MPCS 51250
Entrepreneurship in Technology

Classroom

Thursdays, 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM, Ryerson 277

Contact

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*Please include each of us on all e-mail communications.

Overview

The level of rigor that one undertakes in designing a technology solution must also be applied in the design of a sustainable business. The good news for computer science students is that the design of a good business is recursive in nature and involves solving a simpler, smaller version of the initial larger problem statement. In this class, we will tackle, in teams, a business problem that you define and can be solved with a technology enabled-product. You will develop a prototype, test with users, define the product according to user feedback, design and build a minimum viable product, and create a venture-capital ready investor pitch deck that you can use to launch your next great idea.

The teaching staff's role throughout the course is to act as your idea incubator, providing rigor, targeted feedback, and teaching you general concepts that work across industries and technologies to support the variety of products to be created in this class. We cannot always solve your individual business and technology problems for you, however. For that, just as in any business, you will rely on your team, your customers, your users, your domain experts, your research and your ingenuity.

The teaching staff will work to support your journey along every step of the way. We will discuss how to conduct interviews, how to research market dynamics, how to build prototypes and minimum viable products. But as with everything else in entrepreneurship, this course will be what you make of it.

As a result, your success in the class will be tied to applying course concepts to an actual problem, your ability to obtain new insights, identify new opportunities, and advance from your original "big idea" to a real or hypothetical business that offers a product users, customers and investors value.

Individual Requirements

1. You will join and actively contribute to a team consisting of 2 to 4 people beginning before the start of the second class. Your team will commercialize your new idea throughout the quarter. If you really love your own idea, and are unable to obtain buy-in from other classmates, we will allow a team of 1 if we believe your idea is viable and you will be able to grow it as an individual. Similarly, for a team to exceed 4, we will want to see the need for additional people derive from the scope and complexity of the project.

2. You will always strive to treat teammates with professional respect, especially since this is a learning environment where all are attempting to grow. Any disagreements should be resolved without personal insults, and with the understanding that group members will have different opinions when it comes to group decisions. Should a student feel that group issues have become too uncomfortable in nature, please notify us immediately, and do not feel the need to take matters into your own hands. We are here to help and will support you to ensure you are able to get the most out of the class.

3. You will participate in classroom lectures, labs and activities.

4. You will contribute to your group both inside and outside of the classroom throughout the duration of the quarter.

5. You will regularly visit and access the course materials from https://github.com/dmhall2/mpcs-51250-2018-winter

6. You will email us from your University email address with your name and the group you have joined. We will use this email to share course updates.

7. You are encouraged to bring a laptop to class if you have access to one. Some in-classroom labs and dedicated group work time will benefit from the use of a laptop. We prefer laptops <u>are not used during lectures</u>, unless used solely for notetaking. If you need to online shop, instant message or check personal email, please step outside of the classroom to do so, as that will be less distracting to your classmates.

8. Individual assignments will be printed and hand delivered at the beginning of the class. Only in cases where the student cannot hand deliver in class, the student will email the assignment at or before the stated deadline.

Group Requirements

1. You will prepare a weekly, 5-minute group progress report to be shared with your classmates. This will be led by one group member, and will be done without visuals unless otherwise indicated. The presenting group member will rotate from week to week, so that all group members will have had an equal number of times to be the leader (mindful that scheduling may result in some groupmates presenting an additional time). The discussion will be tailored to the questions that have been provided by us at the end of the previous week. A 3-minute classroom Q&A session will follow with all group members able to participate and answer.

2. The end of class will be reserved for group work. We provide you this time to coordinate for the week ahead and strategize on how to tackle the week's challenges. We will also use this time to check-in with each group individually to address any specific questions or brainstorm strategy. We expect group time to be used intelligently.

3. We expect groups to collaborate in between class sessions as well. Your group will have to determine the scheduling and the means, but we expect those groups that put in the most time outside of the classroom will be the most successful.

