides addressing the classic as well as currently “hot” topics for entrepreneurship research, we will also focus on questions about appropriate research designs and methodologies. Thus, in addition to addressing the content of the received literature, we will discuss the process of crafting high-quality research papers and getting them published in top tier journals. Moreover, as we read the literature, we will continually seek to identify promising research areas and questions that may be of interest to you in the context of your own dissertation research. As a result, you will benefit from the course regardless of whether your research interests lie in entrepreneurship or elsewhere.
Learning Outcomes

- Know the state-of-the-art of entrepreneurship research
- Develop your research agenda: link and enrich it with entrepreneurship topics
- Critically examine published research, and articulate its strengths as well as weaknesses
- Build connections between a small set of research articles, and discover patterns
- Formulate a compelling research question
- Match a research question with an appropriate methodology to explore it
- Craft a research proposal (question, motivation, literature review, hypotheses, method)
- Navigate the review and publication process
- Effectively present your research to others in an academic setting
- Lead an academic discussion

Competences

The course actively fosters a number of key skills that are important for your development as a management scholar. Among them are the following:

- Ability to understand state-of-the-art research published in top journals
- Ability to conduct critical analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of new and complex ideas
- Ability to give a research presentation and to lead an academic discussion
- Ability to formulate an interesting research question and to craft a research design in order to answer that question, including the choice of an appropriate methodology
- Ability to understand and manage the socially complex process of conducting and publishing research.

Methodology

In this course, we will share the responsibility for discussing the readings and raising issues. You are expected to come fully prepared to class to discuss and analyze the readings that are assigned. Each week we will focus on about three readings from the suggested readings list. These readings will be determined jointly by the discussion leader and the instructor (see below on the role definition of the discussion leader). You should read at least one additional paper from the readings list (the one that interests you the most) to compare and contrast the insights from that paper with the ones covered in class. This will enrich the quality of class discussion and analysis, and give you a broader understanding of the field.

“Analyzing” a paper involves identifying and laying out:

- Research question(s)
- Central arguments and hypotheses
- For empirical papers, methods (research design, sample, data collection, construct measures, analytic techniques) and results
- Key conclusions
- Strengths, weaknesses, contributions to the literature, and interesting areas / questions for discussion.
For one session, you will serve as the discussion leader. As discussion leader, you will also be given the opportunity to lead part of the class meeting. In preparation of this, you will meet with me prior to the class to plan the session. You will then, based on your readings and analyses, open the class session by making a presentation on one of the assigned papers that explains your insights. Not only will the seminar participants learn from you, but you will also benefit from getting in-depth feedback on your presentation content as well as style. In other words, you will practice and learn the art of making effective presentations in an academic setting. You will then seed the debate by asking stimulating questions, and you will moderate the ensuing discussion jointly with me. This process helps you develop your skills as discussant and session chair, which other useful skills for your future career as an academic. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, it will help you develop your critical thinking.

In this role, you are expected to critically review and analyze several articles (typically about three) that you will jointly select with the course instructor from the reading list. You should strive to identify new insights in the research that is being reviewed, and develop your own point of view on each article. Moreover, you should reflect on the following questions that consider the readings collectively: What are the common themes within the articles, contradictions among the articles, and insights? What are the most important conclusions from the readings viewed collectively? What might be appropriate follow-on research questions for a study based on a research gap that is suggested? (This entails your developing an understanding of the assigned articles, their relationship to one another, and their collective synthesis.)

As discussion leader, you will also prepare a short memo (max. 3 pages) on the selected papers which includes for each paper a statement of the main research question(s), the central arguments, the methodology, the data set (if any), a summary of findings, a commentary with your thoughts on the readings (taken individually as well as collectively), and proposed discussion questions. This memo will be shared with the other course participants.

As a general recommendation for each session participant, please ensure that you have a point of view on the key insights of the assigned readings as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Also bring your thoughts on questions and interesting issues to discuss during class, and make connections with ideas that you have come across in other courses or readings.

**Evaluation**

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

- Your participation in class discussions: 60%
- Your effectiveness as a discussion leader (incl. memo): 20%
- Your final paper + presentation: 20%

The paper must not exceed 20 double-spaced pages, including everything, and should be largely text-based. It is due on Monday May 31, 2022. You will be given the opportunity to present it and receive feedback on your ideas during our last class sessions.

The final paper should draw on the theoretical and empirical issues addressed in this course. It should present a carefully thought through research design that could be a “first draft”
for a publishable article in a refereed management journal. The paper should be based on a review and synthesis of the research literature on some entrepreneurship-related topic that is of particular interest to you. It can be related to a project that you are currently undertaking, but it should represent a distinct addition to that project. The paper could be structured as follows:

- Introduction, which lays out the motivation and research question
- Theory section with testable hypotheses, anchored in your review of the literature
- If applicable, a method section that explains the empirical methodology
- A tentative, short discussion of the potential implications and contributions of your research

You will get an excellent grade for the course in return for diligent preparation, inspired class participation, and outstanding writing.

