Positive Entrepreneurship: Profits and Meaning

Spring 2015

SYLLABUS

Harris Hall Room L 06

Thursday 6pm-9pm

Office Hours: By Appointment

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BIP 394-0-25

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Course Overview

The goal of this course is to help motivate you to start or work for a company that helps you live to your full potential in life, both professionally and personally. Students today are seeking to find meaningful work with companies that have a mission, culture, and values that align with their own. This class is the start of the student’s journey to find meaning and true passion in their work and personal life.

The class will take you from where you are today (your story, strengths and values) and through your goals and aspirations help you to reach your potential and become the person you want to be. My hope is that through passion and persistence you will be able to live the life you visualize in this class. Positive Entrepreneurship is a class that will teach you the skills and knowledge of realistic optimism and a flourishing life illustrated by real world examples of successful entrepreneurs who have achieved professional and personal success.

Process

The course will consist of nine weeks of classes that will integrate entrepreneurship, Conscious Capitalism, positive psychology and other related subjects to form the basis of Positive Entrepreneurship. The class will rely heavily on outside reading to enable all of you to be prepared for the class subject and to participate fully in the class discussion. In addition to lecture and debate, we will also have video content and guest speakers in the class. My expectations are that all of you come prepared to discuss, interact, and learn from each other as much as from my lectures and guest speakers. In addition, wanting to live a life that matters
takes real effort and commitment, and my hope is that this class is the start of your journey to finding meaning and true passion in your work and life.

**The Nine Weeks of Topics include:**

1. What is Positive Entrepreneurship?
2. What is your Story?
3. The “Good Life”
4. How to find your Calling
5. True Wealth: Success and Happiness
6. Conscious Capitalism
7. Positive Entrepreneurs
8. Who do you want to be and how to get there?
9. Final Presentations

Class Assistant: Yair Sakols: yair@u.northwestern.edu

**All laptops/tablets must be powered down during any guest speaker lectures. No exceptions!**
Course Requirements and Assignments

Assignments:
Your final grade will be composed of:
1. Attendance and Class Contribution   25%
2. Weekly Papers (weeks 2-6)    35%
3. Final Paper (week 8)     20%
4. Group Project (week 9) and Peer Evaluations  20%

Course Contribution (25%)
Individual Participation: It is imperative for this class that you are fully prepared for the lectures and discussions based on the readings and assignments. All students must be prepared to share their ideas, interpretations, and perspectives of the subject matter and be ready to add value to the class through their participation.

This is a class structured to go beyond what is in the books, lectures, slides, etc. and to make you think about where you are in your life and where you are going in the future. All of your views on the subject matter are very important to the learning process in this course and your willingness to engage in class is essential to the progression of this course. Thinking beyond what is in front of you may be a challenge, but I am confident that with the proper amount of effort and passion, the journey this quarter will be worth it.

Attending all the classes and participating in every discussion is expected and mandatory. If you have to miss a class, it is expected that you will notify me within 48 hours in advance so I am able to organize out-of-class materials to keep you up-to-date with the rest of the class.

Weekly Papers (35%)
You will be asked to write a two-page paper (double-spaced) during the second through sixth week of class based on that week’s class subject and discussions in class. The purpose of this assignment is to fully grasp the subject matter and to make sure you understand how to implement it in your own life. Your papers must include 3 references from the week’s reading. Please use APA style when citing references. You may also reference a guest lecturer in your paper.

APA Style Help: owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/, Bibme.org

Final Paper (20%)
This five-page paper (double-spaced) is the culmination of everything you learned this quarter. It’s your best future-self. It’s your life story after an amazing life you lived both professionally and personally. You are encouraged to use any written material from papers you have been doing for this class all quarter. Your final paper must include 7 citations from the class’s readings. Once again, please use APA style.
**Group Project (20%)**
Over the past eight weeks, you have each explored the concepts surrounding positive entrepreneurship. For the final project, delivered in week 9, each group will create and present a company (hypothetical) rooted in the topics reviewed in this class. This is not a case study or a business plan. As a group, your job is to show us this company. What does it do? What does it look like? What is its story? You have each heard from several positive entrepreneurs. Now it’s our turn to hear from you.

In addition to the group element, each student will be rating the contribution of his or her team members. Each student will have 100 points to distribute to the members of his or her group (including himself or herself). In addition, you will describe in a sentence what you felt each group member contributed to your project.

