

Brainstorming to Bankrolling (aka The SURESM Program)

Spring 2026

GENB 7334 (12232)

Instructors: Dr. Saleha Khumawala and Dr. Esther Bailey, (with Senior Consultants)
Office: 325-A, and 325-B Melcher Hall (Office Hours by appointment)
Class: MONDAYS 6:00-9:00 p.m. in CEMO 101
Website: <http://www.bauer.uh.edu/cej>
Prerequisites: Bauer College students and students from other UH Colleges with a basic understanding of business or instructor approval.

This is a UNIQUE course with different requirements and benefits than most courses. You should READ THE WHOLE SYLLABUS as soon as you receive it so you can make an informed decision about if this course is right for you.

What is SURESM?

SURE (Stimulating Urban Renewal through Entrepreneurship) is an award-winning program, an experiential learning model that creates a unique ecosystem by partnering UH students with local entrepreneurs and business leaders. As a student, you'll become a consultant, and will develop human-centric skills you need to succeed while helping real business owners develop and grow their ventures.

What Makes This Course Different?

This course is different from most other courses because:

- All assignments involve working with real clients.
- You're not just a student - you're a consultant.
- There is NO textbook and there are NO exams.
- You get hands-on real-world experience you can add to your resume and LinkedIn.

Learning Objectives

In this course, you'll:

- Develop human-centric skills needed for the future of work
- Serve as a consultant for up to four real business owners.
- Apply and test business concepts in actual entrepreneurial settings.
- Create professional business documents.
- Network as you collaborate with industry mentors, entrepreneurs, and fellow students.

Grading and Course Expectations

Your grade in this course is determined by the quality of consulting you provide to your assigned entrepreneurs. We evaluate this through weekly assignments on EduSourced, our online learning platform.

Grade Breakdown

- 10% - Consultant Training Exercises
- 35% - Feedback Assignments
- 25% - Strategic Analysis
- 15% - Final Case Bundle
- 15% - Consultant Performance Score
- **Total: 100%**

Key Assignments

- **Consultant Training Exercises:** In class assignments and homework related to the first 3 weeks of class aka Consultant Training. These exercises are designed to familiarize you with SURE Methodology.
- **Feedback:** You'll review and comment on your entrepreneurs' work four times during the semester. Minimum requirement is 10 substantive comments per assignment.
- **Strategic Analysis:** A comprehensive research report for each business. You will submit a first draft for just ONE client, then receive feedback from an instructor on how to improve it. Then, you will submit drafts for all your assigned clients' businesses to receive feedback on how to improve those drafts. Then, after editing based on that feedback, you will submit your final draft for a grade at which point it will be visible to your clients for the first time.
- **Final Case Bundle:** Includes an Executive Summary, updated MVBP, two short case studies, and a debrief survey.
- **Consultant Performance Score:** Due to the importance of client work in this course, we give you a score on your overall performance that is regularly updated (see description below).

Attendance Policy

Attendance is crucial for this collaborative course. Penalties are as follows:

- First absence: No penalty
- Second and third absences: 5 points off final grade each
- Fourth absence and beyond: 10 points off final grade each
- Tardiness on a regular basis (>10 minutes late): Counts as 0.5 absence

Entrepreneur Engagement Requirement

The backbone of this course is the relationship you build with your entrepreneurs. A major requirement is that you must have at least one live conversation (phone or video call) with each of your entrepreneurs every week between classes. Failure to do so may result in a Negligence Penalty:

- 5 points off your grade if you miss live conversations with the same entrepreneur for two consecutive weeks without a valid reason.
- Valid Reasons: Entrepreneur illness, significant tardiness of entrepreneur, prior approval of instructor(s), documented earnest attempt to contact, or any of the valid excuses for an [excused absence according to the University of Houston Policy](#).

Consultant Performance Score

We evaluate your overall performance as a consultant. This holistic approach allows us to recognize your growth and impact throughout the semester. It also allows for you to focus on providing excellent client service in scenarios where the exact details of an assignment may not match up to the entrepreneur's needs.

Key points:

- You'll receive periodic feedback based on a comprehensive scale.
- Early performance can be improved; exceptional later work can boost your final score.
- The score reflects your work quality, class contributions, and entrepreneur engagement.
- This system simulates a real-world consulting environment.

