



Department of Dance and Theatre
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

FALL 2026

Arts Entrepreneurship

DANC 3400.001

Tuesdays & Thursdays: 3:55 PM - 5:15 PM

Location: DATH 127

Instructor: Emi Matsushita

Email: emi.matsushita@unt.edu

DATH Office Phone: 940-565-1121

Office hours: By appointment. Zoom or in-person (in DATH 103J)

Course Description:

This course grounds students in the mindsets, practices, and skills of entrepreneurship, including brand strategy, business structure, pricing, marketing, and funding, while guiding them through the self-discovery work that gives those skills direction and purpose. Students move through four connected stages: WHO (self-discovery), WHAT (audience, problem, and offer), WHY (mission and purpose), and HOW (business strategy, planning, and execution). The course builds toward a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) and a small-scale validation test of an offer (as a product or service). The semester culminates in a formal pitch to a panel of business faculty and/or industry professionals, presenting the offer, the strategy behind it, and evidence from the test, and laying the foundation for a future launch. The course is 3 credit hours.

Course Materials:

No required reading. Supplemental readings will be assigned and provided by the instructor as the course proceeds.

Required Materials:

-Notepad/Journal (standard 8 x 11 size or 7.5 × 9.75) and writing utensil for note-taking, record keeping, and self-reflection throughout the semester (**NOT digital**).

Recommended Materials:

-laptop/tablet (*computers will typically be available for use*)

Course Objectives:

- Identify personal strengths, values, and working style using validated self-assessment tools.
- Determine a target audience and the problem they face, and translate one's artistic identity into an offer whose value to that audience is clearly defined.
- Develop a mission-driven rationale (WHY) that grounds a creative venture in purposeful ROI (not just income).
- Apply core business principles (brand strategy, business structure, pricing, marketing, and funding) to a real creative offer.
- Write a S.M.A.R.T goal & build an actionable, working-backward roadmap toward it.
- Design and run a small real-world validation test (MVP) of an offer, and use the results as evidence.
- Deliver a professional, evidence-grounded pitch to industry evaluators, laying the groundwork for a future launch.
- Practice resilience, reflection, and consistent habit-building as professional skills.

Classroom Etiquette & Student Expectations:

- Create a Safe Space for Ideas: Students will share unfinished work, personal reflections, and early-stage business ideas, both with the instructor and with peers.

Feedback should be honest but never dismissive. This course treats entrepreneurship as an iterative process; being unpolished is part of development.

- Be Prepared: Students should bring required materials (readings, drafts, laptop/notebook as needed) and completed assignments/pre-work before class. This is a discussion and workshop based course, and unprepared students slow down their own progress while impacting the rest of the class. **Cell phones should be silenced and put away** during lecture, discussion, and presentations unless being used for an approved in-class activity.
- Arrive on Time: Group work, peer feedback, and in-class workshops depend on full participation from the start of class. Late arrivals disrupt group formation and discussion flow. *See tardy policy below.*
- No Food or Drink: Water bottles are encouraged; no food, gum, or other drinks.
- Stay Open-Minded: Students are expected to share unfinished ideas, receive feedback, and revise their work throughout the semester. Active participation in discussions and group work, and support of peers, is required. This course builds toward a group-informed individual pitch, and the quality of the final outcome depends on genuine engagement in class.
- Stay Informed: Students must check email and Canvas regularly to remain aware of updates, announcements, and important course information.
- Uphold Professionalism: Students must conduct themselves professionally in all interactions; using clear, respectful language in person and via email.
- Group Work & Accountability: Students are expected to contribute equally, communicate proactively about availability, and respect teammates' time and ideas. Unequal participation should be raised with the instructor early.
- Academic Integrity: All work should reflect each student's own thinking and effort. AI tool use must be cited and consistent with course policy [link]. Plagiarism will be addressed per university policy.
- Device Use: Laptops/tablets are permitted for coursework. Non-course browsing during class is distracting to oneself & others.
- Idea Ownership & Confidentiality: Students will share original concepts throughout the semester, including at the final pitch. Classmates' ideas are not to be used,

shared outside class, or claimed as one's own.

- If any issues arise, the instructor may call on the student to remedy the situation immediately or in extreme cases, may be asked to leave class. Continued disregard for expectations will require a collaborative solution.
-

Course Evaluation Procedures:

Engagement & Preparedness (15% of final grade)

This category reflects consistent engagement with the course through specific actions graded on a submitted/complete basis:

- Attendance (see *Attendance Policy*)
- Completion of reading responses or discussion board posts
- Submission of feedback forms (peer or self)
- Completion of in-class reflection prompts, when assigned

Out-of-Class Assignments (25% of final grade)

These assignments extend classroom learning and include research, readings, self-assessments, and independent drafting tied to the coursework. This category also includes development of the MVP and its small-scale validation test, students will design and run a real-world test of their offer throughout the semester, gathering evidence and feedback that will later be presented as part of the final pitch. Class time will be provided to support this work, but development and execution may also happen outside class.

