

ENTRE 540, Winter 2025

“Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Don’t be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people’s thinking. Don’t let the noise of others’ opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.” -Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple Inc.

“Every time you state what you want or believe, you’re the first to hear it. It’s a message to both you and others about what you think is possible. Don’t put a ceiling on yourself. - Oprah Winfrey, global media leader, producer, and actress

Welcome!

... to much more than a business plan practicum. Think of this as an interactive, real-world business planning and problem solving workshop. This is a two credit class during the winter quarter as a precursor to the [Dempsey Startup Competition](#) held in April + May (as well as other upcoming competitions at UW).

A few details:

Instructor: Christy Johnson LinkedIn: connect with me [here](#)Links to an external site..

Email: christye@uw.edu

Office location: DEM 202G or by appointment

Office hours Tuesday 5 to 6pm; by appointment via zoom

Graders: Dipen Waghela <dipenw@uw.edu>, Nicolas Picon <npicon@uw.edu>

Course description and learning objectives:

The world needs more people solving problems in a way that creates a positive impact on the world. During the next 10 weeks, you will immerse yourself in business planning through a practicum experience. This will be an immersive class because *"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."* - [Benjamin Franklin](#)Links to an external site.

This class is about both entrepreneurship and planning. Learn how to start a new venture and make it successful, and how to use the [Dempsey Startup Competition](#) (formerly the Business Plan Competition--BPC) and other upcoming competitions to your advantage.

You'll examine and apply useful, real-world concepts and tools - from generating the original idea/inspiration to business formation/planning to persuading funders/partners/customers - while meeting and working with interesting classmates, accomplished entrepreneurs, and subject-matter experts along the way. You'll build your relational capital so that you can *"Leapfrog over the typical steps that people teach you for getting from point A to point B...That is not lazy, that is not cheating, that is innovation at its very best."* - [Nathalie Molina Nino](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

Once you have discovered and defined the problem you want to solve, you will build out a business canvas to bring your logic, evidence, and outstanding questions to light. And finally, you will learn how to pitch your ideas and tell powerful stories (both business and personal) to inspire and lead.

This class will:

- Immerse themselves in need finding, customer discovery, and engaging with customers.
- You will develop a new ventures workbook - which is tool you can use for the venture you explore in the future. This tool is for problem solving and includes the Business Canvas and the Sequoia pitch deck
- Reflect on what worked, what didn't, and why
- Set intention for if you want to make it up, make it real or make it scale (within the start-up ecosystem, the funder ecosystem, established companies or the public sector). You'll place some bets on where you want to have an impact on the world.
- Build relational capital with the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the PNW. One of the many wonderful parts of the entrepreneurial ecosystem is the high level of collaboration it inspires. You will experience that in this class as we learn from each other and from our speakers.

Course learning objectives*

1. Get inspired to start or to participate in something new
- whether it be a company, a cause, or an important project in your career.

2. Learn what it takes (and what to avoid) to have a successful new venture
- and how to use a set of general-purpose business planning tools to get there.

3. Learn how to persuade others you need, to support your business
- and how to give a great pitch no matter the topic.

And learn how the [Dempsey Startup Competition](#) and other competitions work, including entry requirements, stages of competition, judging criteria, and prizes for winners.

Grading:

No textbooks, no tests, no grades (pass/fail only), limited assignments but tons of class participation, teamwork, and practical application of tools. **DO NOT TAKE THIS CLASS IF YOU ARE NOT GOING TO PARTICIPATE AND WORK WITH OTHERS.** Passing performance is based on five elements.

This class is credit / noncredit. To receive credit, you'll need to complete 60% of the assignments