Your Consultant Performance Score contributes to your final grade and represents:

- The quality and professionalism of your work
- Your effectiveness in supporting real entrepreneurs
- Your ability to apply academic knowledge in practical situations

These are the four potential scores you can receive:

- **Outstanding** Consultant – Score: **13-15** – Contributes positive ideas in class, contributes valuable Feedback to each entrepreneur's MVB, and reflects excellent preparation and organization with entrepreneurs. Ideas offered are always substantive; they provide one or more major insights as well as direction for their Entrepreneurs. Challenges are well substantiated and persuasively presented. Takes initiative to get materials and drive home lessons of class to their entrepreneurs. This person goes demonstrably above and beyond what is asked, and exceeds the level of service offered by that of their peers.
- **Good** Consultant – Score: **8-12** – Contributions in class and Feedback reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are substantive; they provide good insights and sometimes direction for the class. Feedback is well researched, thorough, and aligns with entrepreneur's goals while offering new suggestions. If this person were not assigned to their entrepreneurs, the quality of their business plans would be diminished.
- **Adequate** Consultant – Score: **3-7** – Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Feedback offered is sometimes substantial and provides generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for the entrepreneur. Strategic advice and questions are sometimes presented, fairly-well substantiated, and are sometimes useful. If this person were not assigned to the entrepreneur, the quality of their business plan would be diminished somewhat.

- **Inadequate** Consultant – Score: **0-2** – Contributions to the entrepreneur's MVBP or in-class time are distracting or adversarial, or reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom and provide few, if any, insights, and never a constructive direction for the entrepreneur. If this person were not assigned to the entrepreneur, their progress would improve. Alternatively, this person's effect on the entrepreneur is completely absent. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of their entrepreneur's business plan would not be diminished.

Remember, this course goes beyond traditional academic metrics. Your success is measured by the value you provide to your assigned entrepreneurs and your growth as a consultant. You are not just a consultant, you deliver results.

If you are ever confused or in doubt about how to succeed or what you're being measured on, it is your responsibility to promptly email the instructors.

Our Commitment to Your Success

At SURESM, we're dedicated to your growth and success. While our course policies may seem strict, they're designed to simulate a professional environment and prepare you for real-world consulting experiences. Below we outline what you hope to learn and why we have strict policies and how we support you.

Our Goal for You: Developing Human-Centric Skills

This course is designed to equip you with an entrepreneurial mindset—not by focusing on generating and launching your own business ideas, as many other courses already cover, but by preparing you for what comes next. Our hypothesis is that the right business ideas will come to you organically over time. When they do, you'll know how to capitalize on them, thanks to the hands-on experience you'll gain in this course. Through working directly with clients to start or grow their businesses, you'll practice the real-world skills necessary to turn ideas into impactful ventures.

More importantly, even if you never plan to start a business, this course will help you master essential human-centric skills that are critical in today's world. As artificial intelligence increasingly shapes the future of knowledge work, skills like empathy, critical thinking, leadership, persuasion, and goal-setting will set you apart. You'll learn how to:

- **Empathize** by putting yourself in others' shoes to better understand their needs.
- **Think critically** by analyzing issues from all angles and making the best decisions.
- **Lead** by setting objectives and guiding diverse teams toward collaborative success, even when their motivations differ.

In a rapidly changing world, your ability to work effectively with others will remain a constant. This course is designed to help you identify areas where your human-centric skills can improve and to give you the practice you need to strengthen them systematically through client work. By the end of this journey, you'll be better prepared to thrive in both entrepreneurial and professional environments.

Why We Have Strict Policies

Our attendance and engagement policies might seem demanding, but they're crucial for:

- Maintaining the integrity of the consultant-entrepreneur relationship.
- Ensuring consistent progress for your assigned entrepreneurs.

- Simulating the expectations of a professional consulting environment.
- Upholding UH's reputation in the community - we've served thousands of entrepreneurs and are often the face of UH for many in the local business ecosystem.
- Providing high-quality services to our entrepreneurs, who are investing their time and trust in this program.
- Allowing us to intervene and support you as needed - every case is different, and working with real people can be messy, so we want to be there to guide you through challenges.

Remember, real businesses are counting on your dedication and expertise, and your work reflects not just on you, but on the entire SURESM program and the University of Houston.

Senior Consultants: Your First Line of Support

Each of you will be assigned a Senior Consultant – a former student who excelled in this course and now serves as an adjunct professor. Your Senior Consultant is an ALLY as you work with your entrepreneurs.

Each Senior Consultant plays a vital role in your success by:

- Serving as your **primary point of contact** for questions, troubleshooting, and concerns.
- **Regularly reviewing your work** and providing constructive feedback (but, importantly NOT grading. Your grades all come from the Professors—the Senior Consultant is just to help you improve).
- Acting as a **bridge between you and the course professors**, escalating concerns and feedback when needed.
- Assisting your assigned entrepreneurs when you're unavailable or need support.
- **Coaching and supporting entrepreneurs** on how to navigate program expectations and respectfully address concerns with consultants.

Senior Consultants have an in-depth understanding of the program and are dedicated to your success. Leverage their experience and insights to overcome challenges and maximize your learning experience.

