

Entrepreneurship – MGT 4670-A
Preliminary Syllabus
Georgia Tech Scheller College of Business

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Class Information

Weekly Classes (In-person, synchronous course):

- **Days:** Mon & Wed, 5 – 6:15pm ET ([Zoom](#))
(Note, attending via Zoom does NOT count for attendance credit unless you have made arrangements with me in advance)
- **Location:** Scheller College of Business, Room 201

Office Hours:

- Immediately after each class (Mon & Wed, 6:15 PM)

Course Description

This course examines the entrepreneurial process of creating and launching new ventures, with a primary emphasis on technology-driven entrepreneurship. While the concepts, frameworks, and practices covered are applicable across a broad range of entrepreneurial contexts—including for-profit and social ventures, and both product and service markets—the course is centered on the unique opportunities and challenges associated with technology-based ventures.

Students will engage in the end-to-end process of venture creation, moving from opportunity recognition to business model design, market validation, and investor communication. Working in small, interdisciplinary teams, students will develop new venture management skills through a combination of experiential classroom activities, case analyses, and applied project work. Key course topics include lean entrepreneurship and experimentation; opportunity identification and assessment; business model design and evaluation; legal and organizational considerations in venture formation; go-to-market strategy, marketing, and sales; new venture financing; investor pitch development; and venture scaling and exit considerations.

Central to the course is students forming teams to launch a new venture. Student teams will design a new business concept, articulate a coherent business model, and rigorously test their assumptions through direct engagement with potential customers, partners, and stakeholders. Emphasis is placed on learning through action, evidence-based decision-making, and iterative refinement, mirroring the realities of entrepreneurial practice in technology-intensive markets.

By the end of the course, students will have developed a validated venture concept, an integrated business model, and the analytical and practical skills necessary to evaluate, communicate, and advance new technology-enabled ventures.

Learning Objectives

1. To develop an understanding of important decisions made by entrepreneurs when establishing a new business
2. To develop a wide range of planning skills and business development skills necessary to create a new venture
3. To be exposed to current practices in business model design and validation
4. To sharpen the presentation skills necessary to effectively communicate new venture ideas to potential investors
5. To meet and share ideas with local entrepreneurs and learn by experience the importance of market engagement

Course Overview

This course is designed to provide hands-on experience in developing a startup venture and bringing a new business concept to market. Students will work in teams throughout the semester to apply entrepreneurial frameworks, test assumptions, and iteratively refine their venture ideas based on real-world evidence:

- **Form Entrepreneurial Teams:** Each team (5 students) will select an entrepreneurial venture to develop during the course of the semester. If you have an idea for a venture, you can recruit others to join your team. Otherwise, you can join a team that has an appealing idea. Everyone will complete a *Student Information Survey* at the beginning of the semester that will list any ideas you may have for an entrepreneurial venture and information about your background. These surveys will be visible to everyone in the class to facilitate the formation of teams.
- **How to Build a Startup – Online Course:** Students will leverage an online course that outlines the core steps of building and validating a startup, with an emphasis on identifying a real market need and developing an effective go-to-market approach.
- **Customer Discovery & Market Validation:** Teams will conduct extensive customer discovery by interviewing hundreds of potential customers, users, and partners to test their assumptions and assess demand for their proposed venture. Conversations may also include potential collaborators, suppliers, and channel partners who could help bring the venture to market.
- **AI:** Students are encouraged to use AI tools to assist their work. Students are responsible for understanding all AI output and verifying that it is accurate and directly relevant to the topic (e.g., filtering out any AI hallucinations). Critical review of AI output is a key part of the assignment. AI prompts are to be included with these assignments.
- **Regular Progress Reviews & Pivoting:** Teams will participate in regular check-in sessions to report progress, insights, and challenges. Assumptions will be actively questioned, and teams will be expected to support decisions with evidence gathered through customer discovery. When findings do not support the original concept, teams will explore pivot strategies and refine their venture direction accordingly.

- **Website & Minimum Viable Product (MVP) Development:** Teams will develop an initial website to communicate their value proposition to customers, partners, and investors. In addition, teams will create a minimum viable product (MVP) or service prototype to support testing, feedback, and learning.
- **Venture Presentations:** Throughout the semester, teams will deliver formal presentations on their venture's evolution, culminating in a final investor-focused pitch deck presentation.
- **Startup Management Topics & Guest Speakers:** We will discuss various management issues such as strategies for launching a start-up, how to hire excellent employees, compensation strategies to keep key employees, marketing strategies, etc. Guest speakers will present on their real-world experiences as entrepreneurs and investors.
- **Other Assignments:** Additional activities will be assigned throughout the semester to complement the building of a start-up.

Please note that while unplanned, I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus (including required content), but if so, students will be given adequate notice, on Canvas, and announced during lecture.

