Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Developing a design/ art enterprise that treads lightly and adds to society in a positive way.

Looking back at my education leading to a career as an artist/maker, I wish there had been a course on the basics of making a living at it; a class that would at least have given the idea of what it would take to make it on my own as an artist and designer. This is that course.

Students who are considering their own design and art enterprise need to understand what that entails in order to be successful upon graduation. This course will give students the tools they need to pursue their own business. Throughout this course, student will be shown what it takes to be a successful entrepreneur through presentations, projects, field trips, and lecturers from visiting artist and design entrepreneurs. They will also learn to assess the social and environmental impacts of their trade as they develop a vision for their future ventures.

Summary:

This course will have two major areas of focus; drafting a business plan including; mission statement, business structure, target audience, market analysis, market strategy, and financing. These topics will be addressed through participative course presentations, visiting lecturers, and studio exercises. Students will design a product that fits their business plan and addresses both the environmental and social issues of its production. They will need to test the viability of the products marketability and production feasibility. There will be at least two field trips visiting maker spaces, shared studios and small-scale manufacturers. One trip to Des Moines and one to Minneapolis.

Course Objectives: (1) Introduce students to the various aspects of developing and running a design/ build business. (2) Develop a vision statement/ business plan. (3) Gain a basic understanding of the practical aspects of running a business; determining costs, managing taxes, insurance, contracts, etc. (4) Understand the importance of integrity, and intellectual property issues. (5) Learn how to work with clients. (6) Learn the importance of time management and organization. (7) Design a socially and environmentally conscious product. (8) Develop of a concept or what it’s like to be working artist though those who are currently making a living at it..

Course outcomes: Students will have (1) a draft of a business plan, including target audience, marketing strategy, promotion, startup costs, basic book keeping and goals. (2) a better understanding of the various ways to take a product to market, from ideation to final design, to the material choices and processes, to applying a cost to the product, to identifying their customers and developing marketing strategies. (3) a deeper appreciation and understanding of the term Sustainable Entrepreneurship and how to fold the philosophies into their enterprise. (4) far deeper understanding of what it takes to start and run their own business.