Seminar in Strategic Entrepreneurship: New Venture Creation and Growth

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Course instructors

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Course aims

This seminar in Strategic Entrepreneurship prepares students for their Master’s thesis. The students will write a seminar paper on a specific topic, they will present this topic to the class, they will discuss a fellow student’s paper and be involved in academic discussions on a variety of topics in class. The suggested paper topics deal with new venture creation and growth. The seminar thus equips the participants with concepts, methods, and thinking patterns needed and applied by both managers and academics in the fields of entrepreneurship, strategy, and organization.

In this seminar, we will focus on the creation of new businesses and put particular emphasis on the management of the development process and growth. From an academic perspective, we will look at the following questions: How are new businesses created and how do they evolve? How do their structures develop and change? Are there different paths to consistent configurations and if yes, how do they differ from each other? Which resources are critical to growth and how do new ventures acquire and manage such resources? What strategies do new ventures implement for beating their competitors? How does the general business environment influence new ventures’ decisions? How do new ventures learn and make decisions? Students may choose from a range of questions and write their paper in this context (see “Preliminary list of topics” in the end (topics will be announced later)), but they may suggest their own topic as well.

Course objectives

Knowledge Objectives

After the course students will be able to:

• Define, explain and apply selected key concepts in the field of strategic entrepreneurship
• Read and understand academic literature
• Write an academic paper
• Present an academic paper
• Lead an academic discussion
• Understand the process of academic publishing
• Understand how academic publications may be a source of information, inspiration, and guidance for practicing managers
Skills Objectives
• Improve diagnostic and analytical skills
• Enhance verbal skills via presentations and group discussions
• Build up critical thinking and interpretation skills

Learning Objectives
At the end of this course, students will be able to demonstrate understanding, critical assessment and application of the following:
• Learn how to evaluate academic literature
• Interact with an academic debate
• Prepare, elaborate and defend an academic argument
• Specialist knowledge on their selected topic of interest

Course outline

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date (and location)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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| Apr 14, 2016 4-7 pm (s.t.), EC, 5433 EG 001 | Session 1: Introduction to the seminar topic and procedures as well as allocation of the thesis topics (Note: Last chance to drop this course is on April 15th!)
| Apr 28, 2016 4-7 pm (s.t.), EC, 5433 EG 003 | Session 2: Introduction to literature search, writing skills, and forms of plagiarism
| May 09, 2016 11:55 pm | Optional: Submission of a paper proposal on which we will give you feedback via Email
| May 30 – June 03, 2016; bia | Individual feedback sessions (based on your paper outline, which you should send us at least two days in advance)
| June 23, 2016 4-6 pm (s.t.), EC, 5433 EG 003 | Session 3: How to give academic presentations
| June 28, 2016 11:55 pm | Submission of first version of the paper via Moodle and TurnItIn
| July 05, 2016 11:55 pm | Submission of the presentations (paper and review)
| July 07-08, 2016 9-18 pm EC, 5433 EG 001 | Presentations of the seminar papers and reviews (please arrange individual feedback sessions with each other)
| Aug 31, 2016 11:55 pm | Submission of the final version of the paper via Moodle and TurnItIn
| Aug 31, 2016 11:55 pm | Submission of the TUM research seminar summary report via Moodle and TurnItIn

bia by individual appointment tba to be announced
tbd to be defined tbc to be confirmed
EC Entrepreneurship Center; Lichtenbergstrasse 6, Garching Forschungszentrum
EG "Erdgeschoss" = ground floor

Course Procedures

Our challenge is to make sure you learn about the importance of academic research and its relevance to and application in today’s business environment. Academic research should not be boring, but inform students, managers, and policy makers in how to do things better. In turn, being able to critically reflect on academic literature and being able to move freely and comfortably in academic debates is crucial so as to
be able to actually profit from the rich academic literature that exists. At the same time, taking a topic and making it ‘yours’ can be great fun. So please, try not to turn this class into drudgery. Instead, look at it as an opportunity to acquire and sharpen a set of skills you will need in a couple of months/years when you might be working in a company, on one of the topics explored in this very seminar.

