

STRING THEORY

S C H O O L O F D E S I G N

Ent 145.E3 Contemporary Social Problems / Social Entrepreneurship

Spring 2025

Total Hours: 45

Quarter Credits: 4.5

Faculty Name: F. Morgan Smyrl	Office Hours: Tu. or Th. 8:00-10:30 AM (or by appointment)
Email: msmartyl@stringtheoryschools.org	Class Hours: Block 3 (alternating by cohort)
Phone:	Blue cohort Block 4 Tuesdays and Thursdays Silver cohort Block 4 Wednesdays and Fridays

Course Description: What are contemporary cultures' challenges? How might empathy better ground innovations to address those challenges? Students explore, examine, and analyze case studies of complex contemporary social problems as a basis for creating and sustaining new ventures with social value. Students conduct original research, build a deep context for a specific social topic of interest, and implement that knowledge to develop solutions that support a plan for effective deployment.

Prerequisites: Ent 130.E2 Fundamentals of New Ventures or permission of instructor

IDEATE Program Educational Objectives Alignment: This course is designed to help students achieve the following IDEATE Program Educational Objectives:

- Navigate diverse landscapes
- Think critically and creatively
- Apply knowledge to design challenges

Completion of this course will yield the following student learning outcomes:

- Construct core knowledge
- Map the design ecosystem
- Work wicked problems

Course Learning Goals: The course is designed around the following learning goals. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Analyze case studies in sociology to determine how social problems have affected American norms and values over time
- Connect innovation, design and social entrepreneurship as catalysts for social change
- Think critically and creatively about how innovation impacts society's wicked problems

IDeATE Competencies and Mastery Credits:

Competencies	Course Specific Mastery Credits
Inquiry	Research: Selecting sources that support answering a particular research question with relevant, credible information that distinguishes between fact and opinion Identifying how a source is situated within the world of its origin (time period, location, socio-political climate, cultural conditions, etc.) and explaining how the perspectives within the source shape and/or are shaped by those conditions.
Design	Empathy: Self-assessment through curated and annotated artifacts and reflections of the ability to understand and share the feelings of others.
Critical Thinking	Synthesizing Evidence: Integrating information across multiple sources and analyzing that information to support an argument or explanation.
Core Knowledge	Core Humanities and Entrepreneurship
Collaboration	Service: Takes impactful action to facilitate change, catalyze insight, solve a problem, meet a need, and/or address an issue that matters to those one serves.
Communication	Media: Creates and manages media content and campaigns that communicate with a targeted audience, designing graphics, media, and storytelling to achieve a desired outcome.
Engagement	Passion/Initiative: Takes initiative to invest more energy into something than is required because it is fulfilling.

Course Materials:

Required Texts and Materials:

1. *Focus on Social Problems* by Mindy Stompler and Amanda Jungels
2. *Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation* by Ken Banks

Mastery Grading System:

3.8 - 4.0 Exceeds Mastery	3.0 - 3.7 Mastery	2.0 - 2.9 Developing	1.0 - 1.9 Insufficient Evidence
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Whole number mastery grades (1 - 4) are recorded for each mastery credit (evidenced by products, performances, or assessments) with points used to compute a synthesized mastery course grade for each student at the end of each quarter. Students must earn a mastery course grade of 3.0 to evidence mastery of course learning goals. Students with a 2.0 or higher receive credit for a course and evidence readiness for any future learning for which this course serves as a prerequisite in the IDeATE program.

Course Schedule (subject to change, with notice):

