

STEPHEN M. ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

COURSE NUMBER: ES 640  
Fall A 2019  
Room B3560

Instructor: Stewart Thornhill, Ph.D.  
Phone: (734) 615-4421  
E-mail: [thorstew@umich.edu](mailto:thorstew@umich.edu)

## Building Healthy Businesses

### COURSE SUMMARY

Many opportunities exist, and more are emerging daily, for value creation in the “wellness space.” By better understanding gaps in their ecosystem, students will be able to identify and pursue potential new ventures. And, by studying the various attributes of wellness, participants will also learn best practices for enhancing personal health and well being.

While time constraints may continue to create challenges, knowledge about best practices for personal physical health and psychological resilience will increase the odds that participants will be able to successfully cope with personal and professional stresses, particularly those associated with the launch and growth of new ventures.

Students participating in the course will:

- Learn about opportunities to create and capture value in the health, wellness, and personal resiliency sectors
- Develop tools and methods to implement practices in their workplaces that contribute to wellness and resiliency among all employees
- Apply wellness tools and practices in their own lives

### ELIGIBILITY & CONTEXT

This course is open to graduate students of the Ross School of Business. Students from other Schools and Colleges at the University of Michigan will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### COURSE MATERIALS

This course does not use a single textbook. Instead, we will rely on a set readings contained in the course pack. Supplemental materials will be posted on Canvas.

**Course Pack** – To purchase a copy of the course pack, check Canvas for the announcement of when it is ready and how to buy. It contains required readings that you should read prior to each class session. These readings consist of carefully selected magazine/journal articles and excerpts from books, and case studies. These materials are copyrighted by their respective authors/publishers, so the price of the course pack covers any applicable licensing fees as well as printing costs.

STEPHEN M. ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

**COURSE WEBSITE**

Course materials will be posted on Canvas

**LEARNING GOALS**

1. Students will learn how to adapt and apply relevant business concepts and frameworks to “real life” situations and contexts
2. Students will learn to experiment with different approaches to personal and/or organizational development
3. Students will begin to apply methods, processes and tools that foster idea generation and creative thinking with individuals and groups

**GRADING STRUCTURE**

**Grading:**

In-Class Contribution	25%
Team Presentation	15%
Team Project	35%
Reflection Paper	25%

**Contribution:** It is expected that you will be present and prepared for every class and share your views in the classroom discussion. You may be cold called on occasion, usually to try to bring in the views of those who are less vocal. If you must miss class it is your responsibility to arrange with your classmates for briefings, to pick-up hand-outs, etc. No make-up work is required for a missed class – however, you should understand that repeated absence will affect your contribution grade. In general contributions are graded in an ascending order from good chip shots to quite substantial comments. Challenge and debate are important to discovery and understanding, and we all appreciate the willingness of individuals to engage in such activities with their classmates and faculty. Using air time involves an obligation to actually contribute; none of us have time for recitations of case facts, bland summaries of prior discussion, and so on, that are devoid of implications, i.e., they don't pass the “so-what” test. Also, be aware that I cannot assess quality unless there is some quantity. Negative contribution grades can also be assessed for comments that significantly lower the tone of the discussion.

**Team Project:** In groups of 3-5, choose a focal organization and evaluate its wellness initiatives. Issues you may wish to consider include the scope and breadth of the program(s), the role of wellness in their employee value proposition, and the business case for the initiative(s) (e.g., can costs and benefits be quantified or estimated?). Final reports should not include 2000 words. Exhibits and appendices are not included in the word count, but the body of the report should stand alone if the attachments were removed.

Presentations of approximately 10 minutes will be scheduled for our penultimate class.

**Reflection:** Participants are required to write a reflection paper The paper is to be based on a combination of the readings you have done for each topic – both required and those you have read voluntarily – the knowledge gained from the class discussion on that topic, and reflections on the significance of the topic for you personally, and/or for your organization.

STEPHEN M. ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Weekly Class Structure

Each week, we will focus on a different core aspect of wellness (sleep, nutrition, etc.). Within each session, we will examine the topic from three perspectives: (1) What business opportunities exist or can be created? (2) How can organizational practices be aligned to support the goals of employee wellness? and (3) How can students incorporate best practices into their own lives? Case studies and guest speakers will supplement the readings listed below. Check Canvas regularly for updates.

Week 1

Course Introduction / What is Wellness? What is Entrepreneurship?

