Outline for a course on

Social Entrepreneurship

Based on


By Roger L. Martin and Sally R. Osberg

This course is designed for students with a strong interest in looking under the hood of Social Entrepreneurship. Using the book *Getting Beyond Better* by Roger L. Martin and Sally R. Osberg as the course backbone, each class will dive into underlying theories to explain how social entrepreneurs work to create equilibrium change. The course weaves together themes of wicked problems and mindsets, coupled with the thinking tools of design thinking, integrative thinking, and systems thinking. These themes highlight who social entrepreneurs are and how they think.

The course is divided into two parts. The first examines the context in which social entrepreneurs work. The second looks at how they do what they do. The course culminates with an exploration of social impact measurement. Ideally, each class is about 2 hours in length. A description of each reading is included as an Appendix after the syllabus.

*This syllabus was prepared by Nogah Kornberg in collaboration with Roger L. Martin. If you have thoughts or questions, please email Nogah.Kornberg@rotman.utoronto.ca, we are happy to assist.*

**Part I: Transformation for Good**

**SHIFTING THE EQUILIBRIUM, Classes 1-3**

We start our examination of social entrepreneurship by seeking to better understand social entrepreneurs and the world they live in. The opening frame is one of wicked problems, the complex and ever-shifting problems that social entrepreneurs seek to solve. Then, to understand the people behind the solutions, we explore mindsets and mental models. Our mindsets, a collection of mental models, influence our behaviours and greatly impact our actions. Exploring mindsets allows students to reach a deeper understanding of who social entrepreneurs are and why they engage with wicked problems in the way that they do. *Getting Beyond Better anchor reading: Introduction, Forward and Chapter 1.*

**1. Introduction to Social Entrepreneurship**

2. Social Entrepreneurship to Solve Wicked Problems


3. Who We Are: Mindsets and Mental Models


THE NATURE OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP, Classes 4-5
In creating their equilibrium-shifting solutions, social entrepreneurs leverage tools from the worlds of business and government. Once we understand how business operates (through the exchange of value: a product or service for money) and how governments operate (through mandatory changes in behaviour based on laws), we can begin looking at how social entrepreneurs create their solutions.

*Getting Beyond Better anchor reading: Chapter 2.*

4. Business-Led Innovation


5. Government-Led Transformation

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD, Classes 6-7
Social entrepreneurs go about making change through an integrative process. The first stage of this process is to better understand the context in which the problem exists. There are two aspects of context that are important to understand: The first is the big picture of how things work as a system and the second is the interaction of actors within that system. *Getting Beyond Better anchor reading: Chapter 3.*

6. Systems Thinking

7. Ethnographic Research: Learning from People and Stories

ENVISIONING A NEW FUTURE, Class 8
In the second stage of the process, social entrepreneurs imagine a new reality. This class will explore ideas of imagination and creativity. *Getting Beyond Better anchor reading: Chapter 4.*

8. Aspirations for a Better World
- King, Martin Luther. “I Have a Dream.” Web.
BUILDING A MODEL FOR CHANGE, Classes 9-10

The third stage in the process is to build the solution. As a result of their deep understanding of the context, social entrepreneurs use different mechanisms to create a model to sustainably shift an unhappy equilibrium. They approach the use of these mechanisms with a Design Thinking lens. They expect solutions to be prototyped and iterated, based on feedback from users. *Getting Beyond Better anchor reading: Chapter 5.*

9. Designing Thinking for a Better Answer


10. Mechanisms: Making It Work


SCALING THE SOLUTION, Class 11

Social entrepreneurship is about creating a new equilibrium by shifting how a system works; an answer that fits into a small part of the system is not enough. Shifting a system requires the solution be scalable and sustainable. The fourth stage explores achieving scale. *Getting Beyond Better anchor reading: Chapter 6.*

11. Scaling Social Solutions

A PATH FORWARD, Class 12

Until recently, it was easy to claim positive impact, but hard to prove it. Now, Social Impact Measurement and Social Return on Investment are two avenues to make tangible this change. One approach looks to describe the change, while the other uses financial proxies to communicate impact. This class will explore these approaches to measurement and impact. Getting Beyond Better anchor reading: Chapter 7.

12. Measuring Impact and Social Return on Investment

Appendix

Below you will find more information about the sources selected for this syllabus.

1. Introduction to Social Entrepreneurship

These readings frame the course and offer students an overview of the content. Here, we introduce the notion of stance as a foundation for understanding how and why social entrepreneurs act as they do.


Almost a decade after J. Gregory Dees coined the term “social entrepreneurship,” Martin, professor and former dean of the Rotman School of Management, and Osberg, President and CEO of the Skoll Foundation, make the argument that we need to define it more fully. Up to this point, many disparate activities were classed under the umbrella of “Social Entrepreneurship”. The definition provided in this article added a rigour to a previously open conversation.


Austen, a leading thinker on the subject of artistry across domains, outlines the connection between the stance we hold and the experiences we seek.

2. Social Entrepreneurship to Solve Wicked Problems

These readings build the students’ understanding of social entrepreneurship and wicked problems. Social entrepreneurs, by and large, seek to tackle and solve wicked problems in the world – and a richer understanding of the broad nature of these problems sheds light on the path to solving them.


