



## Testing Innovation Opportunities and Organizational Readiness ESM 233, Spring 2025

Class: W 9:30-10:45 am  
Dean's Conference Room (DCR)

Instructor: Emily Cotter  
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### Course Description

ESM 233 is designed for students to gain experience testing a business model innovation that integrates ESG or sustainability factors. In this practicum, students will continue exploring an innovation idea for a specific company, identified in ESM 231, and test their business model hypotheses to reduce the risk and uncertainty of the business idea. Working on a team with an industry advisor, students will track their work on the "Innovation Project Scorecard" to assess strategic fit, risk reduction and financial potential. In addition, students will determine sustainability impact as the business model evolves.

Teams will de-risk their business idea by going out into the real world, talking to customers and collecting evidence. In an iterative process, teams will go back and forth between designing and testing their idea. The insights gained from this testing will help them make evidence-based business model decisions. Students will also conduct research to understand the corporate culture at the specific company and create a culture map to assess the company's leadership support, organizational design, and innovation practices to determine innovation readiness.

### Course Objectives

- Gain practical experience testing and de-risking a business idea, using the "Business Model Canvas" and "Innovation Project Scorecard."
- Develop analytical and critical thinking skills through the process of testing a business idea that integrates ESG or sustainability factors.
- Assess innovation readiness and learn how a company's existing culture can enable or block innovation.

### Course Software

Box – File Sharing Service  
Canvas – Learning Management System  
Slack – Messaging Application

### Required Reading

Harvard Business Publishing Coursepack

Cases are listed in the schedule below. See course entitled “Testing Innovation Opportunities (ESM 233, S25)” on Harvard Business Publishing site at:

<https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1283089>

All the readings are listed under the Harvard course entitled “Testing Innovation Opportunities (ESM 233, S25).” Each Harvard reading costs \$4.50-8.75. The total approximate cost for the coursepack is \$22.25 (paid directly to Harvard Business Publishing).

*All other required reading will be made available via download on Canvas.*

### Optional Reading

The Invincible Company

Alexander Osterwalder, Yves Pigneur, Fred Etienne and Alan Smith

<https://www.strategyzer.com/books/the-invincible-company>

Testing Business Ideas

David J. Bland and Alex Osterwalder

<https://www.strategyzer.com/books/testing-business-ideas-david-j-bland>

### Course Assessment

Assessment	Individual Contribution	Project/Team Contribution
Attendance and Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class Attendance</li> <li>In-Class Discussions</li> <li>In-Class Labs</li> <li>In-Class Presentations</li> </ul>	300 points (15%)	
Innovation Project:		
Sprint 1 Progress Report		200 points (10%)
Sprint 1 Presentation		200 points (10%)
Sprint 2 Progress Report		200 points (10%)
Interview Summaries	400 points (20%)	
Final Presentation		300 points (15%)
Final Culture Map		200 points (10%)
Final Project Scorecard		200 points (10%)
TOTAL	700 points (35%)	1,300 points (65%)

GRAND TOTAL 2,000 points (100%)

### Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to attend every class. Attendance and participation will account for 15% of your grade (max. 300 points). Participation is evaluated in several ways. Obviously, participation is correlated with attendance. It is impossible to earn participation points if a student is not in class. Students remain responsible for submitting work due even if absent. Students should e-mail the instructor prior to any missed class. Students remain responsible for the material covered and assignments given during an absence. Attendance at all class sessions is critical to the learning process and the participation component of the course. Innovation is a collaborative and interactive process. Innovators find

opportunities, adapt, and improve themselves by listening and learning from others. Please come to class prepared to participate in the day's activities.

The deadline is at the beginning of class (i.e., 9:30 am) on the due date listed for each assignment, unless otherwise instructed. Assignments submitted after the deadline but within 24 hours will lose 5% of the total points; after that, an additional 5% for each day that the assignment is late.

### **Innovation Project**

Working on an Innovation Project team, students will continue their research on a specific company with an industry advisor. Teams will work collaboratively to test their business idea and track their progress towards assessing strategic fit, risk reduction and financial potential. Innovation Project Teams should be comprised of three to six people. Teams are encouraged to select a Project Manager who will be responsible for helping the team perform at its highest level. This involves removing any impediments to progress, facilitating meetings, and making sure the team is organized and working efficiently during each sprint. Each team will have a private channel on Slack for communication and collaboration.

