

**University of North Carolina at Charlotte**  
**MBAD 6305 – Entrepreneurship & Uncertainty**  
**Section: U90 – Spring 2020**

**Professor:** Dr. Torsten M. Pieper **Office:** Friday 244B  
**Time:** Thursdays 5.30 – 8.15 PM **Room:** City 1102  
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**Office Hours:**

Before and after class. Please contact me in advance to schedule an appointment.

**Course Description:**

Entrepreneurs work in contexts where they cannot control what ultimately occurs. Competition, environmental dynamism, random events, and other unforeseen circumstances create conditions of uncertainty. Uncertainty can be worrisome, but it can also be exciting and motivating, and provide access to untapped opportunities – when approached with the right mindset.

What is generally taught in a traditional business school curriculum, is how to figure out problems and determine a specific outcome in a linear fashion when relevant parameters are known and/or can be controlled. However, these strategies are typically less effective (and sometimes even misleading) under conditions of uncertainty, incomplete information, and chaos. By synthesizing the latest insights from business and military domains, this course will provide an understanding of strategies for dealing with uncertainty and chaos, enabling individuals, teams and organizations to respond decisively to rapid shifts in the environment and to ultimately become successful disruptors themselves.

As means to increase students’ self-confidence and mental fortitude for uncertain contexts, this course seeks to present students with conditions of uncertainty and complexity. This course will involve different approaches, from engaged learning exercises, individual and team projects, to interactions with actual entrepreneurs. Students will be required to undertake these tasks without guidance, and feedback will be based on effort, outcome, and mentality during the tasks. Tasks will not be specified until one week prior to their due date.

**Course Objectives:**

Based on the entrepreneurial experiences in dealing with uncertainty, students should:

- Understand the process through which to diagnose uncertain contexts;
- Understand how to present a plan for deriving a solution to their uncertainty;
- Develop a mentality for the inherent risks associated with uncertain contexts;
- Learn how to persist and remain tenacious in tough situations.

**Course Material:**

Articles and other reading materials as assigned by the professor.

**Recommended Readings (non-mandatory):**

Richards, C. *Certain to Win: The Strategy of John Boyd, Applied to Business*. Xlibris Corp., 2004. ISBN-13: 978-1413453768.

Coram, R. *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War*. Back Bay Books, 2004. ISBN-13: 978-0316796880.

**Recommended Daily Readings:**

Business Week, Financial Times, The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, or other reliable business journals/magazines

**Instructional Method:**

This class is a seminar course involving a combination of lectures, assigned readings, learning exercises, and class discussions. In general, a class will consist of five key components:

1. Class preparation involving reading and other assignments;
2. An in-depth discussion of a case, situation or readings;
3. Engaged learning exercises and group/individual activities;
4. Application of the key ideas to other contexts and situations, often using recent examples and case insights;
5. Visits by external guest speakers.

**Attendance and Tardiness Policy:**

Class attendance is a critical component of learning. Therefore, you are expected to attend and participate fully in all scheduled class meetings. It is considered essential, and your grade will be affected by your absences. ***This class has a mandatory attendance policy.*** If you are required to participate in official university-sponsored or work-related activity you should receive an excused absence if you provide PRIOR NOTIFICATION of the planned absence to the instructor with written documentation signed by the official in charge of the activity. You will be required to submit assignments due during that class period before the planned absence.

**You will be allowed only one unexcused absence.** Two unexcused absences will drop your final grade by 10 percentage points. Three unexcused absences drop the final grade by 20 percentage points, etc. Excuses must be official – letter from doctor, job interview confirmation letter, employer's note etc. and must be presented no later than one week following the class period in which you were absent. Please do not ask for exceptions. If it is not critical for your health or life, you should be in class. Learning in this course is heavily based on the classes themselves.

Tardiness is not welcomed. If your tardiness causes a disruption, you will be docked points for it. Pay attention in class. Texting or surfing your computer is forbidden. Electronics use is only permitted when explicitly asked for by the professor. Inattention and indiscreet eating are also not appropriate. Cell phones must be turned off before entering the classroom.

### Student Assignments and Grade Allocation:

Students have to perform various assignments and exercises and assess their performance and understanding of the exercise upon concluding the exercise. The students' assessment should discuss their initial plans, how and why changes occurred to their plans as the students enacted them, the challenges faced by students in performing the exercises and how and why the students sought to deal with the challenges, and how the students ultimately arrived at a solution. At the end of the course, each student will conduct an interview with the professor (or a team of professors), involving an assessment of the student's self-awareness, confidence, and mental fortitude for dealing with uncertainty.