In this paper, Dees, academic scholar and father of social entrepreneurship, both provides an exploratory definition of “Social Entrepreneurship” and explores the difficulties associated with combining entrepreneurship and social good.


This interview with Dees, after twenty years of teaching social entrepreneurship, provides context to the teaching of the subject. It makes the case, as with all disciplines, that this way of thinking and doing can be learned.

Academic scholar Christensen’s book The Innovator’s Dilemma highlighted how new players disrupt industries through innovation. In this article, his theory is applied to the social sector. The authors argue that social sectors require scalable innovations.


This seminal work on wicked problems, written by professors and theorists Horst and Melvin, outlines the nature and the characteristics of wicked problems.


This Guardian article examines the implications of Thomas Kuhn’s book, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.

3. Who we are: Mindsets and Mental Models

These readings highlight how our mental models inform our mindsets and, in turn, how mindsets influence behaviours. Social entrepreneurs must navigate multiple, complex, even opposing mental models to create the new equilibrium.


In this chapter, Rivenburgh, CEO and President of Strategic Imperatives Inc., introduces the concepts of mindsets and mental models. She links to their importance to the way in which we engage with the world around us.


In this introductory chapter, Dweck, a world-leading education researcher and professor, discusses the difference between a fixed and growth mindset.


Martin outlines the theory of Integrative Thinking: a problem-solving methodology focused on leveraging the tension of opposing models.
### (3: Who We Are: Mindsets and Mental Models cont’d)

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<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Edition</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kahneman, Daniel</td>
<td><em>Thinking, Fast and Slow</em></td>
<td>Canada: Doubleday, 2013</td>
<td>Pages 19-30</td>
<td>Kahneman, psychologist and Nobel Laureate in Economics, explains how our brain engages with the world through two kinds of thinking (System 1 – fast, easy, and heuristic-based and System 2 – slow, effortful, and based on reasoning). Social entrepreneurs need to engage with their System 2 to question and challenge the models they hold.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thaler, Richard H. and Cass R. Sunstein</td>
<td><em>Nudge</em></td>
<td>United States of America: Penguin Group, 2008</td>
<td>Pages 17-39</td>
<td>This chapter, written by economist Thaler and legal scholar Sunstein, highlights how unaware people can be of what has shaped their thinking, models, and biases.</td>
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### 4. Business-Led Innovation

These readings offer those new to the underlying concepts of business an overview of how businesses work. Understanding these concepts will enable students to identify how social entrepreneurship can most effectively leverage these business practices.

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<tr>
<td>Drucker, Peter F., Frances Hesselbein and Joan Snyder Kuhl</td>
<td><em>Peter Drucker’s Five Most Important Questions</em></td>
<td>New Jersey: Wiley, 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td>The structure of the book, using guiding questions and their answers, offers those new to business an introduction to the components of a business and their importance. Drucker, management consultant, educator, and author, lays the groundwork for our understanding of modern business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collins, Jim</td>
<td><em>Good to Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great</em></td>
<td>Colorado, 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td>This supplementary reading to <em>Good to Great</em>, written by Collins (a business consultant and lecturer), explores the implications of business practices in the social sector. It helps make the case that those working to improve the world require the use of business tools to do good work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, Mark W., Clay M. Christensen and Henning Kagermann</td>
<td>“Reinventing Your Business Model.” <em>Harvard Business Review</em> (December 2008): 50-59</td>
<td></td>
<td>In this article, Johnson, Christensen, and Kagermann (consultants and authors) discuss the conditions under which a business needs to shift its model and how to go about doing so.</td>
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5. Government-Led Transformation
These readings look at the vision of what government was designed to do in the United States and explore the implications of two laws on society. These readings are intended to illustrate how government can effect change and to draw out how social entrepreneurs can leverage elements of this approach in their own models for change.


6. Systems Thinking
The readings build an understanding of Systems Thinking by focusing on the concepts of feedback loops, causation and human interactions. If social entrepreneurs are looking to shift how systems work, they must first understand those systems and the actors within them.

Ackoff, Russell. (August 2014) “Speech on Systems.” Video


(6. Systems Thinking  cont’d)

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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td>Norman, Don.</td>
<td><em>The Design of Everyday Things</em>. United States of America: Basic Books, Perseus Books Group, 2013. Pages 37-73.</td>
<td>Systems can sometimes feel abstract and impersonal. In this reading, Norman, the director of The Design Lab at the University of California, San Diego, discusses the human dimension of systems and the influence that our mental models have on our behaviour.</td>
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7. Ethnographic Research: Learning from People and Stories

The readings explain what ethnographic research is and how designers use it to gain insights. These insights form the foundation of models of change.