**Required Texts to be Purchased (specific chapters assigned in syllabus)**
*Conscious Capitalism*, by John Mackey and Raj Sisodia

*Give and Take*, by Adam Grant

*Happier*, by Tal Ben-Shahar

*How Will You Measure Your Life?*, by Clayton Christensen

*Start something that matters*, by Blake Mycoskie

*WELLBEING*, by Tom Rath & Jim Harter

Course Packet at Quartet Copies
Week 1: What is Positive Entrepreneurship? (April 2\textsuperscript{nd})

This quarter we will be studying entrepreneurship, Conscious Capitalism, and positive psychology to explore what makes life worth living and how to live to one’s full potential. We will utilize the history from positive entrepreneurs and their companies to learn how you can emulate those that have found professional and personal success in life.

Readings (required prior to class):
*The Start-Up of You*, by Reid Hoffman & Ben Casnocha, pp. 1-24


View Online (required prior to class):
Watch Steve Jobs Stanford Commencement Speech: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1R-jKKp3NA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1R-jKKp3NA)

Do Online (required prior to class):
Register for free on [www.authentichappiness.org](https://www.authentichappiness.org) and take the VIA Survey of Character Strengths (240 questions version). Please print out the results and bring to class.

Prepare for class (required prior to class):
Please print out your results from the VIA Survey of Character Strengths above and bring them to class. Write down your five top values in your life and bring to class.
Week 2: What is your Story? (April 9th)

How do you tell your story? What helped you get to this point in life? Think about everyone who has helped you become who you are. In addition, what have you accomplished and overcome to get to where you are today? Not only is it important to know what your story is now, but also how to build it and become who you want to be. We will use stories to describe ourselves and also to build momentum for our companies in the future.

**Readings (required prior to class):**
*True Story,* by Ty Montague, pp. 1-32
*Tell to Win,* by Peter Guber, pp. 1-37

**Do Online (required prior to class):**
Find a TED (http://www.ted.com) talk where you think the speaker tells an excellent story. Please email me the link by 6 pm the night prior to class and post to class Facebook page. I will pick what I feel is the most informative, and we will watch it together in class.

**Guest Speaker:**
Jeff Sinelli: CEO/Founder Which Wich (whichwich.com)

**Weekly Paper:**
What is your story? In 2 pages (double-spaced) tell us your story up to now of your life. You can start your story from any point in your life but what is important is ending up where you are now. Also, please use your top five signature strengths (from the VIA) and your top five values in the paper. Include a success (you at your best) and a failure (you at your worst) narrative in the paper as well. Citations are not required for this week’s paper.
Week 3: The “Good Life” (April 16th)

Most people want a happier, more meaningful life but it takes more than just wanting something to actually have success—it takes action. I believe that people today want more than just money and power in their lives. They want to make a difference; they want a life that is meaningful that leaves a positive impact on the world. I believe your generation is helping to change how people think and act.

Readings (required prior to class):
The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, by Benjamin Franklin, pp. 62-74

Authentic Happiness, by Martin Seligman, pp. 165-184

Millennial Searchers, by Emily Esfahani Smith & Jennifer L. Aaker, New York Times

Guest Speaker:
Claire Lew - CEO of KnowYourCompany.com

Weekly Paper:
Write a 2 page (double-spaced) paper on what the “Good Life” means to you? What is it and how do you plan on living it? You must use 3 references from this week’s readings.
Week 4: How to find your Calling (April 23rd)

There are traditionally three types of career orientations: a job (about the paycheck), a career (achievement through money and advancement), and a calling (passionate commitment to work for its own sake) (Seligman, 2002). Everyone here should aim for having his or her work as a calling. Everyone should love what he or she does for a living. Work will fill a majority of your waking hours for at least the next thirty years. So how can one find their calling? The best place to start is to ask what do people enjoy doing in their free time, since that is where one’s true passions are usually found.

Readings (required prior to class):
Happier, by Tal Ben-Shahar, pp. 83-110 (Required Text)

“Turn the Job You Have into the Job You Want.” Harvard Business Review, by Wrzesniewski, Berg, & Dutton

How Will You Measure Your Life? by Clayton Christensen, pp. 21-61 (Required Text)

Guest Speaker:
Neal Sales-Griffin - Co-Founder of The Starter League (starterleague.com)

Weekly Paper:
Write a 2-page paper (double-spaced) about the company that you want to create that would be a calling for you. You must use 3 references from this week’s readings.
Week 5: True Wealth: Success and Happiness (April 30th)

Research has shown that more money only matters to a certain extent in increasing one’s well-being and happiness. Money is needed to feel secure and in control, but after reaching a certain level of financial comfort and security, meaningful experiences in life make us happier than material things (Lyubomirsky, 2013). I believe having enough money to feel like you are in control of your life, loving what you do for work on a daily basis, being healthy, and having time to nurture your relationships with family and friends will give you true wealth in life.