### Grade Composition

Contribution	25 %
Assignments and Exercises	50 %
Final Interview	25 %
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100 %</b>

For all written assignments, presentations and deliverables, the following evaluation scheme will be used:

Assessment	Quality of Work
100 - 89.5 points	Exceptionally thorough and well done (choice of words, organization, presentation etc.). Ideas are exceptionally substantive and provide major insights. Exceptionally well researched and well argued. Arguments are presented in an exceptionally persuasive manner. Superior quality of written and/or spoken expression.
89 - 79.5 points	Thorough and well presented, shows good preparation and organization. Ideas are substantive and provide substantial insights. Well researched and well argued. Arguments are presented in a persuasive manner. Meets expectations in terms of the quality of written and/or spoken expression in a senior level, capstone course.
79 - 69.5 points	Less thorough and shows less adequate preparation and organization. Ideas are less substantive and provide few insights. Superficially (or not at all) researched and lack of logical arguments. Positions are less persuasive (as applicable). Does not meet expectations in terms of the quality of written and/or spoken expression in a senior level, capstone course.
69 and less points	Lack of preparation and organization overall. Ideas are not substantive and provide no insights. No supporting research and total lack of logical arguments. Positions are not persuasive (as applicable). Does not meet expectations in terms of the quality of written and/or spoken expression for university studies.
0	Not submitted or not submitted before the due date and time.

**Extra Credit Opportunities:**

Since UNC Charlotte is a research institution, faculty members sometimes conduct research involving student surveys. If such is the case this semester, students can earn bonus points by completing all of these surveys. My colleagues will provide a list of those students who provide useful input (such as those students who complete the entire survey). Those students will subsequently receive bonus points.

**Grades:**

Final grades will be based on the following breakdown:

- A:** 100-89.5%
- B:** 89-79.5%
- C:** 79-69.5%
- D:** 69-59.5%
- F:** 59 and below

**CATT Statement:**

All core courses in The Belk College of Business Administration are committed to fulfilling one or more of four major competency areas identified by the letters CATT: Communication and Technology Skills; Adaptability to Change, Globalization, and Diversity; Teamwork and Leadership; and Thinking and Problem Solving. In the Department of Management, MGMT 3280 is targeted at two of these learning outcomes: 1) Teamwork and Leadership and 2) Thinking and Problem Solving. The purpose of this course is to help students: function effectively as a team leader; to understand group dynamics; to think independently; to apply, articulate, and evaluate problem-solving processes; to recognize, employ, and integrate frameworks from all business disciplines in order to respond to opportunities and solve problems; and to cover ethical, global, and political issues in business.

**Course Policies:**

1. **Orderly and Productive Classroom Conduct.** This class will be conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Your active participation in class discussions as well as online is highly encouraged. The orderly questioning of the ideas of others, including the instructor, is welcome. However, the instructor will exercise her/his responsibility to manage the discussions so that ideas and argument can proceed in an orderly fashion.
2. **Classroom Expectations.** This syllabus contains the policies and expectations that I have established for this course. Please read the entire syllabus carefully before continuing in this course. These policies and expectations are intended to create a productive learning atmosphere for all students. Students who fail to abide by these policies and expectations, risk losing the opportunity to participate further in the course. The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the instructors. Notice of such changes will be by announcement in class and/or by changes to this syllabus posted on the course Canvas website.
3. **Materials.** All materials submitted as part of course requirements or assignments become the property of the instructor. Students desiring to retain copies of their work should make such copies before turning in their materials.
4. **Electronic Devices in Classroom.** Use of computing, communication, or other devices

during the class time **for purposes other than those required for the class** is strictly prohibited and may result in being asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period. This includes the use of laptops, lab computers, phones or other devices for Internet browsing, game playing, reading news, emailing, texting, chatting, IM, Facebook, or other activities not required for the class. Students using their electronic devices for note taking and class-related purposes should be prepared to share their notes and records with the instructor upon request. **Cellular phones and other communication devices must be silenced AND stored away before entering class.**

5. **Under no circumstances** will students be permitted to spend their class time working on assignments for other classes, checking e-mail, surfing the Web, texting, or engaging in activities not related to the class. Attempts to engage in such behavior will be reflected in lower grades and may lead to removal from the course.
6. **Grade Appeals.** If a student believes that the grade that they received on an assignment or an exam was in error or unfair, the student can appeal to the professor in writing within seven (7) calendar days after the grades are posted. The appeal should clearly state the reasons why the grade is believed to be unfair or the nature of the error. Overdue appeals will not be considered.
7. **Use of Tobacco and e-Vapor Products in Class.** The use of tobacco and e-Vapor products in class is prohibited. If a student uses any form of tobacco or e-Vapor product during class, the student may be asked to leave the class.