During this session, we will explore a few fundamental questions such as “What is Wellness?” and “Where are the new venture opportunities in the wellness space?” This will enable us to establish shared language and understanding that will serve as a foundation for the cases and discussions that follow. We’ll also begin to examine how we discover opportunities and how business goals can be aligned with personal goals and values.

Readings:

Smash the Wellness Industry	NY Times	08-Jun-19	Knoll
Health Facts Aren't Enough. Should Persuasion Become a Priority	NY Times	22-Jul-19	Carroll
Four Simple Words to Help You Live Well	NY Times	02-Jan-19	Parker-Pope
What's All This About Journaling?	NY Times	25-Oct-18	Hayley Phelan
Ten Dirty Little Secrets of Successful Entrepreneurs	Ivey 9B12TF03	01-Nov-12	Thornhill

Week 2

Sleep

Growing research has implicated sleep deprivation in underperformance and health issues across a range of settings and behaviors. Sleep products include hardware (beds and beddings), sleep aids (cPAP) and an enormous array of pharmaceuticals and OTC supplements. Today’s case will feature a sleep-inducing supplement that is positioned as a counterpart to the lucrative energy potions sector (e.g., 5-Hour Energy).

**STEPHEN M. ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**

**Readings:**

How a Bad Night's Sleep Birthed the Sound Conditioner	Atlantic	23-Jun-19	Hagood
How to Sleep	Atlantic	Jan/Feb 17	Hamblin
Why Do We Need to Sleep?	Atlantic	03-Jan-18	Greenwood
The \$25 Nap Is Worth It	NY Times	01-Dec-18	Marche
The Simplest Way to Drastically Improve Your Life: More Sleep	NY Times	28-Oct-18	Herrera
Why the Lean Start-Up Changes Everything	HBR R1305C	01-May-13	Blank

Personal Development Assignment: Sleep Journal  
Guest Speaker Dr. Deirdre Conroy

**Week 3**

**Nutrition**

Food and nutrition are among the largest global industries. The sector is constantly evolving as science continues to contribute to our understanding of how nutrition (or lack thereof) contributes to general health, wellness and longevity. Business opportunities run the spectrum from farming to food production to distribution to grocery and restaurant operations. Today's case – Foodstand – allows us to explore a new entry into the mobile app market for people seeking healthy eating options.

**Readings:**

Eat Food. All the Time. Mostly Junk.	Atlantic	June 2019	Shapiro
New Nutrition Study Changes Nothing	Atlantic	01-Sep-17	Hamblin
The Fundamental Link Between Body Weight and the Immune System	Atlantic	02-Aug-19	Hamblin
Science Compared Every Diet, and the Winner is Real Food	Atlantic	24-Mar-14	Hamblin
How Agriculture Controls Nutrition Guidelines	Atlantic	08-Oct-15	Hamblin
When We Eat, or Don't Eat, May Be Critical for Health	NY Times	24-Jul-18	O'Connor
Beating the Odds When You Launch a New Venture	HBR R1005G	01-May-10	Gilbert & Eyring

Personal Development Assignment: Food Journal  
Guest Speaker Rachna Govani

**STEPHEN M. ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**

**Week 4**

**Movement and Activity**

This week will focus on the physical aspects of personal wellness, ranging from how we work to how we can create ventures that serve the physically active community.

**Case Study: CrossFit (A)**

**Readings:**

Kettlebell Lifting, Handstand Walking and a Lot of Mystery	NY Times	02-Aug-19	Mather
How Exercising at Work Saves Money	Atlantic	21-May-13	Gounder
The Consumerist Church of Fitness Classes	Atlantic	04-Dec-17	Romanoff
You Don't Need to Walk 10,000 Steps Every Day	Atlantic	31-May-19	Mull
What Entrepreneurs Get Wrong	HBR	01-May-13	Onyemah et al.

Personal Development Assignment: Activity Journal

**Week 5**

**Mental Health**

Mental health is a broad and diverse topic that encompasses such disorders as anxiety and depression as well as positive states including flourishing and flow. We will touch down on topics that have particular relevance to students and employers, while also considering how value can be created for others.

