Criteria for Electives

Entrepreneurship Process & Entrepreneurial Mindset
Being alert to opportunities in one's environment and willing to take action to create value as a result.

Other Supporting Criteria
*at least two of the following categories

Ideation, Applied Creativity, & Innovation

Outcomes of entrepreneurial ventures and projects have their basis in ideas of a new, future possibility. The entrepreneurial process can be considered the shaping, testing, and refining (and at times abandoning) of the foundational idea--the idea for the perceived opportunity.

Therefore, a course that covers topics on creativity theory and topics or practice related to the creation of ideas, putting those ideas into forms others can interact with and experience, and applying those ideas to problems or needs in the external environment, fulfills this criterion. History of ideas and their evolution over time are topics that are encouraged, but the emphasis in the course should be on topics and or practice related to generating new ideas that could potentially support value creation.

Empathy, Intercultural Intelligence, & Ethical Reasoning

Ideas are necessary but ideation is only the first step. We also want students to select better ideas by getting outside their head and analyzing others' needs and problems in the world. This is where opportunities are more likely to reside.

The human default is to use one's perspective to make sense of others and the environment. Hence, increased awareness and practice are necessary to consider what others see and feel and what problems or needs they have--that is, to be empathetic. Knowledge of group differences in norms, customs, history, identity, and values (e.g., cultural, ethnic, political, socio-economic) is useful in this regard, as are topics that inform how to act and make decisions that consider the consequences for self and for others, as well as the broader society and environment.

Self-Agency, Risk Taking, Leadership & Decision-Making

The pursuit of new ideas and enlisting others in that pursuit requires that the individual exert influence over his or her environment to help shape reality and make a difference. At times this requires a willingness to disrupt default ways of thinking or doing things and questioning

what is real or possible.

Pursuing new ideas and guiding others to follow is facilitated by exposure to topics on leadership. These would likely include topics on individuals' capacity to help spark change and why that matters, in addition to individuals recognizing the need to find problems and see opportunities in them. Other topics should deal with analysis (planning, strategy) and effective decision-making. Further, exposure to situations that require thinking through ill-defined, unscripted, or "wicked" problems can increase recognition that making a difference and setting direction are many times linked to taking risks by engaging uncertain and discomfiting situations.

Teamwork, Negotiation, Collaboration & Organizational Processes

Little of importance gets done without teams because rarely is an individual as smart or effective as a group, and this is especially true in entrepreneurship. But having a team is not enough; what also matters is sustaining and managing the team and its evolution.

This criterion is thus supported by exposure to topics and or practice on the importance of teams and collaboration, knowledge of personnel selection, team dynamics, and team motivation. Topics that center on team dysfunctions and how to overcome them are also important. A course could also focus on effective negotiation and conflict resolution--which is ongoing within teams and with social contacts outside the team. Finally, a course could provide coverage on organizational structure and forms, organizational culture, and management practice.

Communication, Persuasion, and Selling

To give ideas life and move them from one's mind to a place others can consider them requires effective communication and persuasion. So does enlisting the help of others and interacting effectively with team members, mentors, and other stakeholders.

These skills are strengthened by exposure to topics and or practice in effective communication, different forms of communication, and the need to be facile with different platforms for communicating with others. Other course topics may focus on technical/business writing, different types of presentations as a function of audience and venue, and knowledge of or practice in conducting different types of meetings. A course could also leverage knowledge on persuasion and interpersonal influence techniques and marketing principles.