Submission Guidelines: All assignments must be submitted by stated deadlines and in the required format (Canvas, email, or in person, as specified).

Midterm Project: Entrepreneur Case Study & Teach-Back (20% of final grade)

Around the midpoint of the term, each student will research an entrepreneur, founder, or industry figure they admire, follow, or draw inspiration from (this may include online creators/influencers). Students will:

- Research the entrepreneur's story, business model, and key decisions

- Extract specific, applicable lessons from their "playbook"
- Present the entrepreneur's journey to the class
- Design and lead a short activity or lesson that teaches one learned principle to the class

Grading is individual and weighted toward the quality of research, clarity of the lessons extracted, and the effectiveness of the taught activity. A short written summary (with sources cited in APA formatting) will be submitted alongside the presentation.

Final Project: Pitch Presentation & Reflection Paper (30% of final grade)

In place of a final exam, students deliver a formal pitch to a panel of business faculty and/or industry professionals, presenting their offer, the strategy behind it, and evidence from their MVP validation test.

This component includes two parts:

1. **Pitch Presentation** — a professional, evidence-grounded pitch of the offer, audience, problem solved, and strategy, incorporating results from the MVP validation test as supporting evidence.
2. **Reflection Paper** — a written reflection outlining lessons learned throughout the semester, how the offer could be developed further, and next steps toward a possible future launch.

Further details on format and rubric will be provided in class and on Canvas.

Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities will be posted on Canvas throughout the semester. These may include attending entrepreneurship or industry events or talks, interviewing a working creative entrepreneur, or taking steps toward actively developing and nurturing one's own business. Some of these opportunities can also serve as makeup for missed in-class assignments (see *Alternative Assignments*).

Grading Breakdown	Grade Weight (%)		Grading Scale	
Engagement & Preparedness: attendance, responses/discussion posts, feedback forms, reflection prompts	15%		100-90%	A
Out of Class Assignments: research, readings, self-assessments, and other work including MVP development and validation testing	30%		89-80%	B
Midterm Project: Entrepreneur Case Study & Teach-back	25%		79-70%	C
Final Project: Pitch Presentation & Reflection Paper	30%		69-60%	D
TOTAL:	100%		Below 60%	F

**Students are advised to retain all graded work throughout the semester to address any grading discrepancies. Grades and progress can be monitored on Canvas.*

Late Work, Makeup Work, and Alternative Assignment Policy:

NO late work is accepted. However, a 24-hour grace period applies to most assignments; submissions after this period will **not** be graded—even if one minute late. Technical issues are not valid excuses for missing a deadline. If there are issues with submissions via Canvas, students may email work directly to the instructor within the grace period. Partial submissions earn partial credit, which is preferable to no submission.

Exceptions may be granted for extenuating circumstances if the student contacts the instructor within one week and provides valid documentation aligned with UNT Policy 06.039 on excused absences. Acceptable documentation includes notes from doctors, school officials, coaches, or family members. Alternatively, students may seek assistance from the Dean of Students, who will communicate directly with the instructor to verify and support the student's case.

★ **Make up Assignments-** Missed assignments, specifically in-class work, generally cannot be made up. Within one week of the missed class, students must contact the instructor with a proposed remedial plan (**This is not simply a notice that class or an assignment was missed*). In most cases, the accepted plan is an alternative assignment, typically an extra

credit task, submitted directly to the instructor via email or Canvas message within one week of the original due date. **Completion of an extra credit assignment for makeup purposes does not result in additional points beyond the original assignment's value.*

Attendance Policy:

- Students are fully responsible for attending all mandatory in-person components and adhering to syllabus policies. A “no questions asked” absence policy is in place; documentation is not required for missing class.
- Due to the critical role of participation in this collaborative course, attendance is essential and more strictly enforced than in typical university courses.
- Attendance will be recorded by roll call or sign-in sheets; falsifying attendance by signing in for others is prohibited.
- Attendance at the **Art Boost conference is mandatory** and is considered an integral part of the learning objectives achieved in the course.
- Each student is allowed **four absences**. A fifth absence results in a 20% reduction of the overall grade (e.g., 80% becomes 60%). A sixth absence results in **failure** of the course. Opportunities to make up absences *may* be provided throughout the term. *Note: Absences will automatically be excused if in alignment with UNT Policy 06.039.*
- Students absent from class are responsible for independently learning missed material and proposing a remedial plan to the instructor. Make-up points for missed in-class assignments require communication with the instructor **within one week** of absence (*see syllabus policy for make up assignment procedures*).

