

GT 4694 Syllabus

Startup Launch, 1 Credit, 0 Billable Hours

Summer Academic Year 2025-2026

Instructor Information

Instructor: Raghupathy Sivakumar, PhD

Email: siva@ece.gatech.edu

General Course Information

Description

GT 4694: Startup Launch is CREATE-X's 12-week summer accelerator at Georgia Tech. This experiential course instills entrepreneurial confidence in students and helps them launch real startups.

Through experiential learning practices, participants “intern for themselves” to launch their own startup with weekly coaching and accountability sessions, legal and sales workshops, and training with story-telling and pitch practices. Teams receive coaching and mentorship from experienced entrepreneurs and notable Georgia Tech alumni and gain access to Atlanta's growing entrepreneurial ecosystem. In addition, participants may table at Demo Day, Startup Launch's signature event that attracts more than 1,500 attendees.

Throughout the summer, students will experiment with business models, test minimum viable products, engage in customer discovery, and pursue product-market fit. By the course's conclusion, students will have developed not just a theoretical understanding of entrepreneurship, but a practical roadmap and the essential tools needed to launch their own venture both now and in the future.

This course is not graded.

However, to be eligible to participate in Demo Day and to be considered a Startup Launch alum, there's a reasonable expectation of both participation and progress.

Delivery Method

In-person and virtual, synchronous sessions that meet on Tuesdays, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM. Week 1 consists of three full days in the spirit of a startup bootcamp. Each following Tuesday session includes either a guest speaker or workshop, lunch, and small group breakouts with your assigned coach. Teams are expected to also meet 1:1 with their assigned coach once per week throughout the summer.

Pre- and/or Co-Requisites

Application and acceptance into the CREATE-X Startup Launch program. To be Launch-ready, participants ideally meet the following criteria, though exceptions are occasionally made:

- Completion of customer discovery sufficient to validate a market problem.
- A working prototype (early-stage or duct-tape solutions count).

At least one co-founder should be a Georgia Tech student, faculty member, or alumnus, and at least one co-founder is strongly encouraged to commit to working on the startup full-time during the summer.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand how to complete effective customer discovery interviews.
- Form a basic understanding of legal processes like incorporation and IP strategy.
- Refine and validate a business model using customer discovery and lean startup methodology.
- Demonstrate the ability to iterate on a product concept based on market feedback.
- Communicate a startup's value proposition effectively through pitch materials, a showcase video, and Demo Day if selected.

Required Course Materials

No required textbook.

Recommended references: The Lean Startup by Eric Ries and The Mom Test by Rob Fitzpatrick.

Grading Policy

This course is not graded. However, to be eligible to participate in Demo Day, there is a reasonable expectation of participation and progress.

Description of Deliverables

Assignments: Assignments will include customer discovery interviews, weekly report outs, participation in Preview Day, a final pitch video, and live pitching at Demo Day.

Course Policies

Attendance and/or Participation

This is an in-person and virtual synchronous program. At least one team member must attend a majority of Tuesday sessions, team socials, pitch practices, Preview Day, and Demo Day. Participants who miss a majority of the sessions and coach meetings will be asked to withdraw from the program.

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards.

Allegations of scientific or scholarly misconduct are handled in accordance with the procedures outlined by the Policy for Responding to Allegations of Scientific or Other Scholarly Misconduct.

Core IMPACTS

Not applicable.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. Simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI

Startup Launch is fundamentally an experiential program and collaboration with your co-founders and other teams is both expected and encouraged. You are also permitted to use generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT and other LLMs) and any other industry standard tool to support your work.

Extenuating Circumstances

This course expects steady, consistent participation and progress.

If you experience extenuating circumstances, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. For emergencies, please go through the Dean of Students' office:

https://gatechadvocate.symplicity.com/care_report/

Official Course Communication

All official course communication takes place via Heartbeat. Please ensure your Heartbeat notification settings are configured to receive announcements promptly.

Georgia Tech also generally recommends students check their Georgia Tech email once every 24 hours.

Coaching Hours

Each team is assigned a dedicated coach who meets with them weekly throughout the program.

Campus Resources for Students

A list of resources for graduate students is given on the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Education website. This includes academic resources, student resources, and professional development opportunities. CREATE-X also provides program-specific resources, including legal q&a, credits and discounts for several industry standard tools, and co-working space at the Biltmore.

Student Well-Being

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A comprehensive list of wellness-related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being.