

BUSIxxxx

Business Books in Self-Help

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Class meets fortnightly, for two-hours

Student hours: xx hours and by appointment

Course description:

Over the last decade, self-help business books have become popular ways to understand industry, commercial opportunities and new ways to reform business ideation. Readers are finding opportunities in terms that don't initially look and feel like a formal business plan – things like harnessing self-worth, human connectedness, understanding the world 'around me', emotional intelligence, effective relationships, learning to be 'happy', defying the odds and organisational self-help to enable individuals to get sh*t done.

These popular and new modes of business guidance and analysis are starting to make waves in academic disciplines – particularly business and society. But the techniques that illuminate the conceptual understanding and theory of 'doing business' also have applications outside of a university setting: the unstructured character of business self-help often makes it a close fit for the messy problems ones encounters in starting up a business, for instance.

The goal of this course is first, to introduce students to the foundations of business self-help, and then to explore the special problems that emerge when these methods are applied to business expression.

In the first term, we'll start by reviewing well known-business self-help texts, but then move fairly rapidly toward real applications of these principles. So, although the course doesn't assume previous commercial knowledge, or the desire to start a business, students will need experience of reading a range of texts and feeling confident to critique those sources. The first time reading a whole business book in the first two weeks will be very intense. I'm going to schedule extra student hours to help anyone who may be struggling with the volume of early reading required.

Learning outcomes:

Explore business works in detail

Analyse elements such as theme and the ethical stance or moral and business values of texts

Understand and make appropriate use of business terminology

Hone skills in interpretation and critical thinking

Develop and demonstrate an awareness of the cultural significance of the text form, and the role such literature play in the larger business culture by being conversant in debates concerning business values and creative endeavour

Demonstrate a broad knowledge of major authors, major texts and contexts and defining intellectual issues

Writing with clarity, creativity and persuasiveness

All students should achieve the following objectives, which arise out of programmatic goals and evaluative criteria:

- Based on the idea that writing is a recursive series of choices, students should learn how to make effective choices in their own writing.
- Students will learn how to give critical feedback to their peers' writing and to receive critical feedback on their writing.
- Students will learn how to formulate an original thesis and to develop that thesis into a well-supported argument.
- Students will learn a range of critical thinking methods and how to incorporate source material into their writing so that it develops and supports their ideas.
- Students will learn effective organisational strategies for their critical thinking.
- Students will develop critical thinking and reading skills, so that they can devise original ideas, rather than simply echo the ideas of others.
- Students will learn how to evaluate the credibility of sources, to use academic/scholarly resources, and to incorporate sources effectively and ethically.

Assignments:

There will be regularly homework assignments, due Saturday (or Sunday noon in a pinch). Often homework will be a writing assignment, asking students to write a brief reflection on the reading. We'll be learning together to think about self-help in business as well as how to take up the recommendations. The first summative will be an extended piece of writing in the style of a Medium essay to explain key aspects of their favourite book.

We don't have an exam, because I want to leave the course free for students to ideate for their final writing project. The goal of the final project is quite simply to articulate the most useful and interesting recommendations from at least three of the ten books read for the course. (In other words, it's not just an essay or book review). I will help students plan and structure

their work and support ways in which they will ask questions about the context of the readings, and relevance to contemporary business and economic life. Around the middle of the second term, we'll start talking about the final project, and students will have some work in progress to present to reach other on the last day of class. (Anticipated a five-minute presentation supported, optionally, by one or two slides). The project itself is due on the day when a final exam would ordinarily be assigned (which is TBA, but in the exam period). The shape of the project can be flexible, but I am envisaging something that looks like a 1250 Medium essay, supported by a 750 business case summary, and a 500 book review of a text currently not on the course.

Grading:

Ten fortnightly homeworks, 25% (average homework score will be taken forward)

Midterm Medium essay, 25%

Final project 50%

Schedule

TERM

ONE

<i>Week 1</i>	<p>Introduction to reading. Setting the scene for business ‘self-help’ literature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Going over the ten key texts ▪ Introducing homework
<i>Week 2</i>	<p>Book 1 - ReWork: Change the Way You Work Forever by Jason Fried</p> <p>Book blurb: From the founders of the trailblazing software company 37signals, here is a different kind of business book - one that explores a new reality. Today, anyone can be in business. Tools that used to be out of reach are now easily accessible. Technology that cost thousands is now just a few pounds or even free. Stuff that was impossible just a few years ago is now simple.</p> <p>That means anyone can start a business. And you can do it without working miserable 80-hour weeks or depleting your life savings. You can start it on the side while your day job provides all the cash flow you need. Forget about business plans, meetings, office space - you don't need them.</p> <p>With its straightforward language and easy-is-better approach, Rework is the perfect playbook for anyone who's ever dreamed of doing it on their own. Hardcore entrepreneurs, small-business</p>

owners, people stuck in day jobs who want to get out, and artists who don't want to starve anymore will all find valuable inspiration and guidance in these pages.

It's time to rework work.

- Homework1.

Week 4

Book 2 - Outliers: The Story of Success by Malcolm Gladwell item options

Book blurb:

Why do some people achieve so much more than others? Can they lie so far out of the ordinary?