Week #	Topics/Experiences	Content	Products/Performances/ Assessments
Week 1	EQ: How might empathy ground innovation to best tackle contemporary social problems?	<i>Focus on Social Problems</i> Chapter 1 <i>Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation</i> Introduction	Chapter 1 Quiz EQ Socratic Seminar 1
Week 2	Wealth and Poverty	<i>Focus on Social Problems</i> Chapters 2-3 <i>Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation</i> 06 and 07	Chapter 2-3 Quiz Empathy Journal Entry #1
Week 3	Race and Gender	<i>Focus on Social Problems</i> Chapters 4-5 <i>Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation</i> 04	Chapter 4-5 Quiz Define Journal Entry #2
Week 4	Media and Sexuality	<i>Focus on Social Problems</i> Chapters 6-7 <i>Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation</i> 12	Chapter 6-7 Quiz Ideate Journal Entry #3
Week 5	Education and Families	<i>Focus on Social Problems</i> Chapters 8-9 <i>Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation</i> 09 and 10	Chapter 8-9 Quiz Social Entrepreneurship Proposal
Week 6	Healthcare and Criminal Justice	<i>Focus on Social Problems</i> Chapters 10-11 <i>Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation</i> 03 and 05	Chapter 10-11 Quiz Social Entrepreneurship Background Research
Week 7	Economy and Environment	<i>Focus on Social Problems</i> Chapters 12-13 <i>Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation</i> 01	Chapter 12-13 Quiz Social Entrepreneurship Project Outline
Week 8	Strategies for Social Change	<i>Focus on Social Problems</i> Chapter 14 <i>Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation</i> 02	Chapter 14 Quiz Social Entrepreneurship Draft/Edits
Week 9	Social Entrepreneurship	Social Entrepreneurship Presentations	Social Entrepreneurship Final Presentation
Week 10	EQ: How might empathy ground innovation to best tackle contemporary social problems?	All course texts and projects	EQ Socratic Seminar 2 Narrative Reflection

Submission Dates:

SUBMISSION DATE	PRODUCT/PERFORMANCE/ASSESSMENT DUE
weekly on Fridays	Chapter quizzes
TBD Week 1	Socratic Seminar 1
TBD Week 2	Empathy Journal Entry #1
TBD Week 3	Define Journal Entry #2
TBD Week 4	Ideate Journal Entry #3
TBD Week 5	Social Entrepreneurship Proposal
TBD Week 6	Social Entrepreneurship Background Research
TBD Week 7	Social Entrepreneurship Presentation Outlines
TBD Week 8	Social Entrepreneurship Presentation Edits
TBD Week 9	Social Entrepreneurship Final Presentation
TBD Week 10	Socratic Seminar 2
TBD Week 10	Narrative Self-Reflection

IDeATE PROGRAM POLICIES:

Academic Integrity: IDeATE students and professors uphold academic integrity as one of our highest priorities, and the String Theory School of Design investigates any allegation of violations of academic integrity. Violations include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and other forms of academic misconduct. Students who believe they have been wrongly accused or sanctioned have a right to an appeals process.

Attendance Requirements:

Students are expected to attend all classes, and must notify professors if they are not able to attend class for any reason. It is the student's responsibility to inquire about experiences, content, and work missed due to that absence. For further information on the attendance policy, please consult the IDeATE Program catalog.

Course Change Policy: IDeATE program faculty reserve the right to make changes to the course during the quarter to best actualize course learning goals. Changes will be announced to individual classes and conveyed in writing in advance of the change.

Accessibility and Disability Accommodations: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations and services need to complete an Accessibility Form, along with documentation from a licensed medical professional with a diagnosis of disability (defined as an impairment and/or condition that substantially limits a major life activity for 6+ months). Temporary adjustments are available for individuals with short-term impairments, i.e., those due to accident or injury. Please see the String Theory School of Design IDeATE Program course catalog for more details.

Course Drops and Withdrawals: Enrolled students may drop a course through the end of Week 1, and may withdraw from a course through Week 7. Please be aware of the potential financial and academic implications of course drops and withdrawals. Please see the String Theory School of Design course catalog for more details. Once registered, it is your obligation to attend, drop, or withdraw. Dropping will remove the course from your transcript. Withdrawing will result in a "W" on a student's transcript.

Commitment to Inclusive Practices: The String Theory School of Design welcomes individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, and promotes an inclusive and respectful environment that enriches the school community and the educational and employment experience of its members. To report an incident, sexual misconduct, discrimination or harassment based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, age, veteran status, or any other

protected category or identity, please follow current guidance in the String Theory School of Design IDeATE Program course catalog.

Professor's Welcome:

There is, sadly, no shortage of social problems facing us today. Learning to navigate them without despair or acquiescence is a life skill to be cherished. Hopefully, this class will show (or better yet, allow you to show us!) what engagement, passion, and empathy can accomplish.

Course Specific Expectations:

Nine words for the successful student:

Come to class.

Read the directions.

Bring your iPad.