Weekly Outline (Subject to Change)

Week	Topic	Guiding Questions	Labs
1 Jan 4	Identifying your "big idea"	What is the purpose of your business? What role does technology play in your big idea? Who benefits from your big idea?	Speed-Dating
2 Jan 11	Understanding the current market landscape	What is the size of your industry and the different segments that compose it? Which group is most underserved by current products? What will drives your segment to adopt a new product?	The Market
3 Jan 18	Product definition and prototype design	How will your proposed solution support the needs of users? Will your prototype help you to answer the questions you have of users? How will you build your prototype for meaningful user feedback?	Wireframing
4 Jan 25	Prototype testing and evaluation	How will your proposed solution support the needs of users? Will your prototype help you to answer the questions you have of users? How will you build your prototype for meaningful user feedback?	Customer Interviews

5 Feb 1	Product-market fit	What is the revised product you will build for your users? Why does it appeal to them? How will users receive and/or access your product?	Customer Sale
6 Feb 8	Defining the minimum viable product	What technology architecture will be needed for your minimum viable product? How can you balance technology scalability, rapid development, and cost? How to collaborate on technology amongst your team?	Build a Service
7 Feb 15	Building the minimum viable product	Can you build your MVP?	Hackathon
8 Feb 22	Recalibrate	What stays the same? What needs to change?	Pivot
9 Mar 1	Understanding unit economics	What are your sources of revenue and cost? What is the monetary value of revenues and costs per unit?	Partnership
10 Mar 8	Go-to-market strategy	How will you go from 0 users to 1 user and beyond?	Splitting up the pie
11 Mar 15	Investor Pitch Day	What is your business?	

Grading

Grade contributions by assignment have been fully defined below. Additionally, rubrics will be provided with all assignments except for class participation which is simply binary (0 or 1). These are meant to ensure transparency into our thought process, and for you to understand how you will be evaluated throughout the course.

We also do this so you can understand the impact on your grade of missing a weekly assignment or missing a class. For regularly graded activities (reflection reports, group progress reports, class participation) we will not excuse or accept late submissions, especially since it is fully possible to succeed in the class (from a grading perspective) even with a missing reflection report or in having missed a class. We will of course appreciate a heads up if you are to miss a class because it will help us plan.

For larger assignments (MVP, press release growth, investor pitch deck), we will have little tolerance for late assignments. **If you are not 100% confident that you will be able to make a deadline on larger assignments, please communicate to us beforehand, especially since the deadlines for these items have already been set**. We can help you understand how to spend your time leading up to the deadline, and most often, you will still receive favorable credit for the work you have done. Being able to understand

and articulate what you do not know, how your effort may have been better spent, why you have failed to obtain the information, etc. is better than saying nothing at all, and is a core aspect of entrepreneurship.

Assignment	Contribution	Due Date	Description
Reflection Report	15%	Weekly, Beginning of Class	See rubric handout 1.5% per reflection report
Group Progress Report	15%	Weekly	See rubric handout 1.5% per progress report
Minimum Viable Product	15%	Beginning of February 22nd Class	Rubric to be provided
Press Release Growth	15%	1st – Beginning of Jan 11th class 2nd – Beginning of March 15th class	Rubric to be provided
Investor Pitch Deck	15%	Beginning of March 15th class	Rubric to be provided
Groupmate Grading	15%	End of March 15th Class	Rubric to be provided Graded by group members
Class Participation	10%	Weekly, in-class	1% per class if you attend AND participate
Total	**100%**		

After the scores are calculated for the quarter (out of 100), we will convert to the University 4 point scale. The University uses a 4 point scale for grades; these "quality" grades are as follows 4.0 = A, 3.7 = A-, 3.3=B+, 3.0 = B, 2.7 = B-, 2.3 = C+, 2.0 = C, 1.7 = C-, 1.3 = D+, 1.0 = D, F = 0. (Note that there is no A+ or D- in the common grade scale.)

Rubrics will generally follow a 4 point rating as well. We will set rubric scoring such that they follow the general format. Students should generally view a score below 3 as an indication that improvement is needed, view a 3 as a good score, and view a 4 as showing genuine excellence. Larger assignments will have 0 – 4 ratings on several categories.

Score	Description
4	Student successfully applied class concepts in novel ways and exceeded requirements
3	Student successfully applied class concepts and met requirements
2	Student displayed effort in applying class concepts but did not meet all requirements
1	Student displayed effort but failed to apply any class concepts in meeting requirements
0	Student did not display any effort