

BUS/DVST 461

International Microfinance

Semester: Winter 2015
Days: Tues/Thurs 8:15-9:30 am
Room: A2141

Number of credits: 3

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Office Hours: Mon/Thurs 1-3pm

This course will investigate the emerging field of microfinance - the provision of small loans and financial services to the poor – and its impact on addressing poverty in developing countries. Students will develop an understanding of a range of topics in the field, including: the role of credit in microenterprises, lending models, sustainability and best practices for microfinance institutions (MFIs), cultural factors and regional issues. Issues such as the role of profit, where microfinance fits in the overall picture of development and recent concerns raised about microfinance will be discussed.

At the conclusion of the course, students may have the opportunity to participate in an international field visit to see first-hand how the work of partner NGO organizations is impacting the lives of individuals in one or more countries in Africa. Participation in the field travel is optional and not compulsory for completion of the course

Expected Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the basic concepts of microfinance and the history of the industry
- Develop an understanding of the challenges clients face and why microfinance exists, from the perspective of the poor
- Understand some of the key measures associated with sustainability of microfinance institutions (MFIs) and the trend toward larger-scale commercialization
- Critically evaluate the issues associated with microlending such as lending models, interest rates, social collateral, cultural differences, government intervention, etc.
- Understand a variety of new products and services emerging in microfinance, many involving new technologies
- Improve personal skills in research, analysis, writing and presentation

First day of classes: January 7, 2015
Registration revision period: January 18, 2015
Last day to request revised examination: March 2, 2015
Last day to withdraw from course: March 20, 2015
Last day to apply for time extension for coursework: March 30, 2015
Last day of classes: April 10, 2015

Textbook: Ledgerwood, J. (ed.). (2013). *The New Microfinance Handbook*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank. You can also access on-line [here](#) (at no cost).

Evaluation:

This course offers a unique mix of theory and practice as students will have the opportunity to work on projects relating to current issues and microfinance programs in various regions of the world. The course will be primarily focused on reading, research and discussion, with only a small portion of the course evaluation being exam based.

The following is a summary of all evaluation methods and relative weights for the course:

Evaluation Method	Weight	Date Due
Quizzes – microfinance content	21%	See Course Schedule – 3 quizzes
Geography Quizzes	9%	See Course Schedule – 3 quizzes
MFI Funding Proposal	25%	March 3, 2015 – 9:00 a.m.
Research Report	30%	April 8, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.
Round Tables & Participation	15%	See Course Schedule re round tables

Course Requirements:

Note – individual assignment instructions will be provided throughout the term for all assignments. The following is a summary only.

Quizzes

Quizzes on the terminology and basic concepts covered in the readings and classes will take place throughout the course. There are no midterms or final exams in this course but a base level of knowledge is expected to be achieved which is the purpose of the quizzes. See the Course Outline for the quiz schedule. Quizzes will take place at the start of the applicable class and will be short answer or multiple choice in nature. Quizzes will not be cumulative and will include course content covered prior to the quiz date.

Geography Quizzes

This is not a geography course but an understanding of basic world geography is necessary in order to speak intelligently about development issues and microfinance. Each quiz will focus on a specific region (Latin America, Africa, Asia) and will include main countries and basic demographic information. Information sources will be provided.

MFI Funding Proposal

Each student (or pair of students if the students so choose) will pick a microfinance institution (from a list or which the instructor approves) to prepare a funding proposal for. This will consist of a report (approximately 8 pages) on the benefits of microfinance generally, a description of the MFI, a discussion of the key strengths of the MFI and a comparison to other MFIs and microfinance models. A short in class presentation (5-10 minutes) will also be given as though to a group of potential donors or investors.

Research Report

A core aspect of the course will be the development of a research consulting report that outlines challenges and recommendations for various aspects of microfinance programs in the field. As part of this report, students will select specific topics and work in teams throughout the semester to research and develop their reports. The work may include documenting existing programs that have been established, researching alternative best-practices to enhance

delivery and implementation, and/or analysis of cultural aspects and variables in different regions around the world. Acting as consultants, students will develop a practical understanding for working in business teams, managing project timelines and completing deliverables for a major project. Students are encouraged to take initiative wherever possible in the generation of ideas and will be expected to contribute their own unique skills and strengths to the development of the consulting report. Students will also be expected to prepare a poster for submission for the Ambrose research conference.

