

# **The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations**

IDH 2930 Class #29303

**Class Periods:** Mondays, period 7, 1:55 PM - 2:45 PM

**Location:** LIT 119

**Academic Term:** Fall 2024

## **Peer Instructor:**

Brayden Newlin

Email: [bnewlin@ufl.edu](mailto:bnewlin@ufl.edu)

Office hours available upon request - email to schedule

## **Instructor of Record:**

Dr. John Streese

Email: [jstreese@ufl.edu](mailto:jstreese@ufl.edu)

Office Hours: None

## **Course Description**

(1 Credit) Special topics restricted to those in the university-wide honors program. (WR) If you cut off a spider's head, it dies; if you cut off a starfish's leg it grows a new one, and that leg can grow into an entirely new starfish. In this course students will explore how traditional top-down organizations are like spiders, but now starfish organizations are changing the face of business and the world. What's the hidden power behind the success of Wikipedia, Craigslist, and Skype? What do eBay and General Electric have in common with the abolitionist and women's rights movements? What fundamental choice put General Motors and Toyota on vastly different paths? The Starfish and the Spider takes a deep dive into these topics and how established companies are starting to incorporate more and more starfish principles to achieve success.

## **Course Pre-Requisites / Co-Requisites**

None

## **Course Objectives**

Students will learn how established companies and institutions, from IBM to Intuit to the US Government are also learning how to incorporate starfish principles to achieve success. Students will learn through exploring:

- \* How the Apaches fended off the powerful Spanish army for 200 years
- \* The power of a simple circle
- \* The importance of catalysts who have an uncanny ability to bring people together
- \* How the Internet has become a breeding ground for leaderless organizations
- \* How Alcoholics Anonymous has reached untold millions with only a shared ideology and without a leader

## **Materials and Supply Fees**

None

## **Required Textbooks and Software**

The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations by Ori Brafman  
ISBN: 9781591841838

## **Recommended Materials**

None

### **Course Schedule**

Week 1:	Course Introduction and Overview
Week 2:	University Holiday
Week 3:	MGM's Mistake and the Apache Mystery
Week 4:	The President of the Internet
Week 5:	A Sea of Starfish
Week 6:	Standing on Five Legs
Week 7:	The Hidden Power of the Catalyst
Week 8:	Taking on Decentralization
Week 9:	The Combo Special: The Hybrid Organization
Week 10:	In Search of the Sweet Spot
Week 11:	The New World
Week 12:	University Holiday
Week 13:	Student Presentations
Week 14:	University Holiday
Week 15:	Student Presentations

### **Attendance Policy, Class Expectations, and Make-Up Policy**

The course grade is primarily based on participation and attendance and students are expected to attend class each week. Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the Undergraduate Catalog and require appropriate documentation. However, one absence is permitted for any reason, without any documentation required. Email me at least 2 days before class for any absences other than your first one. Additional information can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

### **Evaluation of Grades**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Total Points</b>	<b>Percentage of Final Grade</b>
Homework Sets (9 assigned/best 8 count)	50 each - 400 total	75
Final - Multimedia Presentation	200	25

### **Grading Policy**

The following is given as an example only.

<b>Percent</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grade Points</b>
90.0 - 100	A	4.00
87.0 - 89.9	A-	3.67
84.0 - 86.9	B+	3.33
81.0 - 83.9	B	3.00
78.0 - 80.9	B-	2.67
75.0 - 79.9	C+	2.33
72.0 - 74.9	C	2.00
69.0 - 71.9	C-	1.67
66.0 - 68.9	D+	1.33
63.0 - 65.9	D	1.00
60.0 - 62.9	D-	0.67
0 - 59.9	E	0.00

More information on the UF grading policy can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

### ***Students Requiring Accommodations***

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### ***Course Evaluation***

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

### ***University Honesty Policy***

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

### ***Software Use***

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

### ***Student Privacy***

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see:

<http://registrar.ufl.edu/catalog0910/policies/regulationferpa.html>

### ***U Matter, We Care***

If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit <https://umatter.ufl.edu/> to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.