Key Expectations for Senior Consultants:

- Weekly check-ins with consultants to ensure alignment on expectations and quality of work.
- Constructive feedback on your work (WITHOUT directly assigning grades, as grading is the responsibility of professors and graders.)
- Facilitating collaboration by encouraging consultants and entrepreneurs to communicate effectively and problem-solve together.
- Acting as an ally to consultants and a resource for entrepreneurs, fostering a supportive environment for all.
- Ensuring all significant concerns, such as underperformance or conflict, are escalated to professors with clear documentation and proposed solutions.

We're Here for You

While we maintain high standards, we're also committed to your success. If you're struggling or need additional support:

1. Reach out to your Senior Consultant first
2. If needed, sure@uh.edu and it will go to both professors' email inboxes

We believe in your potential and are here to help you realize it. Our goal is to challenge you while providing the support you need to excel as a consultant and future business leader.

Course Schedule & Homework

Because of the number of guest speakers and mentors, the exact course schedule is not solidified until the semester begins. At that point, you will receive a handout called **Course Schedule with Homework**. Until then, this is a useful abbreviated version:

Dates	Class	Description
January 26, February 2, and February 9	Consultant Training	Students are trained in how the SURE Program works and how to succeed in providing client services. Entrepreneurs are not present.
February 16 through April 27 Spring Break March 16-22	All joint classes	Entrepreneurs join and attend each class with assigned consultants. There is a mix of group work and lecture where the consultants guide the entrepreneurs in writing their Minimum Viable Business Plan (MVBP).
May 4	Pitch and Resource Day	Entrepreneurs pitch to outside funders and other experts. (No money is exchanged—just a chance for exposures and to meet funders.) Attendance is mandatory for all consultants and entrepreneurs. Small Business Support Organizations present all the resources available for small businesses from the Eco-system in the City.
May 11 TBC (Required)	SURE Graduation Day	All consultants, entrepreneurs, supporters, and funders are invited with friends and families to the SURE Graduation Day to celebrate the end of the academic year.

Using EduSourced Platform

EduSourced is the primary platform for managing and tracking your work with entrepreneurs. It is your responsibility to regularly check EduSourced and stay updated on all assignments, communications, and deadlines.

Why EduSourced?

Unlike Canvas and other University of Houston tools, EduSourced is accessible to both students and entrepreneurs. This ensures seamless collaboration without the barriers of the university's single sign-on system.

Whenever possible, mirror deadlines will also be provided in Canvas to help you integrate them into your calendar, but EduSourced remains the authoritative source for all client-facing assignments and updates.

Your Responsibilities on EduSourced

Regular Checks: Make it a habit to check EduSourced before working with your entrepreneurs to ensure you are aligned on deadlines, requirements, and any recent updates.

Follow Assignment Guidelines: Each assignment will include instructions on what to do if your entrepreneur does not submit required work. Follow these steps diligently.

Demonstrate Your Effort: If an entrepreneur's missing work impacts your ability to complete an assignment:

- Document your contributions to the project.
- Record all reasonable attempts to obtain the entrepreneur's submission, including outreach efforts.
- Submit this documentation in lieu of leaving the assignment incomplete or turning in an empty submission.

For instance, if an entrepreneur doesn't turn in their work on time and you can't give feedback, you should submit a brief record of your text messages and phone calls to them, what you expect them to turn in and why they haven't turned anything in. You should also submit any notes or ideas you discussed with them. **Remember:** on EduSourced they'll be able to see what you submit, so keep it professional and upbeat, even if you're relaying that they are not turning in the work they're supposed to.

Other Important Policies

These are the important university and college policies relevant to this course.

UH Email

YOU MUST check and use your CougarNet email for communications related to this course. Faculty use the CougarNet email to respond to course-related inquiries such as grade queries or progress reports for reasons of FERPA. To access your CougarNet email, [login](#) to your Microsoft 365 account with your CougarNet credentials. Visit [University Information Technology \(UIT\)](#) for instructions on how to connect your CougarNet e-mail on a mobile device.

Syllabus Changes

Please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through *{specify how students will be notified of changes}*.

Withdrawal Policy

Last day to drop a course without hours counting towards the [Enrollment Cap for Texas Residents](#) is **Wednesday, February 4, 2026**.

Last day to drop a course or withdraw **without** receiving a grade is also **Wednesday, February 4, 2026**.

Last day to drop a course or withdraw with a “W” is **Wednesday, April 22, 2026**. You **should retain all documentation** of courses you have dropped.

Course Evaluations

The C. T. Bauer College of Business has a policy that requires all of its instructors to be evaluated by their students. The results of these evaluations are important to provide feedback to instructors on how their performance can be improved. In addition, these evaluations are carefully considered in promotion, salary adjustment, and other administrative decisions. Dr. Khumawala encourages students to provide informal feedback to her throughout the semester, as well formal feedback at the end of the semester.