Tardiness & Early Departures Policy:

- Students must arrive on time; tardiness over 10 minutes will be documented and counted against them.
- Early departures are generally not permitted.
- **Three** tardies or early departures equal **one absence** and may lower the final grade (*see Attendance Policy*).

Cheating/Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism are strictly prohibited. Students caught engaging in these behaviors will receive a failing grade for the assignment and may be removed from the course.

Academic dishonesty policies also cover falsifying attendance or misrepresenting work, in accordance with university regulations.

Academic Honesty Statement

Scholastic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, and collusion, violates UNT's Honor Code, as outlined in the [UNT policy handbook](#). Cheating is unauthorized use of materials or assistance; plagiarism is using another's work without acknowledgment; collusion is unauthorized collaboration. Consequences may include a failing grade on the assignment, failure of the course, or suspension.

Student Submission Standards

Students must submit high-quality writing that demonstrates critical thinking and clear communication, using proper grammar, sentence structure, and course vocabulary, with APA citation for assignments that require it. Academic dishonesty will be handled per [UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity](#).

AI Usage

Students must submit original ideas in their own voice. AI is not permitted to draft a submission but may be used to edit and refine it. Original content should make up approximately 80% of the work, with AI assistance limited to 20%. Original ideas, critical analysis, and creativity will be rewarded. When AI is used with any personal or identifying content (e.g., journal-based assignments), use only UNT-approved tools (Microsoft Copilot, UNiTyAI, or Canvas AI). Intellectual honesty is assumed unless there is reasonable doubt; violations will be addressed per the academic integrity standards above.

Course Calendar FALL 2026

Weekly Schedule

Wk	Unit / Focus	Session 1	Session 2
1 (8/18-8/20)	WHO	Welcome & syllabus overview. Why self-knowledge is the foundation of an artistic business. Assign personality/strengths assessments.	Personality/strengths assessments lab: Gene Keys + DISC (in class or homework)

Wk	Unit / Focus	Session 1	Session 2
2 (8/25-8/27)	WHO	Debrief assessments in small groups Adjectives exercise: write 3 words for yourself. Ask 3-5 others (hw)	"Who Am I as an Artist-Entrepreneur" workshop: synthesize self + others' adjectives into a working identity statement; map skills beyond performance (teaching, choreography, directing, coaching, marketing, content creation, grant writing).
3 (9/1-9/3)	WHAT	101 Things share-out: dreams, goals, bucket-list mapping in small groups. Curating My Ideal Life workshop: vision-boarding the life for business should support.	"Discover Your Gifts" workshop: strengths inventory; translate strengths into possible business directions. Conference prep.
4 (9/8-9/10)	NO REGULAR CLASS: Art Boost conference (9/11 & 9/12) mandatory attendance		
5 (9/15-9/17)	WHAT	Identifying Limiting Beliefs + Freedom Metric exercise; group processing circle. Midterm Project Prep/Discussion	Business Ideation Activity: 10 reflective prompts, partner exchange; identify recurring passions, skills, and pain points; sketch three Problem / Solution / Target Audience concepts.
6 (9/22-9/24)	WHAT	NO CLASS: Creatives Future - TBD <i>Independent Asst:</i> Ideal Client Avatar workshop: building a concrete profile of that idea's target audience.	Crafting Your Mission Statement: guided writing using the Passion / Impact / Strengths / Legacy prompts. share-out & partner-feedback circles (clarity, authenticity, resonant language).
7 (9/29-10/1)	WHY	Mission statement share-out & partner-feedback circles (clarity, authenticity, resonant language). Preview midterm expectations.	Midterm Project Prep (Flex day)
8 (10/6-10/8)	MIDTERM PROJECT	Midterm Presentations, Group A Case Study & Teach-Back	Midterm Presentations, Group B Case Study & Teach-Back
9 (10/13-10/15)	NO CLASS: self-administered break		
10 (10/20-10/22)	HOW	SMART Goals workshop + the SWAY Test for narrowing to one goal. Roadmap building lab: working backward from the goal to concrete action steps.	Roadmap refinement + peer roadmap swap and feedback. Business Breakdown Review: consolidating WHO/WHAT/WHY/HOW into a one-page snapshot.
11 (10-27-10/29)	STRATEGY	Creating Your Unique Brand: name, visual identity, artistic voice, and business structure basics (LLC, sole proprietorship, taxes).	Pricing & value: market-rate vs. value-based pricing for performing artists.
12 (11/3-11/5)	STRATEGY	Get Yourself Out There: building an online presence (social media, website/portfolio, content strategy).	Making Money From Your Art: multiple income streams (teaching, online courses, commissions, sponsorships, wellness services) + Funding Your Journey (grants, fellowships, residencies, crowdfunding).
13 (11/10-11/12)	VALIDATE (MVP)	Design a small-scale MVP validation test for the offer: the first real-world test of the business (one workshop, one week of tracked content, one real client conversation, etc.).	Run the test of MVP (NO CLASS?)

