

Course Syllabus:

COURSE NAME: Market Research

Subtitle: Market Research and Due Diligence: an Entrepreneur's and Venture Capitalist's Perspective.

Spring Semester.

Course Number: 324539

Market research is the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of information relevant to marketing decisions. The most common applications for market research are to show the market size and share various market players, to measure use and attitudes to products, to assess customer satisfaction and loyalty, to determine optimum pricing strategies, brand influence and to determine effective segmentation strategies.

Due diligence is the art of sizing up an investment opportunity — its potential outcomes and major risk factors. A good opportunity tests the limits of our observations and experiences, even the limits of our networks and imagination.

Identifying the potential for value creation and estimating its sustained advantage is the heart of any due diligence activity. Effective diligence emulates effective market research to identify, categorize, and rank investment opportunities so investors can make rationally informed investment decisions.

In this course, we'll explore the intersection of market research and due diligence from the perspective of both a venture capital investor and an entrepreneur.

To gain a better understanding of market research, we'll explore the entrepreneur's perspective and approach to venture creation. What is the process that he/she goes through? How does one ideate new ventures? How do you validate ideas as good market opportunities? Develop strategy, business models, and more. Where does market research fit into the process? How do we use it effectively in venture creation? What role does it play in fund raising for your venture?

To answer these questions, we'll learn a market research approach that helps us identify a company's target audience, develop customer archetypes, evaluate competition, and the business itself. We'll develop a market research project that utilizes both Primary and Secondary Market Research to answer these questions to create a superior venture.

To gain a better understanding of due diligence, we'll talk about the process of developing the diligence questions/surveys, methods for implementing the research, and how the results influence the investment decision making throughout the process.

To put due diligence (DD) in a larger context, we'll learn about venture capital investing from the VC's perspective. What are the criteria that investors look at to evaluate whether an investment is worthy of interest? What are the mechanics of investment? Once we have a deeper understanding, we can better explore the objective, role and process of due diligence as well as the various types of DD performed and their effect on investment decision making. We will learn DD by doing a hands on exercise to evaluate a startup company using case studies and real pitch decks of companies in a variety of industries, including: fintech, healthcare, edtech, food tech, and possibly more.

How?

To achieve these goals, the course will combine lectures, case studies, and some highly regarded guest lecturers from the startup and investment communities who will share their vast experience with you and give you the opportunity to network with these industry luminaries. The case studies will illustrate the application of the ideas learned in the real world. By doing the exercises you will gain practical experience dealing with real issues related to venture creation and venture capital.

The group will be divided into, and work in, teams of three over the course of our time together, particularly in working on and submitting the select number of case assignments that illustrate important concepts with a practical application. Through this, and via the term project and some guest lecturers, each team will have the opportunity to simulate the venture creation process as an entrepreneur, and the funding process as a VC investment manager.

You are expected to attend class regularly and participate in class discussions as this will be a key factor in the final grade.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course, you will:

- Understand venture creation and the role of market research
- Understand venture investing and the role of Due Diligence
- Gain hands-on experience in these specific areas

And, you will be able to:

- Design and perform a market research project

- Design and perform a due diligence project

Assessment and Grade Distribution

Grade weight	Assignment	Requirements
50%	Market Research Project (25%) Due Diligence Project (25%)	You will design, develop, and implement a due diligence project based on a specific company's situation.
15%	Case Study (1)	Read, analyze, and respond to the questions for this case. Remember, your outcome choice is less important than the rationale you develop in reaching that choice. Put emphasis and focus on the rationale!
10%	3 short quizzes	3 quizzes based on the weekly reading assignment or previous classroom discussion, 10 minutes each, will be administered according to schedule.
20%	Final Exam	A mix of multiple choice and short essay questions
5%	Class participation	Read mandatory articles for class, participate in in-class exercises and discussions. Complete assignments in and out of class.