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<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td>Patnaik, Dev.</td>
<td>“Big Think Interview with Dev Patnaik.” YouTube. 23 April 2012. Web.</td>
<td>In this video, Patnaik, founder of design firm Jump Associates, offers examples of why empathy matters and how insights from empathy are reflected in how companies operate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitney, Patrick and Vijay Kumar.</td>
<td>“Faster, Cheaper, Deeper User Research.” <em>Design Management Journal</em>. 14, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 50-57.</td>
<td>Whitney, director of the Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology, and professor Kumar, outline why using ethnographic research to uncover needs is important, especially when working in unfamiliar cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bettencourt, Lance and Anthony W. Ulwick</td>
<td>“The Customer-Centered Innovation Map.” <em>Harvard Business Review</em> (May 2008): 109-114.</td>
<td>While the article has a business focus, the underlying theme—appreciating what people are trying to accomplish in a system and building a better way to do so—has resonance for social entrepreneurs as well.</td>
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8. Aspirations for a Better World

These readings tackle the subject of creating a new vision from a variety of angles. A powerful vision of a new equilibrium is a key step for successful social entrepreneurship.

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<tr>
<td>Kelley, Tom and David Kelley.</td>
<td>“Reclaim Your Creative Confidence.” <em>Harvard Business Review</em> (Dec 2012): 30-35.</td>
<td>Many people are held back from creating a new vision because of fear. The Kelley brothers, founders of IDEO and thought leaders, explore the ability to overcome these fears to build something better, through what they call creative confidence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Greene, Maxine. *Releasing the Imagination*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Wiley Imprint, 1995. Pages 17-31. Greene, an education philosopher, writes about the influence of the arts on learning. In this excerpt, she discusses the need to see imagination as a skill that allows people to free themselves from the confines of a reality handed down to them and to create a better future.

Rottenberg, Sarah and Isabel O’Meara. “The Art of Looking.” *Rotman on Design*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013. Pages 172-177. In this short article, Rottenberg and O’Meara, both at Jump Associates, make the case that looking at the world through different lenses enables people to see new things. This ability to see anew propels our ability to envision a new reality.

King, Martin Luther. “I Have a Dream.” Web. King, a leader of the American Civil Rights Movement, articulated his new vision for the world.

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### 9. Design Thinking for a Better Answer

These readings explore the Design Thinking process. Once social entrepreneurs have a vision of a new equilibrium, they must create a model for change. Design Thinking is one path to creating such a model.


Brown, Tim and Jocelyn Wyatt. “Design Thinking for Social Innovation.” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. (Winter 2010): pg. 30-35. In this article, Brown and Wyatt, Executive Director of IDEO.org, explore the application of design thinking to social good. Using examples from the field, the articles highlights how the methodology is used by non-profits as well.

Brown, Tim and Roger Martin. “Design for Action.” *Harvard Business Review* (Sept 2015): 56-64. Addressing the challenge of scaling a new offering, Brown and Martin explain intervention design. It highlights the importance of prototyping the new offering with users for feedback to better understand how the user will interact with the offering. This allows for tweaks and changes to the offering so that it best meets the user needs.

10. Mechanisms: Making It Work
In Getting Beyond Better, Martin and Osberg lay out key mechanisms by which social entrepreneurs can affect change. These readings make explicit different ways to think about these underlying mechanisms.


The Business Model Canvas highlights the many components of a business that need to work together. Understanding what these parts are will help students think through the variety of areas where mechanisms can be used.


In this article, Brown puts forth the argument that we need to think about what makes a new idea possible, in addition to the idea itself.

11. Scaling Social Solutions
These readings focus on scaling in general, as well as highlighting challenges in scaling solutions to wicked problems. Scaling is the final stage of the approach social entrepreneurs take to create large-scale change.


Sutton, and Rao, both professors and researchers at Stanford University, use case studies and business theory to explore how to successfully scale an idea or enterprise.


Dees and Anderson, lecturer and leader in the non-profit sector, focus on scaling the impact of an idea. They offer readers possible mechanisms to scale social impact.


Fabricant, principal and founder of the Design Impact Group, highlights four challenges with scaling design solutions to wicked problems.

12. Social Impact Measurement
These readings explore the ideas, strengths and challenges of social impact measurement and social return on investment.


Brooks, New York Times journalist, discusses why people are drawn to working in spaces that are doing social good. He observes how government is too rigid to bring about change and how markets produce inequality.
### (12. Social Impact Measurement cont’d)

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emerson, Jed with Mark Cabaj. “Social Return on Investment.” <em>Making Waves.</em> Vol. 11, No. 2. Pages: 10-14.</td>
<td>This article provides an overview and short case study of Social Return on Investment (SROI). It also discusses how an SROI study can help an organization seek out investment (or in the case of non-profits, funding).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arvidson, Malin and all. “Briefing Paper: The ambitions and challenges of SROI.” Third Sector Research Centre. Dec 2010. Web.</td>
<td>Exploring both social impact measurement and social return on investment, this paper discusses the challenges with the methodologies. In a world where we look for objective measures of impact, both process include significant human judgment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fujiwara, Daniel. “The Seven Principle Problems of SROI.” <em>SIMETRICA.</em> 11 Aug 2015. Web.</td>
<td>These principles are a community-led attempt to institute standards for how SROI is conducted. This reading gives insight into how those working with Social Return on Investment would like the field to develop.</td>
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