**Outline Overview**

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<th>Session Number</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topical &amp; Methodological Foci</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Tuesday, March 29, 2022</td>
<td><strong>Topical focus</strong>: What is entrepreneurship? Who is (not) an entrepreneur? What is the role of the entrepreneur? What questions define the field?</td>
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| 2              | Wednesday, March 30, 2022 | **Topical focus**: What are the sources of entrepreneurship? Are opportunities discovered or created?  
**Method focus**: Deductive theorizing |
| 3              | Thursday, March 31, 2022 | **Topical focus**: What are the key resources for entrepreneurs, and how do entrepreneurs acquire or build them?  
**Method focus**: Inductive theory development |
| 4              | Friday, April 1, 2022 | **Topical focus**: How are entrepreneurial ventures financed, monitored and governed?  
**Method focus**: Analytical modeling |
| 5              | Friday, April 22, 2022 | Individual Coaching |
| 6              | Tuesday, May 10, 2022 | **Topical focus**: What are the dynamics of the entrepreneurship process?  
**Method focus**: Simulation |
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| 7 | Tuesday, May 17, 2022 | Topical focus: What is a business model, and why is it important? What is the role of design in entrepreneurship?  
  Method focus: Review process |
| 8 | Tuesday, May 24, 2022 | Topical focus: How do markets and fields get created? What do institutional entrepreneurs do? |
| 9 | Tuesday, June 7, 2022 | Presentations & discussion of final papers                           |
|10 | Tuesday, June 7, 2022 | Presentations & discussion of final papers                           |
Detailed Course Outline & Bibliography

- I will work with the discussion leader throughout the week of the relevant class session to prepare the class. We will point you to the specific papers (typically not more than three) on which our discussion will center in the class. I have made a tentative suggestion for the first session (see below: readings marked with *).
- If you would like to suggest additional articles for consideration, please feel free to let me know.

Session 1: What is entrepreneurship? Who is (not) an entrepreneur? What is the role of the entrepreneur? What questions define the field?

Entrepreneurship “Classics” And Recent Extensions


Reviews & Perspective Articles


**Supplemental Readings: Entrepreneurship Research Pioneers**


**Session 2: What are the sources of entrepreneurship? Are opportunities discovered or created?**

**Core Articles**


**Method Papers**


Session 3: What are the key resources for entrepreneurs, and how do entrepreneurs acquire or build them?

Core Articles


Method Papers


Session 4: How are entrepreneurial ventures financed, monitored and governed?

Core Articles


Supplemental Readings


Session 5: Individual Coaching
Session 6: What are the dynamics of the (corporate) entrepreneurship process?

Core Articles


Supplemental Readings & Method Papers

Session 7: What is a business model, and why is it important? What is the role of (business model) design in entrepreneurship?

Core Articles


Review Papers & Book Chapters

Session 8: The institutional context of entrepreneurship. How do markets and fields get created? How does entrepreneurship unfold in emerging contexts?

Core Articles


Review Papers


Session 9 - 10: Presentations of entrepreneurship research ideas
**Professor’s Biography**

**Prof. Christoph Zott**
Professor of Entrepreneurship

PhD, Commerce and Business Administration, University of British Columbia, Canada
Diplom-Wirtschaftsingenieur, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany
DEA, Génie Industriel, Institut National Polytechnique de Grenoble, France

Christoph (‘Chris’) Zott is Professor in the Department of Entrepreneurship, and former Academic Director of the IESE Doctoral Programs. His research centers on the design of new business models; the acquisition, mobilization and combination of resources through specific entrepreneurial behaviors; value creation in private equity; and entrepreneurial management and capabilities within established firms.

Prof. Zott has published on these topics in the *Administrative Science Quarterly, Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Business Venturing, Journal of Management, Organization Science, Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, Strategic Management Journal*, and in other well-respected research outlets and books. He is the former Chair of the *Strategic Management* (formerly *Business Policy and Strategy*) Division of the Academy of Management, the world’s largest professional organization of management scholars. Professor Zott is a Fellow of the *Strategic Management Society*, a former Co-Editor of the *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, and serves on the Editorial Board of the *Strategic Management Journal*. He also served on the Editorial Boards of *Academy of Management Review*, the *Journal of Business Venturing* and *Management Science*.

Prof. Zott teaches courses on entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial strategy and leadership, business model innovation and private equity at MBA, PhD and Executive Education levels. He holds graduate degrees with distinction in Industrial Engineering from Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (Germany) and Institut National Polytechnique de Grenoble (France). He received his Ph.D. in Commerce and Business Administration, also with distinction, from the University of British Columbia (Canada).

**Areas of interest**
* Business Model Innovation
* Design and Implementation of New Business Models
* Creation of New Business Ventures
* Dynamic Capabilities
* Entrepreneurship in Established Firms
* Entrepreneurial Strategy
* Venture Capital and Private Equity