Readings & Assignments

We will cover various readings that you will be required to purchase:

- *The Lean Startup* (Eric Ries)
- *The Mom Test* (Rob Fitzpatrick)
- *Summary of Crossing the Chasm* ([Amazon](#))
 - o Original book: *Crossing the Chasm* (Geoffrey A. Moore)
- *Business Model Generation* (Alexander Osterwalder & Yves Pigneur)
 - o A PDF summary will be available

Additional required cases and materials (e.g. news articles, papers, book chapters, etc.) will be published/updated through the course website, as the course evolves. (e.g., a Case Study Collection from Harvard Business School Publishing)

Canvas (<https://canvas.gatech.edu>) should be checked prior to each course meeting for supplementary reading and handout material. **Please make sure you have "Announcements" turned on in Canvas.**

Readings and Lecture Slides

In some cases, I will clarify if there are changes to the required reading, so as to include only certain materials in a given chapter vs. irrelevant content. You will be responsible, both in lecture discussions and for evaluation (testing) purposes, for only those sections assigned.

Team Formation

Several course activities and assignments will require students to work together in a team, culminating in a final presentation. I will allow students to “self-select” into teams of their choosing. While I expect teams to number 4-5 students, a final determination may not be possible until after the registration process gets finalized. After this, one of your proposed team members will upload the team list to an assignment in *Canvas*. I will form a Team for any students who cannot form their own Team.

Class Attendance and Preparation

Regular attendance and participation in class are important, as students should expect to learn from one another as well as from the Professor and other speakers. Assigned material should be read before each class. I encourage students to participate in class discussions voluntarily, as class discussion will be an important element of the class, and also in a student’s Final Grade in the course. Each student is expected to be an active participant in case discussions and to offer meaningful analyses and convincing arguments for the positions you take. Your grade on class participation can be earned by contributing your assessments and judgments to the discussion. Participation points will also be gained through online discussion boards and assignments related to asynchronous lectures by the guest speakers.

If a student has not read the reading materials it will be very hard for a student to have quality class participation.

The class participation points are intended to promote (i) reading the course material indicated in the “Course Schedule and Assignments” located at the end of this syllabus prior to each class, (ii) participation in the lectures to help create an open lecture and case study learning format for the class, and (iii) help the Professor learn the names of the students.

There are two live class sessions per week. There will be an Attendance Survey conducted during each class (so you'll need a phone, tablet, or laptop); this survey will be used to track attendance. Note, answering the Attendance Surveys are covered by the GA Tech Honor Code and certifies that you attended class in-person.

You can also attend via a live Zoom session, but Zoom attendance does NOT result in attendance credit (unless you have made provision with me or the TA which requires advance notice and coming off of mute and participating in that day’s class discussion).

Verifying Participation

I am required to verify each student’s participation in this course in the first few weeks of the session. Accordingly, I will be posting an “assignment” on *Canvas* asking you to upload a document (either a resume, or a personal statement outlining your training and goals, etc.). By doing that, I not only verify each student’s participation, but also learn about your individual aspirations. This assignment Due Date will appear in *Canvas*.

Illness Policy and Death In Family Policy and Georgia Tech Athletic Department Policy and Georgia Tech ROTC Policy and Georgia Tech Organization Policy

Students with a compelling reason to miss a class in person more than twice for unavoidable circumstances may require special makeup assignments. Compelling reasons for not attending any class in person when required will be discussed individually by email, and students should contact/notify me in advance.

Course Communication

Course announcements will be posted in *Canvas*, and will appear on your *Canvas* dashboard when you log in and/or will be sent to you directly through your preferred method of notification from *Canvas*. Please make sure to check these regularly, as they will contain important information about upcoming projects, changes or class concerns.

Grading and Course Requirements Grading Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

- A: 90-100%
- B: 80-89%
- C: 70-79%
- D: 60-69%
- F: 0-59%

Note that grades are **not** rounded up (e.g., 89.99% is still a B). Any requests for revisions to graded assignments Midterm grades must be submitted **before** the Final Exam.

[See <http://registrar.gatech.edu/info/grading-system> for more information about the grading system at Georgia Tech.]

Pass/Fail Policy

If you are taking the class pass/fail, you must achieve a C grade to earn a pass in the class. Please reach out to me at the beginning of the semester if you are taking the class pass/fail.

Grading Components

Course grade will be based on the following components and allocations
(Note, these grade weights are subject to change during the semester):

Attendance & Class Participation	20%
Team presentations of entrepreneurial venture idea, overview of competition, & initial lean startup business model canvas	10%
Team presentations for Customer Discovery Plan and Questions	15%
Team presentations of the Elevator Pitch	5%

Team presentations of full Pitch Decks (Final Presentations)	20%
Midterm	15%
Final Exam	15%
	100%

When any Team is presenting on each of the above Team activities, the remaining Teams act in a questioning role by questioning the Team presenting about issues the presenting Team raised or failed to raise. Individual grades will be based on components such as your Team’s presentation, your individual presentation as part of your Team’s presentation (i.e., you cannot sit back and let just the members of your Team who are most comfortable verbally communicating carry the presentation); potential peer reviews, and your individual questioning of the other Teams during or after their respective presentations about issues they raised or failed to raise.

The sum of the average of “Graded Activity” grades is not rounded up to award a student the next higher letter grade in the course. Students should increase their chance of being awarded the next higher letter grade in the course by maximizing their “Graded Activity” grades.

