

Building An Impactful Creative Career: Entrepreneurial Tools and Strategies

Syllabus V012725 – Spring H3 2025

4.s24

Tuesdays 9a – 11a

Credit Hours: 2-0-4

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Location E15-466

Instructors

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Office Hours: Email Instructor(s) for an Appointment

Course Overview

In a rapidly evolving global landscape, where creativity and cultural expression are powerful drivers of innovation and change, creative professionals must equip themselves with the strategic tools to transform their artistic vision into a sustainable and impactful career. This course, Building an Impactful Creative Career: Entrepreneurial Tools and Strategies, is designed for students from creative disciplines who aspire to establish independent practices that not only thrive artistically but also navigate the complexities of the cultural economy with confidence.

Through a dynamic combination of theoretical insights and practical applications, students will explore the systemic contexts of cultural production, from international policy frameworks to economic principles that shape the creative sector. They will gain the necessary competencies to identify and articulate their unique value propositions, develop strategic business models, build their personal brand, and effectively manage intellectual property in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

By the end of the course, students will be empowered to position themselves as cultural leaders and active citizens, capable of leveraging their creativity to contribute meaningfully to their communities and the global creative economy. Whether through collaborations,

entrepreneurial ventures, or innovative projects, they will leave with a personalized strategic plan to confidently embark on their professional journey.

Course Objectives

By completing the course, students will be able to:

1. **Understand the systemic contexts of creative and cultural production** and position their individual creative practice within an international framework.
2. **Apply fundamental principles found in cultural economics** to their professional practice and identify opportunities within the creative economy.
3. **Evaluate the multiple value dimensions** in creative and cultural production, including cultural, social, and economic perspectives.
4. **Develop strategic approaches and business models** tailored to their creative careers.
5. **Establish and enhance their personal brand** as creative professionals.
6. **Navigate intellectual property rights and select appropriate business structures** to support their professional practice.

Class-by-class topics outline

Date	Topic	Goals / Assignment	Planning notes
1 Tue, Feb 4 th	Intro to Course Instructors' introduction and course overview (20 m) Students's brief introduction (max 30 m) Systemic Context (I) An overview of the creative economy worldwide, international policy frameworks, conventions. The role of the creative professional as an active citizen and cultural leader.	None	
2 Tue, Feb 11 th	Systemic Context (II) Overview of cultural economics principles and relation to individual careers and spaces for opportunities.	Assignment Due: Identify your case.	
3 Tue, Feb 18 th	The Professional Toolkit: Value Dimensions	Assignment Due: Proposal for an international collaboration.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different dimensions of value in your creative production: cultural, economic, social, geopolitical, innovation. - Different types of value to the user: aesthetic, functional, cultural, social, investment - Sociological foundations, different markets <p>Exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyse your offerings and their value dimensions. - Based on the above, identify customers, users, partners, and stakeholder . - Identify your interested non-users 		
<p>4 Tue, Feb 25th</p>	<p>The Professional Toolkit: Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notes on strategy in general business - How do you balance artistic freedom and excellence with economic balance? - Modelling your business <p>Excercise</p> <p>What different business strategies would look like in your case.</p> <p>Based on identified values, what are your</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - goals - value proposition - target markets - competitive advantage - resources (tangible, relational, etc) - core activities - mkt positioning - Who do you partner with? - How do you combine different values in your offering? - 	<p>Assignment due: Own case's benefits and users analysis. Value proposition formulation.</p>	
<p>5 Tue, Mar 4th</p>	<p>The Professional Toolkit: branding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artists and their brand 	<p>Assignment due: Your strategy, possible business models</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creative product as an extension of the author - Acquiring brand value through network, proximity and association to other brands - Building reputation - Reputation enhancers: institutional <p>Excercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What can you do to enhance your reputation as an artist / as a creative / as a cultural professional - Dos and try-not-to-dos 		
6 Tue, Mar 11 th	<p>The Professional Toolkit: legal tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IP rights (different conventions' contents, new conventions) - Business legal forms in the US 	Assignment due: Personal branding plan	
7 Tue Mar 18 th	<p>Evaluation / Final presentation</p> <p>Each student presents a strategic plan of action for their career in form of a copmact slidedeck. Slides volume to be determined based on participants no. The presentation can be in written form or accompanied by graphics or artifacts.</p>	Assignment due: A plan of action for your career	

Absence Policy

Regular and punctual attendance is considered essential for all class sessions and reviews. Anticipated absences should be communicated to the course instructor in advance to seek an excused absence. In cases of illness where advance notice is not possible, notification should be provided as soon as feasible, accompanied by a doctor's note for retroactive approval. Staying up to date with missed content is the responsibility of the student, which may involve consulting the instructor or classmates. Consistent tardiness and unexcused absences may impact the final grade.

Expected Deliverables & Evaluation Criteria:

1. Class Participation and Engagement (30%)

Active contribution to discussions, collaborative exercises, and peer feedback sessions. This also includes consistent effort, openness to exploring new perspectives and demonstrating engagement with the course material.

2. Weekly Assignments: Reflection and Exploration (40%)

Assignments are evaluated based on thoughtfulness, depth of reflection, and their alignment with course themes. Since assignments will partially be explored in class, students are also assessed on their ability to engage in the iterative process, integrate feedback, and demonstrate progress over time.

3. Final Presentation: Synthesizing Learning (30%)

Assessed on how well the student synthesizes their journey throughout the course. Focus is placed on the depth of understanding, clarity in communicating ideas, and the integration of reflective insights gained from assignments and class discussions.