**Attend class**
The course outline above shows you several mandatory sessions, which you are expected to attend. In case you must be absent for reasons of health, or some other legitimate matter, email one of us beforehand.

**Participate actively**
Presentations and in-class discussions are very important in this seminar. If you are unaccustomed to, or uncomfortable with speaking up in class, summon your courage, take a chance, manage the risk, and rise to the challenge of participating.

**Give feedback**
Your feedback – in class or in private – on any aspect of this course is welcome at any time. It can help make this course an excellent experience for you and for us. We encourage you to contact us via email and we will respond as soon as possible (usually within the same day the email is received). If you wish to see one of us in person, please let us know so that we can prepare. Come prepared.

**Assessment**

**Overview**
Grading is based on a written seminar paper (60%), the presentation of the seminar paper (20%), and a review presentation on another participant’s paper (10%). Further, you are asked to attend one of the research seminars (one-hour event) the TUM School of Management is offering over the semester [http://www.wi.tum.de/en/research/research-seminar/](http://www.wi.tum.de/en/research/research-seminar/). You will have to hand in a report, summarizing and explaining the topic and discussion of the event you choose to participate in (10%). In order to receive a grade, you will need to complete all four obligatory assignments. Extra points may be earned through active and constructive participation in in-class discussions. Missing one of the three class sessions unexcused will lead to an automatic downgrading. If you miss two of the sessions unexcused, you fail automatically. Please try to determine in advance whether an absence is excusable! Please note that dropping the course after April 15th leads to grade 5.0 (failed).

**Seminar papers and presentations**
While the grade for your seminar paper (5000 words +/- 10%) will be determined purely on the last version you hand in before the final submission deadline (see “course outline”), you will also have to give a 10 to 15 minutes presentation on your almost-final version. Note that this version has to be well-advanced – basically, it should be a complete seminar paper that may have a few open issues or lose end and which will thus greatly benefit from getting some feedback from your peers as an input for a refinement or potentially larger modifications. Please note that we will require you not only to submit your thesis to us via Moodle, but also to TurnItIn, for an automated citation check. You will be asked to sign a document regarding this in class. Please note that unless you sign this document, you cannot participate in the seminar.

**Review presentation and research seminar summary report**
Beyond the writing and presenting of your seminar paper, which forms the cornerstone of your grade, you will further be required to give feedback on another seminar participant’s thesis. We will team you up in pairs of two or groups of three, and you will have one other person to give feedback to and to receive feedback from. You will give a five-minute presentation about things you liked and things you did not like immediately after that paper was presented in class, making clear how the paper can be improved. We would further recommend that you have a meeting to discuss this feedback.

Besides the work on your seminar paper and review we prompt you to choose one of the research seminars the TUM School of Management is offering throughout the semester you would like to attend.
These seminars provide a forum for researchers in management to present and discuss their current work. Besides giving you an insight in the current research they might assist you in your approach of writing your seminar paper. As a result we ask you to hand in a short summary report on the seminar you attended (max. 1000 words).

In addition, after each presentation of a paper and corresponding review presentation, there will be a few minutes for general questions and comments. If we see you making a valuable contribution toward someone else’s paper better, we will consider this favorably in your overall evaluation.

In-class teaching methods and preparation

There will be a few sessions in which we will convey some content to you using standard PowerPoint lectures (see “course outline”). In these lectures already, we strongly encourage you to ask questions and interact with us and each other on the subject matter. Yet of course, the largest part of interaction will either be in the individual feedback sessions outside the class, or directly delivered by you through the presentation of your papers, review presentations, and in-class discussions, in which we will strive to take a moderating role, only.

Core literature

The following articles may be considered as a starting point for all seminar papers. However, note that, considerable additional literature search will be needed on your part. There will be an introduction as to how to do so in the second in-class session. Please note that the library is also offering excellent courses on this topic (including how to cite other works). Guidelines to formatting, including referencing and bibliography are available on our website: http://www.ent.wi.tum.de/fileadmin/w00bcx/www/Guidelines_theses_and_papers_15July2015.pdf.


Preliminary list of topics

We will provide a list of topics in the first session. They will address these three themes:

1) “New venture creation”
2) “New venture growth”
3) “New venture strategies”