**Readings:**

For Depression, Prescribing Exercise Before Medication	Atlantic	24-Mar-14	Khazan
There is High Demand for On-campus Mental Health Programs	Atlantic	19-Oct-16	Kwai
Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?	Atlantic	01-Sep-17	Twenge
Frustrated at Work? That Might Just Lead to Your Next Breakthrough	NY Times	08-Mar-19	Grant

Personal Development Assignment: Gratitude Journal and/or Daily Meditation

STEPHEN M. ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Week 6

Synthesis and Team Presentations

During our final session, we will integrate learnings from the weekly topic sessions. Teams will have the opportunity to present the results of their project work

COURSE ADMINISTRATION

**Academic Honor Code**

Personal integrity and professionalism are fundamental values of the Ross Business School community. This course will be conducted in strict conformity with the Academic Honor Code. The Code and related procedures can be found here: [Ross Community Values](#). The site also contains comprehensive information on how to be sure that you have not plagiarized the work of others. Claimed ignorance of the Code and related information appearing on the site will be viewed as irrelevant should a violation take place.

**Disability Accommodations**

The University of Michigan is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Students wishing to receive testing accommodations must register with the University of Michigan [Services for Students with Disabilities \(SSD\)](#) office as soon as possible. Students must then submit their Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form online as early as possible, **but no later than two weeks prior to the first test or quiz for which accommodations are requested**. Accommodations arrangements are not guaranteed for students who submit their VISA form with less than two weeks' notice.

Requests must be sent using the [Ross Accommodations Request Form](#) and must include a scanned or photographed copy of the VISA form. This form only needs to be submitted once during your academic career with Ross unless your accommodations eligibility expires.

In rare cases, the need for an accommodation arises after the two week deadline has passed (example: a broken wrist). In these cases, students should still contact SSD and the Ross Accommodations Coordinator. However, due to logistical constraints, we cannot guarantee that an accommodation can be made after the two week deadline has passed.

Questions can be directed to the Ross Accommodations Coordinator at [RossAccommodationsCoordinator@umich.edu](mailto:RossAccommodationsCoordinator@umich.edu).

**STEPHEN M. ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**

**Suggested Additional Reading**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>
How Sleep Deprivation Decays the Mind and Body	Atlantic	30-Dec-12	Seth Maxon
A New Theory Linking Sleep and Creativity	Atlantic	15-May-18	Ed Yong
Building Better Athletes with More Sleep	Atlantic	04-Nov-14	Mark McClusky
The Purpose of Sleep? To Forget, Scientists Say	NYT	02-Feb-17	Carl Zimmer
Sleep deprivation: Impact on Cognitive Performance	Neuropsych Dis Treat.	2007; 3(5)	Alhola & Polo-Kantola
Deep into Sleep	Harvard Magazine	Jul-Aug 2005	C. Lambert
Sleep Loss and Divergent Thinking Ability	Sleep	1988, 11(6)	J.A. Horne
Tainted Pork, Ill Consumers and an Investigation Thwarted	NYT	04-Aug-19	Matt Richtel
Hydration Angst	NYT	24-Jun-06	Gretchen Reylonds
Study of the Day: Mild Dehydration Alters Mood, Makes Thinking Hard	Atlantic	22-Feb-12	Hans Villarica
The Politics of Drinking Water	Atlantic	30-Dec-14	Anya Groner
The Vitamin Myth: Why We Think We Need Supplements	Atlantic	19-Jul-13	Paul Offit
Why 'Drink More Water'?	Atlantic	12-Sep-13	James Hamblin
You Call It Starvation. I Call It Biohacking	NYT	11-Jul-19	Thomas Stackpole
Exercise is ADHD Medication	Atlantic	29-Sep-14	James Hamblin
The Joy of Exercising in Moderation	Atlantic	07-Jul-14	Samuel Sattin
A First Aid Class for Mental Health	Atlantic	12-Feb-16	Megan Morris
Why So Many Americans Are Turning to Buddhism	Atlantic	07-Mar-19	Olga Khazan
How Well Do We Really Understand Mental Illness?	Atlantic	05-Aug-13	Hope Reese
Need Extra Time on Tests? It Helps to Have Cash	NYT	30-Jun-19	Goldstein & Patel
Since 2008, Insurers Have Been Required by Law to Cover Mental Health—Why Many Still Don't	Atlantic	11-Mar-13	Judith Graham
The Physiological Causes of Mental Illness	Atlantic	Jul/Aug 2016	Velasquez-Manoff
How Health and Lifestyle Choices Can Change Your Genetic Make-Up	Atlantic	06-Nov-11	Alice Walton
The Difference Between Happiness and Joy	NYT	07-May-19	David Brooks
A 20-Minute Exercise You Can Do Anywhere	NYT	12-Feb-19	Marissa Meltzer
Why Trying New Things Is So Hard to Do	NYT	01-Dec-17	S. Mullainathan
Get Happy: Four Well-Being Workouts	NYT	05-Apr-17	Julie Scelfo