In this provocative and inspiring book, Malcolm Gladwell looks at everyone from rock stars to professional athletes, software billionaires to scientific geniuses, to show that the story of success is far more surprising, and far more fascinating, than we could ever have imagined.

Gladwell reveals that it's as much about where we're from and what we do, as who we are - and that no one, not even a genius, ever makes it alone.

Outliers will change the way you think about your own life story, and about what makes us all unique.

- Homework2.

Week 6

Book 3 - Mismatch (Simplicity: Design, Technology, Business, Life):

How Inclusion Shapes Design item options by Kat Holmes

Book blurb:

How inclusive methods can build elegant design solutions that work for all. Sometimes designed objects reject their users: a computer mouse that doesn't work for left-handed people, for example, or a touchscreen payment system that only works for people who read English phrases, have 20/20 vision, and use a credit card. Something as simple as colour choices can render a product unusable for millions. These mismatches are the building blocks of exclusion. In Mismatch, Kat Holmes describes how design can lead to exclusion, and how design can also remedy exclusion. Inclusive design methods--designing objects with rather than for excluded users--can create elegant solutions that work well and benefit all.

Holmes tells stories of pioneers of inclusive design, many of whom were drawn to work on inclusion because of their own experiences of exclusion. A gamer and designer who depends on voice recognition shows Holmes his "Wall of Exclusion," which displays dozens of game controllers that require two hands to operate; an architect shares her firsthand knowledge of how design can fail communities, gleaned from growing up in Detroit's housing projects; an astronomer who began to lose her eyesight adapts a technique called "sonification" so she can "listen" to the stars.

Designing for inclusion is not a feel-good sideline. Holmes shows how inclusion can be a source of innovation and growth, especially for digital technologies. It can be a catalyst for creativity and a boost for the bottom line as a customer base expands. And each time we remedy a mismatched

interaction, we create an opportunity for more people to contribute to society in meaningful ways.

- Homework3.

Week 8

Book 4 – The Empathy Edge by Maria Ross

Book blurb:

Being empathetic at work means seeing the situation from another's perspective, and using that vantage point to shape your leadership style, workplace culture, and branding strategy. Pairing her knowledge as a branding expert with proven research and fascinating stories from executives, change-makers and community leaders, Maria Ross reveals exactly how empathy makes brands and organizations stronger and more successful.

Ross shows why your business needs to cultivate more empathy now, and shares the habits and traits of empathetic leaders who foster more productivity and loyalty.

She gives practical tips, big and small, for how to align your mission and values and hire the right people, cultivating a more empathetic—and innovative—workplace culture. Finally, she gives you the goods on building your empathetic brand in an authentic and proactive way, and shows how doing so results in happier customers, innovative work cultures and increased profits.

In this practical playbook for businesses of all types, Maria Ross proves that empathy is not just good for society—it's great for business, and may transform you at a personal level, too.

- Homework4.

Week 10

Book 5 – Ditch the Act: Reveal the Surprising Power of the Real You for Greater Success 1st Edition by Leonard Kim and Ryan Foland

Book blurb:

Use your failure, mistakes, and vulnerabilities to fund success—the proven guide to building a powerful personal brand through the fearless admission of just being human

Business professionals are finding it harder and harder to break through the noise. The problem is, most of it is just that: noise. What if you could gain more career success, respect, and a powerful digital presence by being your natural, flawed self instead of pretending to be perfect?

Ditch the Act takes a strategic approach to this little-known secret to help you build an authentic, long-lasting personal brand. The authors—both marketing and communications experts—explain why exposure is important and how it cultivates more durable connections than any polished persona can, and they show how to use stories of failure and weakness in ways that build trust and loyalty from large audiences.

Inside, you'll find an actionable, 7-step process for driving brand differentiation and growth.

Actions include:

*Crafting a unique bio and creating an "exposure resume" *Writing out stories and thought leadership insights based on the exposure resume*Extracting key content pieces to turn into

video scripts for posting, sharing, and embedding in existing content*Fostering camaraderie in new relationships

People are getting weary of-and, frankly, seeing right through-the oversized egos dominating the business world today. By building a personal brand that is honest and authentic and that reveals personal struggles, you can build stronger, longer-lasting relationships-and achieve greater success.

- Homework5.

TERM

TWO

Week 1

Introducing the first assignment

Week 2

Book 6: The One Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results by Gary Keller and Jay Papasan

Book blurb:

YOU WANT LESS. You want fewer distractions and less on your plate. The daily barrage of e-mails, texts, tweets, messages, and meetings distract you and stress you out. The simultaneous demands of work and family are taking a toll. And what's the cost? Second-rate work, missed deadlines, smaller pay cheques, fewer promotions-and lots of stress. AND YOU WANT MORE. You want more productivity from your work. More income for a better lifestyle. You want more satisfaction from life, and more time for yourself, your family, and your friends. NOW YOU CAN HAVE BOTH-LESS AND MORE. In The ONE Thing, you'll learn to cut through the clutter achieve better results in less time build momentum toward your goal dial down the stress overcome that overwhelmed feeling revive your energy stay on track master what matters to you. The ONE Thing is the New York Times bestseller which delivers extraordinary results in every area of your life-work, personal, family, and spiritual. WHAT'S YOUR ONE THING?