Artificial Intelligence

AI tools may be used for brainstorming, proofreading, or basic research, similar to spell-check. However, all core work, ideas, and client interactions must be entirely your own. Disclose all AI usage in your work. The course aims to develop your skills through direct client experience, so over-reliance on AI is counterproductive. Failure to disclose AI use will be treated as academic dishonesty. This policy ensures both academic integrity and the development of essential professional skills.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

The University of Houston has a number of resources to support students’ mental health and overall wellness, including [CoogsCARE](#) and the [UH Go App](#). UH [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) offers 24/7 mental health support for all students, addressing various concerns like stress, college adjustment and sadness. CAPS provides individual and couples counseling, group therapy, workshops and connections to other support services on and off-campus. For assistance visit uh.edu/caps, call 713-743-5454, or visit a [Let’s Talk](#) location in-person or virtually. [Let’s Talk](#) are daily, informal confidential consultations with CAPS therapists where no appointment or paperwork is needed.

Need Support Now? If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call CAPS crisis support 24/7 at 713-743-5454, or the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: call or text [988](tel:988), or chat 988lifeline.org.

Title IX/Sexual Misconduct

Per the UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and state law and must report incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking) about which they become aware to the Title IX office. Please know there are places on campus where you can make a report in confidence. You can find more information about resources on the Title IX website at <https://uh.edu/equal-opportunity/title-ix-sexual-misconduct/resources/>.

Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids

The University of Houston is committed to providing an academic environment and educational programs that are accessible for its students. Any student with a disability who is experiencing barriers to learning, assessment or participation is encouraged to contact the Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center (Dart Center) to learn more about academic accommodations and support that may be available to them. Students seeking academic accommodations will need to register with the Dart Center as soon as possible to ensure timely implementation of approved accommodations. Please contact the Dart Center by visiting the website: <https://uh.edu/accessibility/> calling (713) 743-5400, or emailing jdcenter@Central.UH.EDU.

The [Student Health Center](#) offers a Psychiatry Clinic for enrolled UH students. Call 713-743-5149 during clinic hours, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to schedule an appointment.

The [A.D. Bruce Religion Center](#) offers spiritual support and a variety of programs centered on well-being.

The [Center for Student Advocacy and Community \(CSAC\)](#) is where you can go if you need help but don't know where to start. CSAC is a "home away from home" and serves as a [resource hub](#) to help you get the resources needed to support academic and personal success. Through our [Cougar Cupboard](#), all students can get up to 30 lbs of FREE groceries a week. Additionally, we provide 1:1 appointments to get you connected to on- and off-campus resources related to essential needs, safety and advocacy, and more. The [Cougar Closet](#) is a registered student organization advised by our office and offers free clothes to students so that all Coogs can feel good in their fit. We also host a series of cultural and community-based events that fosters social connection and helps the cougar community come closer together. Visit the CSAC homepage or follow us on Instagram: @uh_CSAC and @uhcupbrd. YOU belong here.

Women and Gender Resource Center

The mission of the [WGRC](#) is to advance the University of Houston and promote the success of all students, faculty, and staff through educating, empowering, and supporting the UH community. The WGRC suite is open to you. Stop by the office for a study space, to take a break, grab a snack, or check out one of the WGRC programs or resources. Stop by Student Center South room B12 (Basement floor near Starbucks and down the hall from Creation Station) from 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday.

Academic Honesty Policy

High ethical standards are critical to the integrity of any institution, and bear directly on the ultimate value of conferred degrees. All UH community members are expected to contribute to an atmosphere of the highest possible ethical standards. Maintaining such an atmosphere requires that any instances of academic dishonesty be recognized and addressed. The [UH Academic Honesty Policy](#) is designed to handle those instances with fairness to all parties involved: the students, the instructors, and the University itself. All students and faculty of the University of Houston are responsible for being familiar with this policy.

Excused Absence Policy

Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to

student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) and [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).

Recording of Class

Students **may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor.** If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with anyone without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

Security Escorts and Cougar Ride

UHPD continually works with the University community to make the campus a safe place to learn, work, and live. The security escort service is designed for the community members who have safety concerns and would like to have a Security Officer walk with them, for their safety, as they make their way across campus. Based on availability either a UHPD Security Officer or Police Officer will escort students, faculty, and staff to locations beginning and ending on campus. If you feel that you need a Security Officer to walk with you for your safety, please call [713-743-3333](tel:713-743-3333). Arrangements may be made for special needs.

Parking and Transportation Services also offers a late-night, on-demand shuttle service called "Cougar Ride" that provides rides to and from all on-campus shuttle stops, as well as the MD Anderson Library, Cougar Village/Moody Towers and the UH Technology Bridge. Rides can be requested through the UH Go app. Days and hours of operation can be found at <https://uh.edu/af-university-services/parking/cougar-ride/>.

WELCOME ABOARD!!

Any questions? Email: SURE@uh.edu