Entrepreneurship in Sustainable Protein

Professor: Hans Taparia

Course Day/Time: W 6:20pm - 9:00pm

Course Description: Today, the food industry is the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, accounting for up to 30% of emissions. A poor diet is now the leading cause of mortality in the U.S. As part of these huge global problems, animal production is arguably the biggest culprit. In recognition of this, consumers are dramatically altering diet patterns, and food entrepreneurs are rushing to solve the problem with desirable solutions. Vegetarianism and veganism are exploding and new alternative meat and dairy offerings are being launched at a frenetic pace. This undergraduate course—the first of its kind—is designed to put the idea of teaching entrepreneurship to its ultimate test—with the objective of incubating a series of ventures through the course of the semester that have the potential to be viable businesses and reverse negative externalities that arise from animal production. The course will start by exploring the chemistry of protein, the nutritional role of protein, the history of animal production and its environmental consequences. It will then take students through a series of frameworks to identify and implement solutions using entrepreneurship as the vehicle. These frameworks will include: (1) design thinking to identify opportunities, (2) sector / industry analysis models to identify need-gaps and validate the opportunity, (3) design thinking to prototype solutions and (4) business modeling in order to commercialize solutions. At the beginning of the semester, “start-up” teams of five to six students each will be formed and tasked with building a “blue-print” for a startup in the sustainable protein sector.