- Homework6.

Week 4

Book 7: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be: The 25 Principles of Success by Jack Canfield

Book blurb:

Within minutes of reading this book you will want - and be able - to apply its clear, direct and highly effective principles to your own life. Jack Canfield, author of Chicken Soup for the Soul, built an \$80 million business from nothing. Now he shares his key techniques and unique insights so that you too can achieve success in everything you do.

If you keep on doing what you've always done, you'll keep getting what you've always got. Isn't it time you changed for the better?

Jack Canfield's extraordinary insights and powerful life tools will enable you to become the happy, successful person you know you are meant to be - without burning out. Whether you

want greater success and fulfilment at work, financially, in your relationships, with your health, in sports or creativity, Canfield will show you how.

* Take control of your life - 100% responsibility, 100% fulfilment

* Discover and focus on your core genius - be better at what you do best; be a huge success at what you enjoy most

* Set your goals and achieve them - transcend other people's limiting opinions

- Homework7.

Week 6

Book 8: The Non-Obvious Guide To Emotional Intelligence (You Can Actually Use) by KERRY GOYETTE

Book blurb:

Today's leaders are more stressed than ever. Whether you are leading a Fortune 500 company trying to retain top talent, or are an entrepreneur trying to cultivate the next great idea, the current corporate landscape is unpredictable, multi-factored, and complex. This is where the power of emotional intelligence comes in.

In this guide, Aperio founder and CEO Kerry Goyette challenges the conventional wisdom of EQ by breaking down the neuroscience of emotional intelligence and offering a bold and applicable new approach. See how emotional intelligence tactics empower you to leverage the impact of emotion, thrive in competitive environments, and prevent fight or flight responses from hijacking your best intentions. Explore ways to leverage EQ to connect with people, add value, and grow your business.

IN THIS BOOK YOU WILL LEARN HOW TO:

- > Improve your decision-making when it matters most.
- > Navigate change and better manage disruption.
- > Identify the derailers that may be holding you back.
- > Trace problems to their roots so they can be solved more easily.
- > Be agile and thrive in today's chaotic environments.
- > Shape your company culture to drive loyalty and engagement.

- Homework8.

Week 8

Book 9: Can't Hurt Me: Master Your Mind and Defy the Odds by David Goggins

Book blurb:

For David Goggins, childhood was a nightmare—poverty, prejudice, and physical abuse colored his days and haunted his nights. But through self discipline, mental toughness, and hard work, David transformed himself from a depressed, overweight young man with no future into a U.S. Armed Forces icon and one of the world's top endurance athletes. The only man in history to complete elite training as a Navy SEAL, Army Ranger, and Air Force Tactical Air Controller, he

went on to set records in numerous endurance events, inspiring Outside Magazine to name him “The Fittest (Real) Man in America.”

In *Can't Hurt Me*, he shares his astonishing life story and reveals that most of us only tap into 40% of our capabilities. Goggins calls this the 40% Rule, and his story illuminates a path that anyone can follow to push past pain, demolish fear, and reach their full potential.

- Homework9.

Week 10

Book 10: How to Get Sh*t Done by Erin Falconer

Book blurb:

From the editor-in-chief and co-owner of the highly respected self-improvement site *Pick the Brain* comes an inspirational guide for overscheduled, overwhelmed women on how to do less so that they can achieve more.

Women live in a state of constant guilt: that we're not doing enough, that we're not good enough, that we can't keep up. If we're not climbing the corporate ladder, building our side hustle, preparing home-cooked meals, tucking the kids in at night, meditating daily, and scheduling playdates, date nights, and girls' nights every week, we feel like we're not living our best lives. Yet traditional productivity books—written by men—barely touch on the tangle of cultural pressures that women feel when facing down a to-do list.

Now, Erin Falconer will show you how to do less—a lot less. In fact, *How to Get Sh*t Done* will teach you how to zero in on the three areas of your life where you want to excel, and then it will show you how to off-load, outsource, or just stop giving a damn about the rest. As the founder of two technology start-ups and one of *Refinery29's* Top 10 Women Changing the Digital Landscape for Good, Erin has seen what happens when women chase an outdated, patriarchal model of productivity, and now she shows you how even the most intense perfectionist among us can tap into our inner free spirit and learn to feel like badassess.

Packed with real-life advice, honest stories from Erin's successful career, and dozens of actionable resources, *How to Get Sh*t Done* will forever reframe productivity so that you can stop doing everything for everyone and start doing what matters to you.

- Homework10.

TERM

THREE

Week 1

Week 2

Online

Prepare for final project / student presentations

Webinar to prepare for final project

Initial preparation for “Business Books in Self-Help”

Students will be expected to read a lot in a compressed period of time; we’ll generally spend the first half of each class on lecture/discussion, and the second half is going to be some student-led exploration of the new ideas we’ve covered. Before, or during the first class, students will need to start honing their reading skills.