

# IDEATION

ECTS Credits: 7.5  
SPRING 2024

## COURSE MEMO

“Ideation” is a course about generating original ideas for innovative and impactful startup ventures and evaluating their viability. Ideation is a process of discovery and design leading toward the creation of dynamic businesses or social enterprises. For innovators, generating an idea is important but only the beginning. They must develop an idea into a promising opportunity through opportunity recognition, innovation, deep customer understanding, design thinking, prototyping, vision, business modeling, competitive analysis, risk mitigation, and more.

The course offers you the opportunity to develop a skill set that is essential for entrepreneurs and innovators. Classes include lectures and hands-on learning activities. In the course, we give you an opportunity to experience what it feels like to be an entrepreneur (from generating and evaluating startup ideas to forming teams and interacting with potential customers). The course covers many business concepts—drawing on the fields of entrepreneurship, innovation, management, psychology, economics, strategy, and marketing—but does not assume or require prior business knowledge.

Teaching involves a set of lectures, exercises, presentations, peer-to-peer sessions, and a team project. The teaching approach is experiential and process-based to develop an entrepreneur's mindset, skills, and resilience. Teaching may also involve extracurricular activities and guest lectures on the course's core topics. The course is taught in English.

Extensive work outside the classroom is essential for good sessions. This includes readings, assignments, and independent exploration of your business idea (Ideation project). You will work to design and validate a new business idea in the Ideation project, ending with pitches in our last session. The idea that you pursue should have growth potential and differentiate itself from existing companies through innovation – for example, through an innovative product or service, an innovative production process or business model, or a new market. You should have the rights to pursue this opportunity in a new venture. The ideation project is a project carried

out in teams, hence be advised that you will need to create teams and get started on developing a business idea within a few days after the start of the course.

### **Intended Learning Outcomes.**

Upon completing the course, students should be able to:

1. Analyze and explain entrepreneurship and innovation and their significance in today's economy and society
2. Generate and develop innovative new venture ideas
3. Evaluate the attractiveness and feasibility of new venture opportunities
4. Analyze industries, markets, and competitors
5. Assess appropriate markets to enter with new products or services

### **Course Philosophy.**

We seek to develop entrepreneurship and innovation practitioners and scholars and to equip students to pursue their entrepreneurial interests (e.g., business startups, intrapreneurship, social ventures, and/or life design). Clarify your own aspirations, and focus your efforts accordingly. If you immerse yourself, you may find that this course opens up new vistas for your life and work.

### **Course literature.**

The readings have been carefully curated to include scholarly and practical articles to expose you to new ideas and deepen your knowledge. They are an essential part of the course and will be instrumental to your learning (and your grade). Some of the readings are mentioned only briefly or not covered in class. You are responsible for doing all the readings and keeping up with them as we go. The readings can be extensive, so set aside enough time for them and review them again (e.g., notes or key points).

The major part of the course readings is available on SSES Canvas or available for download from your local university library, essentially consisting of a number of hand-outs, links, assignments, and articles that will be discussed during the sessions. Please see each session for detailed information on the readings.

### **Course requirements.**

The examination occurs through individual and group assessments. Given that this course is about the opportunity development process, *each graded assignment* is designed to give you practice in developing potential business opportunities. In developing this knowledge and skill, repetition and experience are crucial. There are two sets of graded assignments – the Ideation project and Idea kernels. The student’s overall grade in the course is determined by these tasks – one individual and one group. Examination and course grades will be based on the following components and relative weights:

- Idea kernels 50%
- Ideation project 50%

Grading is according to ECTS, where the passing grades are: A excellent 90-100%, B very good 80-89%, C good 70-79%, D satisfactory 60-69%, E sufficient 50-59%. Non-passing grades are: Fx further work required (e.g. had below 50% on exam, did not hand in all assignments) F fail (e.g. cheating, did not submit any assignments). If you are a student from KI, Konstfack or admitted after fall 2016 at Handelshögskolan you are listed to another scale of grading. Your grades will be transferred accordingly in line with regulations at your home university. Assignments and exams handed in late will not be graded except in special circumstances. Only assignments delivered in time can get the grade A or B. Attendance is an important prerequisite to learning, especially since classes go beyond the readings, include active learning activities, and prepare students for all the assignments; however, it is not required.

