

Lecturer, University of Michigan

- **Center for Entrepreneurship - College of Engineering** (Jan 2023-present)
- **Ross School of Business** (Sep 2024-present)

Current Courses:

ENTR 570: Creativity and Product Development

This course connects the importance of creativity and storytelling in product development, two key elements that are often overlooked. You'll discover the pivotal role they play in designing innovative products and how to harness them effectively. You'll learn techniques for developing your creativity and enhancing your communication skills while exploring and prototyping new product ideas. The course equips you with a deeper knowledge and understanding of the product development process, which will enable you to become a more efficient team player, problem solver, and leader. Creativity and storytelling will help you stand out in a changing business environment, where these are among the highest value skills. (Formerly ENTR 490.022/599.021)

ENTR 490.105: AI, Entrepreneurship and the Next Industrial Revolution

As Artificial Intelligence edges toward ubiquity, entrepreneurs and leaders from business and civil society are grappling with its profound implications for how we solve problems, how we work, and how we create value in the future economy. While AI has been evolving since the 1950's and has already seen a couple of boom-to-bust cycles, the current AI boom will have materially more impact than those before it, as the capabilities and scale of Large Language Models (LLMs) have fundamentally and forever changed the way we interact with information. We'll center our exploration around five themes:

1. Context: Historical examples of technology-driven disruption and a high-level understanding how AI works
2. Curiosity, Inquiry and the Unknown
3. Understanding Value Creation *and* Values
4. AI opportunities, challenges and societal needs
5. Ethical considerations and risks around AI

ENTR 490.104: Storytelling for Innovators

Creating something from nothing starts with a story—a narrative about a problem, why it matters, and how you'll solve it. Storytelling conveys your idea's value, inspiring customers, investors, and employees. This class will teach you that great storytelling isn't about flash, but about clarity, passion, and authenticity. Over seven weeks, you'll learn to craft compelling stories that drive change.

TO 448/548 + IOE 548: Integrated Product Development

An experiential, interdisciplinary 6-credit course that creates a competitive product development environment for students from Art & Design, Business, Engineering, Information and across the University. Teams combine their expertise to research, build, and launch new products that address a design challenge.

Prior Courses:

ENTR 390.102: Entrepreneurship in the Age of AI

This course is an opportunity to explore what AI does well, what humans do well, and what opportunities and risks emerge when you bring them together with an entrepreneurial mindset rooted in creativity, curiosity and experimentation. We'll use AI tools to develop a new product or business concept. We'll explore the ways in which AI can - and can't - accelerate or add real value to a project. We'll also consider how - or whether - AI could be incorporated into a startup's business model. As businesses and organizations rapidly create new AI roles and expect their leaders to understand AI, you'll gain hands-on experience to equip you for success in an evolving career landscape.

ENTR 411: Entrepreneurship Practicum

This hands-on practicum course immerses students in the development of their own ideas for new ventures through the exploration of problem spaces, customer discovery, entrepreneurial biases, and idea testing.

ENTR 411: Finding Your Venture

This course introduces a framework to help you design and pitch a new product or service in a startup-like environment. Students work in teams to build networks of supporters and collaborators interested in new opportunities, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset.

Principal, Sticky Lab (Feb 2020-present)

Advisory

Sticky Lab works with early-stage companies, community organizations and their leaders at the intersection of strategy, storytelling and leadership development. Experience includes work tech companies and tech-enabled businesses, online marketplaces, food supply chains, food security and access, sustainability, local economies, data science, new media, and community development.

Investing

Sticky Lab invests in early-stage startups, led by diverse founding teams, who are working to address climate change, improve health, and expand economic opportunity. We currently invest through syndicates and angel groups. Experience with deal flow, due diligence, investment terms, advising.

Advisory Board Member

- Michigan Founders Fund (Jan 2022-present)
- Planet Detroit (Oct 2021-present)

Mentor in Residence, VentureWell (May 2022-present)

- Ascend Energy and Mobility Accelerator - an intensive program that helps entrepreneurs bridge the gap between customer discovery and commercial launch. (Lead Instructor)
 - Aspire Climate Tech Accelerator - prepares startups for investor engagement. Investor-mentors work one-on-one with startups to simulate due diligence conversations and integrate feedback into deal room materials in real time. This program aims to prepare startups to raise equity investment.
 - The American-Made Solar Prize is designed to energize U.S. solar manufacturing. A program of the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the competition enables the rapid development of innovative solar solutions by providing resources and support to entrepreneurs as they transform concepts into early-stage prototypes ready for industry testing.
 - Innovate Egypt – support for academic research teams in the early stages of commercializing climate and health related technologies through the U.S. Department of State's Global Innovation through Science and Technology (GIST) initiative.
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Co-Founder & CEO, Saganworks (2017-2020)

Saganworks is an immersive knowledge management platform that works the way our brains work, tapping into the power of visual and spatial memory to organize, contextualize and make use of our digital knowledge.