Name Tents

I want to get to know the students who elect to participate in class discussion. I will therefore ask each student to have a “name tent” in the class, with their first and last name legibly printed. It is the responsibility of each student to bring this name tent to each class and place the name tent in front of them on their desk space. Given the nature of this class, it is important to remember that class participation will help with overall communication and presentation skills, and it will also be an element used in grading.

Student Use of Laptop or Mobile Devices in the Classroom

The use of a laptop or tablet during class sessions is allowed only to access course material such as handouts, teamwork notes and presentations. It can be very distracting to get incoming calls, emails or social media announcements, so I count on your adherence for the benefit of all. Your class participation grade depends on not doing online tasks unrelated to the class (e.g., Web browsing, emails, etc.).

Legal Disclaimer

Any and all opinions or statements as to legal matters made by the Professor are for classroom purposes only and are not intended and should not be construed as dispensing legal advice. This disclaimer includes conversations with students during and outside of class.

Academic Honesty/ Honor Code

As members of the Georgia Tech community, the instructor and students of this class are bound by the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code. The full text of the honor code may be found at

<http://honor.gatech.edu>. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with its requirements. Note that the acts that qualify as academic misconduct include "Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or persons, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism)." The Office of the Dean of Students investigates suspected cases of academic misconduct.

Examples of academic dishonesty include:

- Possessing, using or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included in an academic course;
- Substitution for, or unauthorized collaboration with, a Student in the commission of academic requirements;
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or person, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism);
- False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the student;
- Alteration or insertion of any academic grade or rating to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Deliberate falsification of a written or verbal statement of fact to a member of the Faculty so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Forgery, alteration or misuse of any Institute document relating to the academic status of the Student.

Georgia Tech Communication Center

Consider making an appointment at the Communication Center, <http://communicationcenter.gatech.edu>, a resource aimed at assisting students with written, oral, visual, and other academic and professional communication needs. At the Communication Center, students from all disciplines at Georgia Tech work with tutors with expertise in core areas of communication. The Communication center can be of assistance to students who are non-native English speakers or English language learners. Appointments are free. The Communication Center's [Rehearsal Rooms](http://communicationcenter.gatech.edu/rehearsal-rooms-0) are also available for reservation, <http://communicationcenter.gatech.edu/rehearsal-rooms-0>. You can use these spaces for presentation rehearsals, video and audio recordings, and more. While all of the rooms have sound recording equipment, the IBM room (Room 441) has an especially state-of-the-art system.

Course Policies

Recording Classroom Activities

Student recording of our real-time classes in any format (e.g., using digital, tape, or audio devices) is not allowed. This policy can be waived by the instructor for students with accommodations upon explicit recommendation from the Office of Disability Services. The instructor will record real-time classes to accommodate students in particular cases (e.g., learning-needs or illness).

Students must receive the written consent from the instructor to distribute, sell, or otherwise commercialize class notes, lecture slides, lecture videos, and materials such as homework assignments and answers. Students may not store or distribute class notes and materials in homework repositories or test banks under any circumstances. Students may not share or distribute lecture videos or lecture notes outside of this class.

Disability or special needs / Accommodation

Please let me know if you have a disability or special need that requires accommodation. Georgia Tech offers accommodations to students with disabilities. If you need classroom accommodation, please make an appointment with the ADAPTS office (see <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>).

The Georgia Institute of Technology has established policies with respect to disability accommodation through the Office of Disability Services for Tech Students (Disability Services). These policies may be accessed at the Disability Services website located at <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu>. Students seeking disability accommodation are specifically referred to the student guide and documentation pages on this website. Students failing to comply with the requirements set forth in Disability Services will not receive accommodation.

CARE Center, Counseling Center, Stamps Health Services, and the Student Center

Some students may need help in dealing with stress and mental health. The **CARE Center** and the **Counseling Center**, and **Stamps Health Services** will offer both in-person and virtual appointments. Student Center services and operations are available on the **Student Center** website. For more information on these and other student services, contact the Dean of Students or the **Division of Student Life**.

Other Expectations and Guidelines related to Covid-19 and Other Contagious Diseases

See me for special accommodations if you suspect you have Covid-19 or some other contagious disease – We can make online arrangements so you do not need to come to class when you are sick.

Georgia Tech is committed to promoting a campus community that supports holistic well-being, as well as empowering students to make choices that enable positive health outcomes. As we continue to live and learn through a pandemic, Georgia Tech strongly encourages students to utilize several tools not only to reduce their risks of infection from Covid-19 or other contagious diseases but also to help reduce the overall levels of transmission in the community.

These tools include:

1. Getting fully vaccinated. Getting vaccinated at Tech is easy and free.
2. Immediately self-quarantine or self-isolate if you experience any symptoms that could be related to Covid-19, flu/cold, or if you have tested positive for Covid 19.
 - Before coming to class in person, perform a Covid-19 Self-Screening: <https://health.gatech.edu/coronavirus/daily->

[checklist](#) Additional information and resources are available at <https://health.gatech.edu/coronavirus/services-guide>

Notable Dates

TBD