During the quarter, students will conduct research in two "sprints," as follows:

	<u>Sprint Period</u>	<u>Sprint Length</u>	<u>Presentation Date</u>
Sprint 1:	4/16/25 to 5/6/25	3 weeks	5/7/25
Sprint 2:	5/7/25 to 6/3/25	4 weeks	6/4/25*

*\*The Innovation Project Final Presentation will be given to a panel of business leaders, innovators, and investors at the end of Spring Quarter.*

The goal of these sprints is to "get out of the building" and talk to industry experts or potential customers face-to-face (or via Zoom). Students should set milestones for each sprint (e.g., interview 5 industry experts and 5 potential customers during Sprint 1). During each sprint, teams should aim to interview at least 10-15 industry experts and/or potential customers. The required minimum for each student will be 3 interviews per sprint. On each presentation day, students will report what they learned through their research.

### **Description of Course Assignments**

#### Interview Summaries

Students will demonstrate their analytical skills and their ability to perform qualitative research through interviews with industry/sustainability experts, stakeholders or potential customers. Each student is required to participate in and submit Interview Summaries for at least 6 interviews over the six-week project.

An interview summary should be submitted for each interview conducted by the team. It is a brief report of the key insights from an interview, not a full interview transcript (e.g., transcribed interview from Zoom). Be sure to list all students who participated as interviewees. Examples will be posted on Canvas.

Interview Summaries will be submitted by students on Canvas. Students should try to spread out interviews over the six-week project and strive for at least 3 interviews in Sprint 1. Interview summaries must be completed by 8:30 AM on Wed 6/4/25 for grading purposes. Interview Summaries will account for 20% of your grade (max. 400 points).

### Progress Reports

At the end of each sprint, a Progress Report will be submitted by each team/project. The Progress Report will state the research focus and goals for the reported sprint, then summarize what was learned through experiments, research and testing, including the team's key takeaways. The report should discuss any progress made on the Innovation Project Scorecard. For further instructions, see "Progress Report Guidelines" on Canvas.

A progress report for Sprint 1 must be completed by 9:30 AM on Wed 5/7/25. This Progress Report will account for 10% of your grade (max. 200 points). These points will be the same for each team member.

A progress report for Sprint 2 must be completed by 8:30 AM on Wed 6/4/25. This Progress Report will account for 10% of your grade (max. 200 points). These points will be the same for each team member.

### Presentations

Each team will give one Sprint Presentation in class on Wed 5/7/25 and one Final Presentation to an expert panel on Wed 6/4/25. The Final Presentation will be judged by a panel of experts (business leaders, innovators, and investors). Specific guidelines for the Sprint Presentation and Final Presentation will be posted on Canvas.

A soft copy of the Sprint Presentation must be uploaded on Canvas by 9:30 AM on Wed 5/7/25. The Sprint Presentation will account for 10% of your grade (max. 200 points). These points will be the same for each team member.

A soft copy of the Final Presentation must be uploaded on Canvas by 8:30 AM on Wed 6/4/25. The Final Presentation will account for 15% of your grade (max. 300 points). These points will be the same for each team member.

Please use the following format for submission of your team's presentations:

Sprint Presentation\_(Team Name)

Final Presentation\_(Team Name)

### Final Culture Map

At the end of this course, each team will submit a Final Culture Map. Specific guidelines for the Final Culture Map will be posted on Canvas. A Final Culture Map must be completed by 9:30 AM on Wed 6/11/25.

This Final Culture Map will account for 10% of your grade (max. 200 points). These points will be the same for each team member.

### Final Innovation Project Scorecard

At the end of this course, each team will submit a Final Innovation Project Scorecard. Specific guidelines for the Final Innovation Project Scorecard will be posted on Canvas. A Final Innovation Project Scorecard must be completed by 9:30 AM on Wed 6/11/25.

This Final Innovation Project Scorecard will account for 10% of your grade (max. 200 points). These points will be the same for each team member.