### *Idea Kernel.*

An Idea kernel is a structured, initial business opportunity. A complete kernel concisely answers a series of questions that correspond directly to each of the five intended learning outcomes. There will be an opportunity to complete two (2) kernels during the course. Each kernel is approximately 500 words. These are individual tasks.

A successfully completed idea kernel is one that answers each question fully and approximates the clarifying examples provided and is submitted on time. Learning the process of opportunity development improves with repetition and practice. Therefore, each time a student completes an idea kernel the student increases his or her mastery of the intended learning objectives.

Advanced Idea Kernel 1 - Due February 5, 23:59

Advanced Idea Kernel 2 – Due February 26, 23:59

*Ideation project.*

The Ideation final project is a structured, researched, and elaborated potential business opportunity report. A complete project answers a series of questions that correspond directly to each of the five intended learning outcomes. Additionally, it is expected that these answers demonstrate use of the course materials presented in a supported, convincing argument. This report should be no more than 5000 words. This a team task.

To PASS a group must complete “successfully” a complete project. A completed project is one that answers each question fully and approximates the *clarifying examples* provided and is submitted on time.

Ideation project – Due 11 March, 23:59

For detailed information about the idea kernels and the ideation project, see the documents for these tasks posted on SSES Canvas.

**Classes.**

What happens in class rarely follows any exact and pre-determined timeline. While in many instances there will be one or two 15-minute break(s) during sessions, sometimes we will go on without a break. This is particularly so when we have in-class exercises or case discussions, so be prepared for teaching activities that stretch across the full duration of any particular session. It is, of course, always ok to sneak out for a few minutes if you have any special or pressing matters to attend to.

Please, also keep your phones off the tables and avoid unrelated activities like email, social media, and similar. For the most part, you will not need a laptop. It is hence appreciated to close the laptop whenever you do not need it, or even put it away, in order to increase the interpersonal dynamics in the classroom.

**Class Participation.**

We work hard to create an open and welcoming environment where different viewpoints and scholarly debates are encouraged. We expect all students to participate actively in class, thereby

enhancing learning. Read the material in advance and come to class prepared to discuss it. You may be called on by the instructor during class to discuss the readings or reflect on in-class learning activities. The keys are engagement and participation in learning, not feeling you have to be right or have brilliant ideas to speak up.

### **SSES Canvas.**

The course will be administered through the SSES Canvas. All materials (e.g. readings and assignments) will be posted on SSES Canvas and the main line of communication outside class occurs there. Also, all the assignment submissions are made on SSES Canvas. Use the assignment templates provided. Assignments must be submitted as PDFs in the SSES Canvas before 23:59 on the due date. The SSES Canvas sends confirmation emails when you submit assignments (keep those) and automatically flags late assignments.

### **Plagiarism.**

Plagiarism is not acceptable and will be reported. This includes:

- passing off the ideas or words of another as your own
- using another's work or ideas without crediting the source
- presenting an existing idea or product as new and original and not crediting the source
- using so many words or ideas from other sources that your work is not sufficiently original
- Review the KTH Web for more specifics and details  
(<https://www.kth.se/en/student/stod/studier/fusk-1.997287> plagiarism | KTH).

Ensure that your work is original and referenced properly. Plagiarism suspicions will be handled appropriately, leading to potential referrals to the university disciplinary committee and possibly resulting in the suspension of studies.

### **Your Input.**

This course is for you. We encourage you to provide feedback on the course, express concerns, and make requests. After the course, SSES will distribute an online evaluation survey. Please complete it so we can improve the course in the future.

### **Confidentiality and NDA Policy.**

There are no Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) for startup ideas in this course. By participating, you agree to act with integrity and discretion, and you agree not to disclose or distribute information received from other students unless you receive explicit permission from them to do so. You should be able to complete all assignments without disclosing any sensitive intellectual property for your startup idea(s).

