

Bogaziçi University, Computer Engineering Department

ENG 493 Launching A Startup

Instructor: Emrah Yalaz [Linkedin](#)

Description

ENG493 covers the conception, launch, funding and growth of a technology startup with special emphasis on software products. Assignments are designed to practically apply other-than-coding skills like marketing and design thinking. Case studies are based on real-world, early-stage software startups from the USA and Turkey.

ENG 493 is a team-based, practical class where students experience startup constraints: result-driven environment, limited time and resources, rapid iteration and feedback.

Students work in teams to build a MVP/prototype/demo and prepare an investor pitch. Group projects are treated as real ventures. Past students went on to launch profitable businesses and founded/joined other startups. Past projects have been mostly software with few hardware products. Turkish founders/angels/VCs join as speakers. The instructor created the methods marked with © and designed this class.

Textbooks and Material

- Hackers and Painters by Paul Graham
- Zero to One by Peter Thiel
- [Makebook.io](#) (use YALAZ2021 code for \$10, first 40 students)
- Selected Essays - Paul Graham, Joel Spolsky, Keith Rabois and others

Grading

Attendance 30%

Assignments 30%

Final Pitch/Demo 40%

Course Outline

Intro Fundamental parts, mechanics and constraints of a tech startup
How to get startup ideas
Introducing FUCHS method©
The path from an idea to launch
How to avoid most common startup killers
Introducing Triangulation Method©

Story-Team Introducing Narrative Method©

Product-market-team fit
How to attract co-founders
How to interview engineering and product team members
Startup team composition and team jelling

UVP

What to launch
Introducing Product Board©
Forming the Unique Value Proposition (UVP)
Building the Sunny Day Flow©
Mapping substitute/complementary products
Sizing the market opportunity: TAM/SAM/SOM analysis

Interviews

How to collect and iterate based on user feedback
Building user profiles, aka Personas
Preparing for user-centric interviews
Introducing Topic Mapping
Interview rehearsal

Launch

Extracting, mapping user interview insights on Product Board
Generating Minimum Viable Product (MVP) options
Introducing Six-Pack Method©
Launching the first version

HRBs

Understanding hyper-responsive buyer (HRB)
Segmenting and bundling point of difference (PoD) features
Conducting HRB-centric interviews
MVP iterations based on HRB-feedback

Distribution

Guerilla marketing: getting traffic with no or very little resources
Understanding growth levers
Building PoD marketing copy
Generating unique selling bundles
Pricing SaaS bundles

Iteration

Applying Agile principles
Techniques for faster feedback loops
Team iteration using lean methods (kanban board, Scrum)
Lean on a budget: using free/inexpensive tools to manage sprints

Metrics

Understand the economics of customer lifecycle value

Understanding revenue models
Calculating LTV and CAC
Designing and debugging the acquisition funnel
Understanding cohort mechanics, managing pipelines
Funnel metrics from awareness to referral to churn
Setting KPI baselines and goals

Pitch

Mechanics of pitching and fundraising
Principles of giving effective product demos
Understanding data visualization
Creating investor decks, data rooms
How to present to investors
Pitch rehearsal and feedback
Closing