Wk	Unit / Focus	Session 1	Session 2
14 (11/17-11/19)	VALIDATE (MVP) PITCH PREP	Gather real feedback from MVP test. "Make It Last" check-in: normalize fear/imposter syndrome, burnout risk, and the need for a support system when reality talks back.	NO CLASS Debrief with classmates (optional). Prep for PITCH.
15 (11/23-11/29)	THANKSGIVING BREAK! NO CLASS		
16 (12/1-12/3)	PITCH PREP & FINAL	Dress-rehearsal pitch presentations. Structured peer critique; final polish of pitch materials and delivery	FINAL PITCH: formal presentation to a panel of business faculty and/or industry professionals.
17 (12/8-12/10)	FINAL	Reflection & Forward Intention: biggest lessons learned, 3-month goal-setting, course wrap up	

*****Syllabus & Schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.***

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity (Policy 06.003)

The University of North Texas promotes the integrity of learning and embraces the core values of trust and honesty. Academic integrity is based on educational principles and procedures that protect the rights of all participants in the educational process and validate the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the University. In the investigation and resolution of allegations of student academic dishonesty, the University's actions are intended to be corrective, educationally sound, fundamentally fair, and based on reliable evidence.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities (ODA Statement) (Policy 16.001)

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students needing a reasonable academic accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the student will request their letter of accommodation, and ODA will provide faculty with the accommodation letter via email to begin a private discussion regarding the student's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 04.008, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's Code of Student Conduct (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward email. (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

Student Course Evaluation (SPOT)

Student feedback is important to help improve the quality of instruction and student experience in their courses. The SPOT (Student Perceptions of Teaching) survey allows students to submit confidential feedback on their experiences. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org)

with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

Technical Requirements/Assistance:

If you ever have any issues with the technical systems needed to access course resources, correspondences, or for assignment submissions. Please contact the instructor and also the UNT Help Desk: <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm> or through email: helpdesk@unt.edu. Phone: 940.565-2324 In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Code of Conduct (Policy 07.012):

The University of North Texas is deeply committed to advancing educational excellence and preparing students to become thoughtful, engaged citizens of a diverse, global community. The University has established the Code of Student Conduct to promote the wellbeing, honor and dignity of all who live, learn and work in our educational community. The Code of Student Conduct is intended to foster a safe environment conducive to learning and development, as well as to hold students accountable through an educational process that balances the interests of individual students with the interests of the University. Students and student groups are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates respect for the rights and property of others and upholds the integrity and values of the University community.

Note: Portions of this syllabus were drafted with the assistance of AI tools. All content has been reviewed, verified, and finalized by the instructor, who takes full responsibility for its accuracy.

This course is a working studio for building a business. The self-leadership required to run an artistic enterprise (accountability, follow-through, professionalism) is also required to succeed in this course. This contract asks students to take the same ownership of their learning that they will be asked to take of their business.

Own the Learning Environment

- Engage with respect, empathy, and professionalism in all class interactions.
- Contribute to a collaborative environment where classmates can share ideas, pitches, and works in progress without fear of judgment.
- Give and receive feedback professionally. Peer critique is a core entrepreneurial skill.

Come Prepared

- **Check Canvas daily.** Bring required materials and completed assignments to class.
- Follow the late work and makeup work policies in the syllabus.
- **Consult the syllabus before reaching out with queries;** most policies are already detailed there. **Knowing and following them is the student's responsibility.*
- Arrive on time and ready to engage. Devices are put away during class.

Classroom and Professional Etiquette

- **No food, drink, or chewing gum in MAC LAB.** Water bottles are welcome.
- Treat classwork with the **professionalism** of a client meeting or industry pitch.
- Students are **allotted 4 absences**. Additional absences affect the course grade (see *Attendance Policy*). See UNT Policy 06.039 for excused absences.
- **Art Boost conference attendance is mandatory** (see Attendance Policy).
- Contact the instructor before a small issue becomes a larger one.

Communication

- Check email and Canvas regularly.
- Uphold professionalism in all communications, in person and in writing, consistent with industry standards.

Behavior and Consequences

The instructor may address issues as they arise, which in extreme cases may include asking a student to leave class. If expectations are repeatedly not met, the student will work with the instructor on a collaborative solution.

By signing this contract, I acknowledge that I have read, reviewed, AND understood the expectations & guidelines listed above and the respective policies detailed in the syllabus. **I understand it is my responsibility — not the instructor's — to know and abide by these policies for the duration of the course.** I agree to uphold these standards as a foundation for the self-leadership this course builds, and to help create a professional environment that supports learning for myself and my classmates.

Student Name: _____ Student Signature: _____

Date: _____