RESEARCH SEMINAR IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
SOCIAL INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

McGill University
INTD 497 (section 4)
Tuesday 2:30-5:30 PM
Leacock 109
Professor Mark L. Berlin
Fall 2015
Course description:

A social entrepreneur is an entrepreneur who works to increase social capital by founding social ventures including charities, for-profit businesses with social causes, and other non-government organizations.

Social innovations are new strategies, concepts, ideas and organizations that meet the social needs of different elements which can be from working conditions and education to community development and health – they extend and strengthen civil society.

Working individually or in teams, you will be asked to develop a new venture that has an impact on international development/global justice. This will be a practical course, working on real life issues and situations, with the aim of creating something that could actually come into being. This entails 1) a written and research component - a written plan for the venture/initiative, enunciating a vision or theory of change, market/needs analysis, implementation plan, and evaluation methods, and 2) to the extent possible, real world testing and action.

Possible initiatives could be as diverse as the following: a proposal to Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) to undertake a justice-related development project in one of their countries of interest; a startup company focused on a need of a poor person in a low-income country; fair trade ventures; a citizen-led lobby group in Canada focusing on development/global justice issues; a social movement (e.g. Occupy, G-20 activism; a white paper proposing reform for a government or multilateral agency and a plan to disseminate it. Students should think about an idea for a project they might like to pursue and come to the first class prepared to discuss.

Recommended readings: Iani Smilie-BRAC

Course Outline:

Tuesday, September 8, 2015 – Tuesday, December 1, 2015 (13 class sessions in all)

Sept 8- Course #1: Who We Are

Part A

- Course description: What the course is about – overview and expectations (e.g. strict deadlines).
- Introductions by and Q&A with professor
- Student roundtable (This will help students know each other, and professors know students. This is good intrinsically, and also for the formation of teams).
  - 5-10 min each, on what are you about/where are you from/what are you interested in.
  - “Two truths and a lie” exercise.
• Students share their ideas for projects, or their general themes/areas of interest

Part B: Brief Introduction to Entrepreneurship

• Definitions:
  o “what is an entrepreneur” - emphasizing original French meaning word- “to undertake” - i.e. not just company/private sector, but social projects too
  o Distinction between social activism, social entrepreneurship, and social innovation.

• Spectrum of Examples:
  o Below are examples of types of projects which are “in-scope” for this course. They run from technology and product-oriented for-profit-oriented ventures on end of the spectrum to social movements on the other. The notion here is that there are many paths to truth and justice, although certain axioms are necessary. They might include:
    ▪ Solar energy backpacks/Free Trade Coffee-Uganda (last year)
    ▪ Social businesses (c.f Mohammed Yunus)
    ▪ Fair trade, volunteer/pro bono actions
    ▪ Social movements (e.g Arab Spring, civil rights movement, Occupy).

Readings to do before Week Two: Stanford Social Innovation Review: “Social Entrepreneurship: The Case for Definition” (pp 34-39, skim only); Teju Cole – “The White Savior Industrial Complex”- The Atlantic; Yunus’ 7 Principles of Social Business (1 page); Business Plan Basics (Sequoia Capital); Rules for Radicals – Saul Alinsky (2 pages); Evgeny Morozov (“The Naked and the TED” (last 1.5 pages); Flow – Csikzentmihalyi and Happiness (skim).

Assignment: For those of you who have a notion, or even half a notion, of the (ad)venture you might like to pursue, at course #2 please deliver a 1-2 minute utterly informal off the cuff oral presentation on your startup idea – no written materials or lengthy preparation allowed! As a helpful guide, one could try to touch on some or all of these points: a) the need/the problem, b) the idea: what you will do c) the landscape of others addressing it and the gap you are filling d) the politics of it (e.g. is this opposing, modulating, or extending market systems?)

