Module Overview

Humanity and the planet face escalating social, environmental, and economic challenges. Entrepreneurs are perceived to hold a particular role in innovating and bringing about societal change and many also believe that business has a pivotal role to play in shifting society towards a more sustainable future (Hall et al., 2010; Baumann-Pauly et al., 2013). In consideration of UCL’s Grand Challenges, especially cross-disciplinary working for Sustainable Cities, Human Wellbeing and Transformative Technology, the module will engage participants to address societal and humanity’s challenges while planning businesses for a more sustainable future.

Week One
- Contemporary societal challenges for a more sustainable future
- Technological aspects
- Human Wellbeing case study (visit to the UCL Centre for Behavioral Change/Digital Health Hub)

Week Two
- The role of business and entrepreneurs for a more sustainable future
- The circular economy and sustainability
- Sustainable Cities case study (excursion to Stratford, London 2012 Olympics site)

Week Three
- Business planning for societal challenges
- Funding sources
- Transformative Technology case study (excursion to Haringey’s Smart Homes Project)
Module Aims
The aim of this module is to focus on the relevance of business planning for societal challenges in the broadest possible sense. The module will train and develop the capacity of participants in sustainable business planning while addressing, with a series of relevant multi-disciplinary case studies, societal problems and the escalating social, environmental and economic challenges that humanity faces. The potential contribution of entrepreneurs to address societal challenges is disentangled beyond the traditional (i.e. ‘pre-sharing economy’) considerations of economic viability. The module therefore aims to address the former in particular in relation to the existing gap existing in entrepreneurial and start-uppers’ education and skills with respect to their important role and potential contribution to address contemporary societal challenges in their current as well as future business plans.

Teaching Methods
The module’s teaching methods include class based lectures, interactive seminars as well as excursions to sites for experiential learning relevant for prospective business planners for societal challenges. The latter can include examples of recent London based exemplary transformations combining cross-disciplinary perspectives and experiences relevant for the key themes of the Summer School programme. Reading lists will be available online via the UCL library site. Students will be directed towards class materials, further support and discussion forums on UCL’s virtual learning environment Moodle.

Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this module, students will:

- Be able to combine professional and academic perspectives in business planning
- Have developed an understanding of practical considerations in relation to societal challenges combining research, experiences and case studies
- Have explored how industry works at the interconnection between entrepreneurship, technology and societal challenges
- Have shared knowledge and discussed ideas with the instructor as well as built connections among participants

Assessment Methods
- Presentation (25%)
- Business Plan (75%)
Key Texts


Module Leader

In the past 15 years, Diego has taught, supervised and tutored more than 1,000 BSc, MSc and PhD students from around the world (both online and offline). He has taught business planning, project management, IT architecture/strategy, G-IS governance & management, business analysis tools & techniques. Dr Navarra also has experience as a programme leader and module coordinator in the fields of Business and Management, IT Strategy and Management, Global Business and Sustainable Management, Business Administration, Organizational Development, Public Sector Management and Research Methods (Qualitative & Quantitative), supervising & managing research projects, (re)developing curricula for eLearning in VLEs, producing course syllabi and designing evaluation methods together with colleagues and support staff.