### **Examination adapted to students with special needs.**

The following applies to students with functional variations who have a statement from KTH's FUNKA unit on recommended support measures during examination:

- Support measures under code R (i.e. adjustments relating to space, time, and physical circumstances) are granted by the examiner.
- Support measures under code P (i.e. pedagogical measures) are granted or rejected by the examiner after the examiner has been contacted by the
- Student in accordance with KTH's rules. Normally, support measures under code P will be granted.

## **SCHEDULE**

### ***CORE TOPICS***

#### ***Session 1***

#### ***Myths and facts about entrepreneurship***

Monday, January 15

This session gives you an introduction to entrepreneurship and the creation of new business ideas. It covers some baseline facts about entrepreneurs, their business ideas, and the chances of success of new ventures.

#### ***Read:***

Two Facts (SSES CANVAS)

12 words (SSES CANVAS)

The art of creativity (SSES CANVAS)

The art of the start (SSES CANVAS)

What is a startup? <http://www.startuplessonslearned.com/2010/06/what-is-startup.html>

#### ***Session 2***

#### ***Business ideas and opportunity recognition***

Monday, January 22

This session focuses on the generation of business ideas and different ways of working with idea discovery. Case and exercise applications are used to exemplify how entrepreneurs discover and evaluate ideas.

#### ***Read:***

Case – Using effectuation to start up a new venture through Instagram

What makes entrepreneurs entrepreneurial (SSES CANVAS)

## **BUSINESS MODEL TOPICS**

### **Session 3** *Developing and validating your business idea*

Wednesday, January 24

In this session the focus turns to the business model and how you can formalize and eventually execute on your business idea.

#### *Read:*

Brainstorming guidelines (SSES CANVAS)

How to think creatively about thinking creatively (SSES CANVAS)

The lean start-up <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/eric-ries-on-the-lean-startup/>

An MVP is not a cheaper product <http://steveblank.com/2013/07/22/an-mvp-is-not-a-cheaper-product-its-about-smart-learning/>

#### *Deadline:*

Personal profiles submission

### **Session 4** *Business ideas by the numbers*

Monday, January 29

This session aims to show the often ‘forgotten’ side of business ideas – the numbers side. Here, you will be able to familiarize yourself with basic financial statements (e.g. balance sheets, cash flows, income statements) and margins and price-setting. This session is particularly useful for non-business students who may not have come across financial statements before or business students who want a refresher on the topic.

#### *Read:*

Financial statements (SSES CANVAS)

## **INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMER TOPICS**

### **Session 5** *Industry analysis*

Monday, February 5

Industry analysis is fundamental for thinking strategically about positioning the new business idea vis-à-vis competitors, and an obvious component in any presentation of the new venture. This session is a walkthrough of the conceptual foundations followed by a case application.

#### *Read:*

Case – Pearl industry (SSES CANVAS)

Industry analysis (SSES CANVAS)

Industry analysis self-assessment (SSES CANVAS)

#### *Deadline:*

Idea kernel 1 submission

Team charter submission

### **Session 6** *Framing, selling and marketing your business idea*

Monday, February 12

A successful realization of a new venture depends on the entrepreneur's ability to 'sell it' and hence this session covers selling and marketing of the business idea and how to 'frame' it to various audiences. A case offers the possibility for application.

*Read:*

Case – D-Bamboo (SSES CANVAS)

The art of the elevator pitch (SSES CANVAS)

How does the customer development model work? <https://www.cleverism.com/how-customer-development-model-work/>

No plan survives first contact with customers - business plans versus business models

<https://steveblank.com/2010/04/08/no-plan-survives-first-contact-with-customers-%e2%80%93-business-plans-versus-business-models/>

The art of the elevator pitch <https://hbr.org/2018/10/the-art-of-the-elevator-pitch>

The myth of the elevator pitch

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254004669\\_The\\_Myth\\_of\\_the\\_Elevator\\_Pitch](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254004669_The_Myth_of_the_Elevator_Pitch)

## **INTERNATIONAL SCALING TOPICS**

**Session 7** *Scaling business ideas to international markets*

Wednesday, February 14

Globalization has created never before seen opportunities for the international scaling of new business ideas. This session showcases overall trends as well as provides strategic tools for the assessment of the fit of your business ideas to specific foreign markets.

