DESCRIPTION:

What makes a food business special, yet similar to business in other industries? In this course we focus on the concepts of experientiality, authenticity and credence, to understand the tools food shares with other businesses, as well as the unique context of food businesses. We utilise case studies and meaningful stories of food products, brands and services, told by real people: entrepreneurs and chefs who are “on fire” to bring to the market a unique and superior proposition.

The course includes a module on sustainability focused on feminist ethics and the inequalities that have historically existed in the food world.

Food is where it’s at; there have never been more market opportunities to create, explore and ride the contemporary trends that make food such a special business field.

CREDITS: 3
CONTACT HOURS: 45
INSTRUCTOR: Fernando Alegría, MBA (fernando.alegria@ub.edu)
LENGUAGE OF PRESENTATION: English
PREREQUISITES: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- Lectures: you will be presented with relevant theory and examples, with motivating content to cement the learning of the different topics.
- Review of case studies, videos, podcasts and readings: in order to have some meaningful in-class discussions about real stories.
- Class discussions and debates: exchange of ideas and cultural perspectives.
- Teamwork and student presentations: students will prepare a food-related business plan and present their work, covering the main subjects discussed throughout the course. Presentations should promote debate and discussion, aiming to enhance collective and individual learning.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- Class preparation and participation: based on attendance and quality participation stemming from using knowledge acquired through reading and analysis. 20%
- Midterm exam: in-class test on business concepts explained in class and as applied to the discussions of business cases, videos and readings. The exam will include a combination of multiple choice and short essay-type answers. 25%
- Final team project and oral presentation: student teams will research and analyze a food business venture (existing or future), for which they will prepare a business plan. Each group will choose their own research topic and obtain agreement with the professor. Some topics and contacts might be suggested by the professor, but students are free to look for alternatives. Proposals for running the project individually will also be considered. Students will be graded on their command of the issue acquired through research, readings, analysis and discussions. 30%
• **Final exam:** in-class test on business concepts explained in class and as applied to the discussions of business cases, videos, readings, guest speaker and podcasts. The exam will include a combination of multiple choice and short essay-type answers. **25%**

**GRADING:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>85-89.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>80-84.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>75-79.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-74.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>65-69.9</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>65-64.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>50-54.9</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>0-49.9</td>
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**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Identify, summarize and describe relevant business theories, in relation to food business situations.
- Analyze “real world” case studies involving food business issues.
- Provide recommendations for action on the case studies.
- Prepare a business plan for a food venture.
- Use relevant concepts to explain and discuss typical management decisions regarding the business of food.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Attendance is mandatory for all classes, including any outside activities. Any exams, tests, presentations, or other work missed due to student absences can only be rescheduled in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. If a student misses more than three classes in any course 3 percentage points will be deducted from the final grade for every additional absence. Seven absences in any course will result in a failing grade.

**CONTENT:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session No.</th>
<th>Detailed Description:</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1:</td>
<td>- Introduction to the course.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Setting the food business scene.</td>
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<td>- Objectives of the course and the use of resources: cases/articles/videos/podcasts/etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 2:</td>
<td>- The common areas shared with other industries and the specificities of the food businesses.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- The marketing concept and entrepreneurship in food.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Session 3: The food customer as the starting point. | The concepts of experientiality and authenticity  
| Session 4: The concept of experientiality | Experiential considerations for food.  
- The symbolic, hedonic (pleasure) and aesthetic aspects of consumption.  
| Session 5: Segmentation and positioning | Segmentation and the specific way of dividing up the population into relevant groups of food consumers.  
| Session 7: the branding of food | A brand as more than only a name, a set of all the “touch points” where the food product or service interacts with customers.  
| Session 8: the branding of food (cont.) | The most relevant branding dimensions of a food business. | Anselmsson, Johan, and Niklas Lars Anders. "What Successful Branding Looks Like: a Managerial Perspective.” British food journal |
| Session 11: channel decisions or go-to-market strategy (cont.) | - The types of retailers - The private label phenomenon - The ubiquity of food. | The Aldi effect: how one discount supermarket transformed the way Britain shops [https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/mar/05/long-read-aldi-discount-supermarket-changed-britain-shopping](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/mar/05/long-read-aldi-discount-supermarket-changed-britain-shopping)  
### Session 13: Midterm Exam

**Session 14: business plan guidelines. Brand communication**
- Discussion of the Business Plan structure, for the end of term assignment.
- Advertising and promotion development.
- Educating the customer.


**Session 15: brand management and communication cont.**
- The customer’s journey
- The use of endorsement, as part of the marketing mix of a food business.
- The role of experts.


**When Does the Real Customer Journey Start?**

**Session 16: brand management and communication cont.**
- Key principles of food media planning.
- The increasing role of digital and social media.


**The Food Programme Podcast. BBC “How Instagram changed food”. [https://podcastaddict.com/episode/69508749](https://podcastaddict.com/episode/69508749) 2018.**

**Session 17: more on the Business Plan**
- Discussion of sample business plans.
- Expectations for the final project.

**Stroh, Patrick J. “Business Strategy: Plan, Execute, Win!” Chapter 8**
| Session 19: innovation in food cont. | - The product life cycle as a key model for understanding a business.  
| Session 20: food entrepreneurship | - How to start a “start-up”.
- The value proposition.
| Session 21: food entrepreneurship (cont.) | - Profitability and break-even analysis.
- The basics of financing a food business venture and company valuation.
| Session 22: food entrepreneurship cont. and start of business plan presentations | - Review of relevant experiences in entrepreneurship.
Session 23: Business plan presentations - Presentations of the business plans.

Session 24: Summary, review and wrap-up - Summary and course conclusions. - Review for the final exam.

Session 25: Final Exam

**REQUIRED READING:**

- O’Keefe, Michael and Andrew Fearne. “From commodity marketing to category management: Insights from the Waitrose category leadership program in fresh produce”. 


Other resources:
- The Food Programme. [https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qnx3](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qnx3) BBC

Recommended Readings:

INSTRUCTOR BIO:
Fernando Alegria, MBA. has extensive experience in the fields of marketing, sales, management and innovation, and has held positions of responsibility in consumer goods multinationals such as Procter & Gamble, SC Johnson Wax and Reckitt Benckiser. He has lived and worked in seven countries and some of his key assignments include: Marketing VP for Spain, Director of Global Marketing and Innovation based in London, Regional Marketing VP and Distributors’ Sales Manager for Scandinavia, Marketing Manager in Italy. In Barcelona he founded a small consulting firm where he has carried out work in a wide variety of fields. Because of his strong interest in food, he has consulted with an important South American agro-food conglomerate, but also with smaller food businesses in consumer sales and hospitality in Europe. Since 2015 he has been teaching Study Abroad in Barcelona. He obtained his B.A. in Business Administration at University of Lima (Peru) and holds an MBA from McGill University (Canada).