Completion Requirements:

- Completion of assignments.
- Presentations of work at the Final Review

Grading Definition [TBC]

A: Exceptionally strong performance, demonstrating a superior understanding of the subject matter, a comprehensive foundation of knowledge, and skillful application of concepts and/or materials.

B: Solid performance, demonstrating the ability to apply appropriate concepts, a good understanding of the subject matter, and competence in handling the problems and materials encountered in the course.

C: Adequate performance, demonstrating a basic understanding of the subject matter, the ability to handle relatively simple problems, and sufficient preparation for progressing to more advanced work in the field.

D: Minimally acceptable performance, demonstrating partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to address simple problems, but with deficiencies significant enough to indicate the need for further foundational work before proceeding in the field.

F: Failing performance. This grade indicates that the student must repeat the course to receive credit.

NE: No record. This designation signifies that the course will not appear on the external transcript.

Textbooks / Materials

Readings, references, and other course materials will be posted on Canvas.

Final Documentation for Archiving Purposes

No grade will be given without providing the following project documentation.

- Documentation presented at the final review.

Diversity and inclusive classroom

MIT values an inclusive environment. We hope to foster a sense of community in this classroom and consider this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect. We welcome individuals of all backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, religious and political affiliations – and other visible and non-visible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other class member. If this standard is not being upheld, please feel free to speak with the instructor team at any time.

Anti-racism

In this course, we look carefully at problems and opportunities in the human environment. Moreover, we work to include perspectives of those who are underrepresented or have suffered, or continue to suffer, from racism or the effects of past racism or social injustice.

Land acknowledgement statement

MIT acknowledges Indigenous Peoples as the traditional stewards of the land, and the enduring relationship that exists between them and their traditional territories. The land on which we sit is the traditional unceded territory of the Wampanoag Nation. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced occupation of their territory, and we honor and respect the many diverse indigenous people connected to this land on which we gather from time immemorial.

Intellectual property

The work and ideas you develop in this class will not be considered IP of MIT unless ideas were developed prior to the class or current to it as part of research or lab work at MIT, or if any other MIT rules apply to your work. If there are patents in your possession or MIT IP applicable to your ideas, please consult with the instruction team. Any new ideas or technology shared or proposed in the class will be considered open and non-exclusive information for all members of the class. In such case that a team or individual wishes to pursue a venture based on an idea shared in the class, they will not possess exclusive rights to the idea. If you believe you are creating an algorithm, code, or design that

could be patented or copyrighted and want to protect your rights as an inventor, please consult with the instructor team prior to disclosing material.

Academic integrity/honesty

Massachusetts Institute of Technology students are here because of their demonstrated intellectual ability and because of their potential to make a significant contribution to human thought and knowledge. At MIT, students will be given unusual opportunities to do research and undertake scholarship that will advance knowledge in different fields of study. Students will also face many challenges. It is important for MIT students to become familiar with the Institute's policies regarding academic integrity, which is available at [Academic Integrity at MIT: A Handbook for Students](#).

In this course, we will hold you to the high standard of academic integrity expected of all students at the Institute. We do this for two reasons. First, it is essential to the learning process that you are the one doing the work. We have structured the assignments in this course to enable you to gain a mastery of the course material. Failing to do the work yourself will result in a lesser understanding of the content, and therefore a less meaningful education for you. Second, it is important that there be a level playing field for all students in this course and at the Institute so that the rigor and integrity of the Institute's educational program are maintained. Violating the Academic Integrity policy in any way (e.g., plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, cheating, etc.) will result in official Institute sanction. Possible sanctions include receiving a failing grade on the assignment or exam, being assigned a failing grade in the course, having a formal notation of disciplinary action placed on your MIT record, suspension from the Institute, and expulsion from the Institute for very serious cases.

Please review MIT's Academic Integrity policy and related resources (e.g., [working under pressure](#); [how to paraphrase, summarize, and quote](#); etc.) and contact the instructor team if you have any questions about appropriate citation methods, the degree of collaboration that is permitted, or anything else related to the Academic Integrity of this course.

Special accommodations

MIT is committed to the principle of equal access. Students who need disability accommodation are encouraged to speak with Disability and Access Services (DAS), prior to or early in the semester so that accommodation requests can be evaluated and addressed in a timely fashion. If you have a disability and are not planning to use accommodations, it is still recommended that you meet with DAS staff to familiarize yourself with their services and resources. Please visit the [DAS website](#) for contact information.

If you have already been approved for accommodations, the instructor team is ready to assist with implementation. Please inform Giuliano Picchi (gpicchi@mit.edu), who will oversee accommodation implementation for this course.

Student support

Undergraduate students: Student Support Services (S3)

If you are dealing with a personal or medical issue that is impacting your ability to attend class, complete work, or take an exam, you should contact a dean in Student Support Services (S3). S3 is here to help you. The deans will verify your situation, provide you with support, and help you work with your professor or instructor to determine next steps. In most circumstances, you will not be excused from coursework without verification from a dean. Please visit the S3 website for contact information and more ways that they can provide support.

Website: studentlife.mit.edu/s3

Graduate students: GradSupport

As a graduate student, a variety of issues may impact your academic career, including faculty/student relationships, funding, and interpersonal concerns. In the Office of Graduate Education (OGE), GradSupport provides consultation, coaching, and advocacy to graduate students on matters related to academic and life challenges. If you are dealing with an issue that is impacting your ability to attend class, complete work, or take an exam, you may contact GradSupport by email at gradsupport@mit.edu or via phone at (617) 253-4860.

Website: oge.mit.edu/development/gradsupport