**Sept 15 - Course #2: What is an Entrepreneur**

Finding Your Path as an Entrepreneur (workshop)

Format: In small breakout groups, with reporting back to full group:

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• Intro: Brief recap of Course #1
• Exercise #1: list of the world’s great problems –climate change ; minorities’ rights etc
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• Exercise #2: Flow (borrowing very tangentially from the work of psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi). Look at your past experiences in work and life. Write down your best and worst past experiences, and your unique talent. Where have you gotten lost in work or an activity, and where does your heart sing? That is what you should do in life. (combine with exercise #3)

• Exercise #3: Students discuss very extra-curricular hobbies and interests of theirs (gardening, fishing, chess, more obscure things, etc.) – these can be clues

• Exercise #4: Talk about perceived needs - in the system, among poor people, etc.

• Exercise #5 (large group) Students vocalize in a few words what they are passionate about-causes; subjects – share thoughts from exercise 1-4

• Exercise #6: Initial brainstorming about projects/initiatives/ventures/ assignment from Week 1- 60 second overview of your start up idea

• Exercise #7: In the full class session students form project groups and pick presentation date

Sept 22 - Course #3: Entrepreneurial Basics - Planning and Acting on Your Venture (Guest lecture- Deborah Friedman—Director General; International Legal Programmes: Dept of Justice - Canada).

Part A: Guest lecture- how government projects advance democracy; security and economic growth. How evaluations and business plans are an integral part of any project proposal and key to implementation. I.e. Biz plan Basics:

- Needs
- Competitor Analysis
- Product/Service
- Business Model
- Rollout
- Team
- Financials

Part B: ( 45 minutes) Students discuss their projects in pairs- what gaps or problems are you addressing? What are your objectives how can you achieve them?

Sept 29 - Course #4: Peer Discussion

Overall concept: Student presentations: where you are so far.

• Roundtable: Informal student presentations : Students provide a status report on their proposals/projects (15 minutes each, including discussion and questions and peer feedback. No slides needed)
• 10 min x 15 groups = 150 min = 2.5 hrs

Oct 6 – Course #5: International Development and Law
Part A: International Legal Technical Assistance

This class gives an in-depth examination with practical applications of how international development in a legal context is actually undertaken.

Readings:
Students should familiarize themselves with:

- Official Government of Canada website for Department of Justice; and focus on countries and areas of priority
- Official Government of Canada website for DFATD (Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development), with an emphasis on its development component; and focus on countries and areas of priority.
- OECD DAC handbook on security system reform- Supporting Security and Justice (2007)

Oct 13- Course #6: Getting out to the community/ making connections/ meeting partners

Students venture out into the community to create partners for their initiatives and provide a 1-page report on their progress and achievements the next class

Oct 20 – and onwards Course #7-13: Student Presentations

Major student presentations- 60- 75 minutes each (approximately 30 min presentation, 30 minutes Q&A).

Presentation can be in any format e.g. (speech, interactive lecture, powerpoint, video).

Teams of 2

December 10 - Final proposal/project plans submitted

Evaluation:

Class participation: 25%
Class presentation: 25%
Written project plan/proposals: 25%
Effort/advancement in real world: 25%

**Extra credit opportunities:**

Attendance at McDonald Currie Lecture The Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID) annual McDonald Currie Lecture will take place on Thursday, October 15, 2015, from 5:00-6:30 PM. The location, speaker and topic will be confirmed shortly. Attending students will receive an extra 1% that will count toward their participation grade. Please note that the participation grade is never to exceed the percentage established for the course. At the lecture, there will be a sign up sheet. Before the lecture begins, students should sign up, providing their name, student ID number, and provide a signature. Attendance for the full lecture is necessary to receive the extra credit.

**Instructor Contact Information:**

Prof. Mark L. Berlin  
Email: mark.berlin@mcill.ca  
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Office hours: By appointment. Also drop in Tuesdays 5:45-7:00pm, and on select Tuesdays 12:30-2:20pm, at 338 Peterson Hall

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