*Read:*

Process model of internationalization (SSES CANVAS)

Casino internationalization (SSES CANVAS)

International new ventures (SSES CANVAS)

**Session 8** *Scaling business ideas to international markets – case application*

Monday, February 19

In this session we follow a business idea from inception to international expansion, and explore some of the usual challenges that come with internationalization.

*Read:*

Case - Panda Furniture (A)

## **INTRAPRENEURSHIP TOPICS**

**Session 9** *Business ideas within the established firm*

Wednesday, February 21

The module on business ideas within the established firm describes the arena for entrepreneurship within large corporations and gives some practical advice for making new business ideas survive in an often-hostile environment.

*Read:*

Corporate venturing (SSES CANVAS)

A guide to intrapreneurship <http://mitsloan.mit.edu/newsroom/articles/a-guide-to-intrapreneurship/>

The innovator's DNA <https://hbr.org/2009/12/the-innovators-dna>

**Session 10** *Pulling it all together – case application*

Monday, February 26

This case application explores the selection processes that new business ideas within established corporations face.

*Read:*

Case – Spectre

*Deadline:*

Idea kernel 2 submission

**FROM IDEA TO PITCH**

**Session 11** *From idea to pitch*

Wednesday, February 28

The concluding session includes ideation project pitches and allows you to get feedback from other course participants.

*Deadline*

**Ideation project submission**

Monday, March 11

**READINGS SUMMARIZED**

**Session 1** *Myths and facts about entrepreneurship*

- Two Facts (SSES CANVAS)
- 12 words (SSES CANVAS)
- The art of creativity (SSES CANVAS)
- The art of the start (SSES CANVAS)
- What is a startup? <http://www.startuplessonslearned.com/2010/06/what-is-startup.html>

**Session 2** *Business ideas and opportunity recognition*

- Case – Using effectuation to start up a new venture through instagram
- What makes entrepreneurs entrepreneurial (SSES CANVAS)

**Session 3** *Developing and validating your business idea*

- Brainstorming guidelines (SSES CANVAS)
- How to think creatively about thinking creatively (SSES CANVAS)
- Business models and business model innovation (SSES CANVAS)
- The lean start-up <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/eric-ries-on-the-lean-startup/>

- An MVP is not a cheaper product <http://steveblank.com/2013/07/22/an-mvp-is-not-a-cheaper-product-its-about-smart-learning/>

**Session 4** *Business ideas by the numbers*

- Financial statements (SSES CANVAS)

**Session 5** *Industry analysis*

- Case – Pearl industry (SSES CANVAS)
- Industry analysis (SSES CANVAS)
- Industry analysis self-assessment (SSES CANVAS)

**Session 6** *Framing, selling and marketing your business idea*

- Case – D-Bamboo (SSES CANVAS)
- The art of the elevator pitch (SSES CANVAS)
- How does the customer development model work? <https://www.cleverism.com/how-customer-development-model-work/>
- No plan survives first contact with customers - business plans versus business models <https://steveblank.com/2010/04/08/no-plan-survives-first-contact-with-customers-%e2%80%93-business-plans-versus-business-models/>
- The art of the elevator pitch <https://hbr.org/2018/10/the-art-of-the-elevator-pitch>
- The myth of the elevator pitch [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254004669\\_The\\_Myth\\_of\\_the\\_Elevator\\_Pitch](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254004669_The_Myth_of_the_Elevator_Pitch)

**Session 7** *Scaling business ideas to international markets*

- Process model of internationalization (SSES CANVAS)
- Casino internationalization (SSES CANVAS)
- International new ventures (SSES CANVAS)

**Session 8** *Scaling business ideas to international markets – case application*

- Case - Panda Furniture (A) (SSES CANVAS)

**Session 9** *Business ideas within the established firm*

- Corporate venturing (SSES CANVAS)
- A guide to intrapreneurship <http://mitsloan.mit.edu/newsroom/articles/a-guide-to-intrapreneurship/>
- The innovator's DNA <https://hbr.org/2009/12/the-innovators-dna>

**Session 10** *Pulling it all together – case application*

- Case – Spectre (SSES CANVAS)

**Session 11** *From idea to pitch*