Founder & CEO, Local Orbit (2010-2017)

Local Orbit is the supply chain management platform for people who are creating a new, connected food economy. Local Orbit enables institutions and restaurants to efficiently purchase from local farmers and food makers, while maintaining complete supply chain transparency. By enabling efficient, transparent, and decentralized supply chains, Local Orbit helps people build a more equitable and sustainable food system - and increasing market share for small and mid-size food producers.

Principal, Blockwork (2006-2012)

Blockwork focused on helping people without time or technology experience understand how online tools could support their business goals and processes. I developed affordable, manageable strategies to leverage social networks, blogs, user-created content and sharing services to tell stories, engage stakeholders, streamline collaboration, and increase operational efficiency.

Representative projects:

- Market & regulatory research and feasibility planning to establish a credit union for underbanked communities. (2008)
- Early planning and proposal writing for a viral community action project that raised over \$250,000 for Barack Obama in one minute. (2008)
- Developing a private online social network for an international arts organization. (2007)

Co-Artistic/Producing Director, Walk & Squawk Performance Project (1994–2006)

Walk & Squawk makes physical and visual theatre, focusing on imagination and collaboration, play and transformation. As co-founder I shared responsibility for setting the vision, programming, and growth. Responsibilities included strategic planning, program development, community engagement, partnership development, marketing, board relations, operations, hiring, financial management, and fundraising. I led the renovation of a vacant building in a Detroit Enterprise Zone into the Furniture Factory, a theater, gallery, and office space.

I also directed a multi-year arts and civic dialogue project that explored the paths made by people who walk across fields in South Africa and across vacant lots in Detroit – and what connects them. With a team of artists and community partners in the US and South Africa, the project reached over 15,000 people in both countries through performances, humanities events, public walks and conversations, voter registration drives, visual arts exhibits, poetry slams, music, and workshops at schools, universities, and churches.

Awards (selected)

- **PopTech** Social Innovation Fellow
- **Spirit of Entrepreneurship** Award - Great Lakes Entrepreneur Quest
- Crains Detroit Business - **40 Under 40**
- Support from the Rockefeller Foundation, New Generations Program (funded by the Duke and Mellon Foundations) and Africa Exchange (funded by the Ford Foundation)
- NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Directors
- Hopwood Award for Creative Writing (University of Michigan)

Additional Teaching (selected)

- Business Boot Camps for Local Food System Entrepreneurs (2014–2016)
- University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, Visiting Artist (4 extended residencies, 1997–2005)
- Workshops on walking, mapping, improvisation and physical theatre at schools, universities and community groups with young people, elders, women, artists and for businesses (1995–2006)
- Lecturer in English (Composition/Argumentative Writing), University of Michigan (1989–91)

Panels, Presentations & Publications (selected)

- Generative AI Tools - Friday Flash Talk on teaching with AI for University of Michigan Information & Technology Services Learning/Emerging Technology teams (April 2025)
- From Breaking Down the 4th Wall to Breaking into the 4th Dimension: An Entrepreneur's Journey – Tech Talk (Sep 2019)
- Keynote Panel Discussion on decision-making and risk with Daniel Kahneman (*Thinking, Fast and Slow*) - SummerCon (June 2018)
- Numerous panels, presentations and articles on local food systems, supply chains and new technologies including Cornell, PopTech, Seedstock, Food Tech Connect, School of Visual Arts/Design for Social Innovation, IACP, Local Food Association, National Good Food Network, Permaculture Voices, National Farm Viability Conference, California Small Farms Conference, Bon Appetech (2012–2017)
- Social Media: Concepts and Contexts for Activists, Detention Watch Network presentation (2007)
- Are They Speaking Our Language? What the next generation of the internet means to theatre artists and producers, Theatre Communications Group presentation (2006)
- The Walking Project, World Culturelink Conference presentation, Zagreb, Croatia (June 2005)
- *Desire Lines, Walking and Mapping Across Continents*, Community Arts Network (June 2005)
- *A Reversal of Intimacies: Vietnam Savors the Hybrid Flavors of French Rule, Ancient Chinese Tradition and Western Kitsch*, American Theatre (2004)

Education

- MFA, Playwriting, Columbia University
- BGS, University of Michigan