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

## Part II: Paths to 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.


### 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.*

Rivenburgh, Diana. The New Corporates Facts of Life. United States of America: American Management Association, 2014. Pages 37-62. 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.


(3: Who We Are: Mindsets and Mental Models cont’d)


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.*


Collins, Jim. *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great*. Colorado, 2005. This supplementary reading to *Good to Great*, 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.

Johnson, Mark W., Clay M. Christensen and Henning Kagermann. “Reinventing Your Business Model.” *Harvard Business Review* (December 2008): 50-59. 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.
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


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.

  Human-centered design relies on a deep understanding of end users—the people who will eventually use the product, service or system. In this chapter, Brown of IDEO, outlines why designers use ethnographic research to drive their understanding and insights.

  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.

  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.

  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.

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.

  Lafley, executive chairman of Procter and Gamble, and Martin outline the five interconnecting questions a business must answer to develop a strategy. Their first question focuses on a company’s aspiration.

  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.
(8. Aspirations for a Better World cont’d)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greene, Maxine. <em>Releasing the Imagination</em>. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Wiley Imprint, 1995. Pages 17-31.</th>
<th>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.</th>
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<td>Rottenberg, Sarah and Isabel O’Meara. “The Art of Looking.” <em>Rotman on Design</em>. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013. Pages 172-177.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>King, Martin Luther. “I Have a Dream.” Web.</td>
<td>King, a leader of the American Civil Rights Movement, articulated his new vision for the world.</td>
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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 mechanism by which social entrepreneurs can affect change. These readings make explicit different ways to think about these underlying mechanisms.

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<th>Reading</th>
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<td>Osterwalder, Alexander and Yves Pigneur. <em>Business Model Generation</em>. New Jersey: Wiley, 2010.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown, Tim. “From Blueprint to Genetic Code: The Merits of Evolutionary Approach to Design.” <em>Rotman on Design</em>. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013. Pages 66-71.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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### 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.

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### 12. Social Impact Measurement

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

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(12. Social Impact Measurement cont’d)

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Mulgan, advisor and professor, offers an overview on the challenges associated with measuring social value.

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).

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.

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.