Readings (required prior to class):
*Happier*, by Tal Ben-Shahar, pp. 51-80 *(Required Text)*

*WELLBEING*, by Tom Rath & Jim Harter, pp. 1-66 *(Required Text)*

*Can Money Buy Happiness*, by Andrew Blackman, online.wsj.com/articles/can-money-buy-happiness-heres-what-science-has-to-say-1415569538

HBS Case Study: Whole Foods: Balancing Social Mission and Growth (I will handout)

Guest Speaker:
Ken Meyer - COO Whole Foods

Weekly Paper:
Write a 2-page paper (double-spaced) about what true wealth means to you. In order to live a life that matters you need to have professional success and personal happiness. How will you be able to balance the two to live the life that you envision? You must use 3 references from this week’s readings.
**Week 6: Conscious Capitalism (May 7th)**

Milton Friedman wrote in his 1962 book *Capitalism and Freedom*, "There is one and only one social responsibility of business — to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud." Conscious Capitalism companies maximize value for all stakeholders (customers, employees, suppliers, investors, and community) instead of focusing primarily on increasing shareholders’ profits. Profits are the lifeblood of a company and are paramount to being a business, but they should not be all that matters.

**Readings (required prior to class):**
*Conscious Capitalism*, by John Mackey and Raj Sisodia, pp. forword, 11-73, 251-271 *(Required Text)*

*Firms of endearment: How world class companies profit from passion and purpose*, by Sisodia, Wolfe, & Sheth, pp. Foreword, Prologue, 1-20

*Good Works*, by Kotler, Hessekiel, & Lee, pp. 1-20

**Weekly Paper:**
Write a 2-page paper (double spaced) about Conscious Capitalism and stakeholder mentality and defend why it is a better, long-term business model than the traditional shareholder model. You must use 3 references from this week’s readings.
**Week 7: Positive Entrepreneurs (May 14th)**

Positive entrepreneurs wake up everyday doing what they love and knowing that their efforts are making their company and the world a better place. The following three examples of positive entrepreneurs started their companies out of a personal passion and have increased the well-being substantially for all the stakeholders in their companies. Examples of exemplary “positive” companies and entrepreneurs include Yvon Chouinard of Patagonia, Blake Mycoskie of TOMS, and John Mackey of Whole Foods. Today’s successful entrepreneur is one that aims to create a profitable company based on his/her culture and values that can make the world a better place. These three positive entrepreneurs will give you inspiration and confidence that with passion and conviction anyone can start a positive, conscious company that will earn profits and also help the world.

**Readings (required prior to class):**

*Start something that matters*, by Blake Mycoskie, pp. 3-40 *(Required Text)*

*Raising the Bar*, Gary Erickson, pp. 29-67

“Patagonia’s Founder is America’s Most Unlikely Business Guru,” WSJ, by Seth Stevenson

**View Online (required prior to class):**

John Mackey interview: [http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/309877-1](http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/309877-1)

**Guest Speaker:**
Steven Dyme from Flowersfordreams.com

**Due:**
Outline of your final paper.
Week 8: Who do you want to be and how to get there? (May 21st)

You has the rest of your life to become who you want to be. What is important is that you spend time everyday improving who you are and get closer to being the person you want to be.

Live a Great Life:

1. Start or work for a company that you feel a passion for and is your true calling in life
2. Nurture and cultivate relationships with your spouse, family, friends, and those who touch your life in a significant way
3. Live a life of integrity and virtue, and build a legacy that your past ancestors and future generations can be proud of
4. Aim for the “good life” and flourish.

Readings (required prior to class):
Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success, by Adam Grant, pp. 1-60, 216-249 (Required Text)

How Will You Measure Your Life? by Clayton Christensen, pp. 175-206 (Required Text)

Guest Speaker:
TBA

Final Paper:
Write a 5-page (double-spaced) paper on who you want to be and how you will get there in your lifetime. Imagine you are now at the end of your life (ninety years old or so…) and everything that you hoped would happen during your lifetime both professionally and personally happened. You lived a great life. Write your life story. Please use any of the material you wrote in the weekly papers to write this paper. It is important to start the story at least where you are today (at Northwestern) and use the class topics and materials we covered this quarter to build your life story through the years. This should be as realistic as possible in what you are hoping to achieve through being a positive entrepreneur and reaching your potential in life. Include 7 citations from course materials.
Week 9: Final Presentations (May 28th)

**Group Presentation:**
Over the past eight weeks, you have each explored the concepts surrounding positive entrepreneurship. For the final project, delivered in week 9, each group will create and present a company (hypothetical) rooted in the topics reviewed in this class. This is not a case study or a business plan. As a group, your job is to show us this company. What does it do? What does it look like? What is its story? You have each heard from several positive entrepreneurs. Now it’s our turn to hear from you.

**Guest Speakers:**
Brian Burkhart-Squareplanet (sqplanet.com)
Andrew Razeghi-Founder of Strategy Lab, Inc.