COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course objectives are two-fold: (1) to develop an awareness and understanding of the range, scope, and complexity of issues involved in starting a technology business; and (2) to gain insight into how entrepreneurs conceive, adapt, and execute strategies to create new, successful businesses.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is about entrepreneurship and specifically about starting, growing, managing, leading, and ultimately exiting a new venture. Of all the courses you take at the University of Washington, this one will likely be the most hands-on. Sixty percent of your grade will be based on pitches, product demos, and a business plan that you develop with your team.

The course sessions will follow the natural order of starting a new business: choosing your idea and your team, validating that idea with customers, honing your initial pitch, dealing with the legal issues of starting a business, building a great product, deciding among financing strategies, developing a go-to-market and operating plan, and exiting successfully. We will spend part of nearly every three-hour block giving you feedback on your actual pitch, your product, and your business generally. To ensure that this course is practical, we will invite numerous guests who are currently working in the venture ecosystem: CEOs, venture capitalists, lawyers, journalists, and others involved in the startup community.

BACKGROUND READING

David Cohen, Brad Feld, Do More Faster
Peter Thiel, Zero to One

GRADING

Grading for the class will be as follows:

- Class Contribution: 30%
- Class Assignments: 10%
- Term Project (in-class presentations, final presentation, and written material): 60%
DETAILED SYLLABUS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Class #1: Wednesday, January 9, 2018
Introduction to Entrepreneurship

Hour 1: Course Overview and Expectations (Greg Gottesman)
Intro to Entrepreneurship and Company Building (Greg Gottesman)

Some Thoughts on Business Plans (HBS Case #9-897-101)

- What are the key components of a successful venture?
- What are the key components of a business plan?
- How do the key components of a successful venture and the key components of a successful business plan differ?

Hour 2: Five Funding Tips in 15 Minutes or Less (Greg Gottesman)
Choosing Your Teams (Greg Gottesman)

Read: David Cohen, Brad Feld, Theme 3: Idea and Vision, Do More Faster, pp 3-14

Hour 3: Why Entrepreneurship? (Guest: Rich Barton, Chairman & Co-Founder, Zillow; Founder & ex-CEO, Expedia)

Assignment Due on January 11: Come to class prepared to make a persuasive one-minute pitch of a new business idea and product that you would like to build. Reading Zero to One might help with idea generation.

Class #1.5: Wednesday, January 16, 2018 (5 pm in CSE 691)
Optional Book Review Session

Read: Peter Thiel, Zero to One

Hour 1: Discuss Zero to One and new ideas for potential pitches

Class #2: Wednesday, January 16, 2018
Startup Formation

Read: Guy Kawasaki, The Art of Pitching, Chapter 3
Peter Thiel, Zero to One


Hour 1: Student One-Minute Business Pitches

Hour 2-3: Choosing Your Idea and Forming Teams

Assignment Due on January 23: Prepare as a team a three-minute pitch (up to 10 slides) of your team’s startup idea. (Note: These pitches will be a recurring assignment for the rest of the course.)
Class #3: Wednesday, January 23, 2018  
Customer Validation

Hour 1: Thinking About Customer Acquisition & Distribution (Guest: Dan Shapiro, CEO & Founder, Glowforge)

Hour 2: Acquiring Customers Using Facebook and Google (Guest: Peter Denton, Marketing Lead, Pioneer Square Labs)

Hour 3: Student Pitches with Feedback (Dan Shapiro & Peter Denton)

Class #4: Wednesday, January 30, 2018  
Building Product

Skim: David Cohen, Brad Feld, Theme 4: Product, Do More Faster, pp 171-202

Hour 1: Prototyping Your Product (Guests: David Zager & Ben Gilbert, Pioneer Square Labs)

Hour 2: Scaling Crowd Cow (Guest: Joe Heitzeberg, CEO & Co-Founder, CrowdCow)

Hour 3: Student Pitches with Feedback (David Zager, Ben Gilbert & Joe Heitzeberg)

Class #5: Wednesday, February 6, 2018  
Marketing Your Business

Hour 1: Rover.com Marketing Case Study (Guest: Aaron Easterly, CEO, Rover.com)

Hour 2: Seattle tech scene overview (Guest: John Cook, Co-Founder, Geekwire)

Hour 3: Student Pitches with Feedback (John Cook)

Class #6: Wednesday, February 13, 2018  
Pricing & Go-to-Market

Hour 1: Pricing for Startup Products and Services (Guest: Palvi Mehta, CFO, Pioneer Square Labs)

Hour 2: Go-to-Market Strategies & Sales (Guest: Kelly Wright, former EVP Sales, Tableau)

Hour 3: Student Pitches with Feedback (Palvi Mehta & Kelly Wright)

Class #7: Wednesday, February 20, 2018  
Financial Modeling & Business Planning

Hour 1: Financial Modeling & Business Planning (Guest: Ben Rush, Pioneer Square Labs)

Hour 2: Boundless pitch (Guest: Xiao Wang, CEO, Boundless)

Hour 3: Student Pitches with Feedback (Xiao Wang & Ben Rush)
Class #8: Wednesday, February 27, 2018
Financing Dynamics

Hour 1: Financing Your Venture (Matt McIlwain, Managing Director, Madrona Venture Group)

Skim: David Cohen, Brad Feld, Theme 6: Legal and Structure, Do More Faster, pp 243-272

Hour 2: Startup Legal Issues (Guest: Craig Sherman, Partner, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati)

Read: The Legal Forms of Organization (HBS Note #9-898-245)

Skim: David Cohen, Brad Feld, Theme 5: Fundraising, Do More Faster, pp 203-242
Annotated Term Sheet for Venture Capital Financing

Hour 3: Student Pitches with Feedback (Matt McIlwain and Craig Sherman)

Class #9: Wednesday, March 6, 2018
Scaling & Exits

Hour 1: Scaling a Business (Guest: Andy Jassy, CEO of Amazon Web Services)

Hour 2: Thinking about IPOs and M&A (Guest: Dan Levitan, Managing Director, Maveron)

Hour 3: Student Pitches with Feedback

Class #10: Wednesday, March 13, 2018
Company Pitch Day (At Pioneer Square Labs, 240 2nd Ave South, Ste 300, Seattle)
4:30-7:30 p.m.

Assignment: Complete Pitch Deck, Product Demo, and Executive Summary. Your team will have eight minutes to present your business to a panel of top venture capital and angel investors and then take five minutes of Q&A.

Hour 1 (4:30): Company Pitches

Hour 2 (5:30): Company Pitches

Hour 3 (6:30): Company Pitches