#### **University Policies:**

##### **8. Academic Integrity**

University regulations will be strictly enforced in all cases of **academic irregularities, cheating or plagiarism** or any variations thereof. Students assume full responsibility for the content and integrity of the academic work they submit. The guiding principle of academic integrity shall be that a student's submitted work, examinations, reports, and projects must be that of the student's own work.

All UNCC students have the responsibility to be familiar with and to observe the requirements of **The UNCC Code of Student Academic Integrity** (see the Catalog and also <http://integrity.uncc.edu>). This code forbids cheating, fabrication or falsification of information, multiple submission of academic work, plagiarism of written materials and software projects, abuse of academic materials (such as Library books on reserve), and **complicity in academic dishonesty** (helping others to violate the code). The Code reads as follows:

*The UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity governs the responsibility of students to maintain integrity in academic work, defines violations of the standards, describes procedures for handling alleged violations of the standards, describes procedures for handling alleged violations of the standards, and lists applicable penalties. The following conduct is prohibited in that Code as violating those standards:*

- A. Cheating. Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids, or other devices in any academic exercise. This definition includes unauthorized communication of information during an academic exercise.*
- B. Fabrication and Falsification. Intentional and unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in any academic exercise. Falsification is a matter of altering information, while fabrication is a matter of inventing or counterfeiting*

*information for use in any academic exercise.*

*C. Multiple Submission. The submission of substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without authorization.*

*D. Plagiarism. Intentionally or knowingly presenting the work or another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging is when the ideas, information, etc. is common knowledge.*

*E. Abuse of Academic Materials. Intentionally or knowingly destroying, stealing, or making inaccessible library or other academic resource material.*

*F. Complicity in Academic Dishonesty. Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.*

Violations of the Code of Student Academic Integrity, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Definitions and examples of plagiarism are set forth in the Code. The Code is available from the Dean of Students Office or online at: <http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html> (also see <http://integrity.uncc.edu/>). All UNC Charlotte students are expected to be familiar with the Code and to conduct themselves in accord with these requirements. To clarify, any academic dishonesty can result in a grade of "Fail" (F) for the course. Academic dishonesty also pertains to violating the "rules" of this syllabus. Anyone violating this policy will receive an "F" for the course.

Any further specific requirements or permission regarding academic integrity in this course will be stated by the instructor, and are also binding on the students in this course.

Students are expected to **report cases of academic dishonesty** they become aware of to the course instructor who is responsible for dealing with them.

9. **Disability and Impairment Accommodations.** UNC Charlotte is committed to access to education. If you have a disability and need academic accommodations, please provide a letter of accommodation from Disability Services early in the semester. For more information on accommodations, contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) at 704-687-0040 or visit their office in Fretwell 230.
10. **Diversity.** The Belk College of Business strives to create an inclusive academic climate in which the dignity of all individuals is respected and maintained. Therefore, we celebrate diversity that includes, but is not limited to ability/disability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.
11. **Incomplete Grades.** Students will not be given an incomplete grade in the course without sound reason and documented evidence as described in the Student Handbook. In any case, for a student to receive an Incomplete, he or she must be passing the course and must have completed a significant portion of the course.
12. **Course Changes.** The instructor reserves the right to make any necessary changes to the course content, schedule, and policies. Changes will be announced in class and will also be posted online and communicated via email.
13. **Religious Accommodations.** The instructor will observe University Policy 409 (<https://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-409>) on matters of religious accommodation. Please note that the procedure prescribed by this policy requires a notice to the instructor prior to the census date of the semester (typically the tenth day of instruction).

14. **Severe Weather.** Students will be responsible for any academic work which they miss due to absences caused by severe weather conditions. It is the individual student's responsibility to take the initiative to make up any missed class work.

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