Round Tables & Participation

Students will be expected to participate in a number of round table discussions on various topics and issues throughout the term. These will be discussions on certain questions that follow from the assigned readings and will take place in random groups of 4-6 students. Other opportunities for participation will include a scripture reflection in the area of poverty, compassion and justice and other discussions or events that will be presented throughout the course.

Submission of Assignments:

Separate instructions for each assignment (other than the current event presentation which will have the wiki sign-up only) will be posted on Moodle. All written assignments are to be submitted on Moodle.

Attendance & Participation:

Each student is expected to regularly attend and actively participate in classroom discussions and any on-line discussion forums assigned. Group discussions and analysis of course topics will be a key component of learning throughout the term. Students are expected to attend all classes, having prepared for class by reading the assigned readings ahead of time and actively participate in group discussions. The skills needed to participate effectively in class and present your ideas are the same skills required to be effective in the business world. If external circumstances or illness prevent you from attending or adequately preparing for a class, please let the professor know. The instructor may reduce a student's mark by a letter grade (i.e. B to B-) if a student's participation is inadequate (in addition to the direct effect on the round table and participation portion of the grade).

Grade Summary:

The available letters for course grades are as follows:

<i>% Grade</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Description</i>
95% to 100%	A+	Excellent
90% to 94%	A	
85% to 89%	A-	
80% to 84%	B+	Good
76% to 79%	B	
72% to 75%	B-	
68% to 71%	C+	Satisfactory
64% to 67%	C	
60% to 63%	C-	
55% to 59%	D+	Minimal Pass
50% to 54%	D	
0% to 49%	F	

To pass the course, students must achieve an overall grade of at least 50%. Failure to submit an assignment without legitimate reason (i.e. evidenced illness) or prior approval of the instructor may result in a failed grade for the course. In the case of legitimate or approved absence, and at the instructor's discretion, the assigned date may be rescheduled to a later date, or if this is not practically possible, the marks reallocated to other components of the course grade. Late assignments will typically receive a mark of 0.

Please note that final grades will be available on your student portal.

Policies:

All students have received an Ambrose e-mail account upon registration. It is the student's responsibility to check this account regularly as the Ambrose email system will be the professor's instrument for notifying students of important matters (Cancelled class sessions, extensions, requested appointments, etc.) between class sessions. If students do not wish to use their Ambrose accounts, it is highly recommended that they forward all messages from the Ambrose account to the other account.

During the **Registration Revision Period** students may to enter a course without permission, change the designation of any class from credit to audit and /or voluntary withdraw from a course without financial or academic penalty. These courses will not appear on the student's transcript. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Students intending to withdraw from a course after the Registration Revision Period must apply to the Office of the Registrar by submitting a Request to Withdraw from a Course by the **Withdrawal Deadline**. Please consult the List of Important Dates. Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. A grade of "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Students, who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a **Revised Examination** Request form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; 2) three final exams within three consecutive exam time blocks; 3) the scheduled final exam slot conflicts with an exam at another institution; 4) extenuating circumstances. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

Electronic Etiquette

Students are expected to treat their instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students with respect. It is disruptive to the learning goals of a course or seminar and disrespectful to fellow students and the instructor to engage in electronically-enabled activities unrelated to the class during a class session. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class. Laptops should be used for class-related purposes only. Please do not use iPods, MP3 players, or headphones. Do not text, read, or send personal emails, go on Facebook or other social networks, search the internet, or play computer games during class. The professor has the right to disallow the student to use a laptop in future lectures and/or to ask a student to withdraw from the session if s/he does not comply with this policy. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Dean. If you are expecting communication due to an emergency, please speak with the professor before the class begins.

Academic Policies

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.

Extensions

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a "**Course Extension**" from the Registrar's Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date. Please consult the List of Important Dates. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control".

Appeal of Grade

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

Academic Integrity

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student's permanent record.

Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records.