MGT 6667 - (Spring 2027) Strategic Entrepreneurship

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Course Homepage: *http://canvas.gatech.edu*
Time & Location: Mon/Wed: 11:00 am - 12:15 pm – Location: Scheller College of Business 221

Virtual Office Hours: By appointment

Course Overview

In the Strategic Entrepreneurship course the students will learn how to be opportunity-driven entrepreneurs and how to make decisions about their venture while dealing with the uncertainty of the entrepreneurial process. The course will first introduce students to a framework for developing an entrepreneurial strategy. This involves the key choices of customer, competition, technology, and identity. Then, it will provide an in-depth discussion about more specific entrepreneurial choices and themes that are relevant to most entrepreneurial businesses nowadays. These include strategies for starting and growing AI- and platform-based start-ups and challenges related to the global nature of most high-tech entrepreneurial ventures.

This course is designed to address the needs of students who are currently evaluating specific venture opportunities, plan to start entrepreneurial ventures at later career stages, or who want to pursue careers where the ability to evaluate new ventures is important (e.g., venture capital, consulting, M&A). Strategic entrepreneurship should also be of interest to students working in established firms since many of the issues we discuss also apply to the context of “corporate entrepreneurship”. Moreover, understanding the new venture perspective will be useful for incumbents who frequently face startups as competitors or as potential partners.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the key choices that define an entrepreneurial strategy and explain how they fit together.
- Evaluate a new venture idea in terms of both value creation and value capture.
- Develop alternative strategies for the same venture idea and design simple tests to choose between them.
- Analyze the specific strategic challenges faced by AI-based and platform-based ventures, and the role of location and entrepreneurial ecosystems.
- Present and defend a venture’s strategy clearly, using supporting evidence.
- Assess new ventures from the perspective of founders, investors, and established firms that compete or partner with startups.

Course Structure

The course is organized in three parts. The first part introduces a framework for developing an entrepreneurial strategy, built around four key choices (customers, technology, organization, and competition) and around how these choices fit together into a coherent strategy. The second part focuses on strategic experimentation, that is, how entrepreneurs can test alternative strategies before committing to one. The third part discusses themes that are relevant to many entrepreneurial ventures today, such as AI-based and platform-based startups and the role of location and entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Class sessions combine lectures, case discussions, guest speakers, and team work. There are two in-class exams during the semester, and the course concludes with the presentations of the final team projects. The detailed schedule, readings, and deadlines will be posted on Canvas.

The table below gives a rough outline of the sessions. The detailed schedule, with dates, readings, and deadlines, will be posted on Canvas.

Session	**Topic**
1	Course overview
2	Intro to Entrepreneurial Strategy
	No class - Martin Luther King Day
3	Choosing your customers
4	Choosing your technology
5	Lytro (CASE – customer + technology)
6	Choosing your organization
7	Choosing your competition & strategy
8	Guest Speaker (IP)
9	Rapid SOS (CASE - competition)
10	Team work: ideas for the final project
11	Feedback on team assignment
12	Feedback on team assignment
13	Exam preparation
14	**Exam 1**
15	Strategic Experimentation
	No class - Spring Break
16	Guest Speaker (experimentation)
17	Rent the Runway (CASE - experimentation)
18	AI-based startups
19	Platform-based startups
20	Location and ecosystems

21	Exam preparation
22	**Exam 2**
23	Final project work
24, 25, 26, 27	Team project presentations

Lecture
Case/Guest Speaker
Students' Presentations
Exam

Cases and Readings

To ensure that we meet copyright requirements while minimizing the cost for students, readings are available from two sources. The detailed schedule posted on Canvas will state where you can find each reading.

- The official book for the class is **Entrepreneurship: Choice and Strategy** (by Joshua Gans, Erin Scott, Scott Stern; W. W. Norton; ISBN 9781324072188). The book provides valuable insights into the topics covered in class.
- Most cases are freely available on Canvas
- Some cases and readings are available in a course pack through Harvard Business School Publishing (the link will be posted on Canvas). Please log in or create a student account in order to access the website. The course pack is for your personal use only and is not to be shared or distributed in any form as it is copyrighted material. If you experience any technical difficulties, please contact the Harvard Business Publishing Tech Help line at (800) 810-8858 or email techhelp@hbsp.harvard.edu

I will post the slides on Canvas after each session.

Course Requirements and Grading

The course grade is based on a weighted average of the following components:

Class Attendance and Participation	15%
Exams	40% (20% each)
Final Team Project	40%

Peer Evaluation	5%
Total:	**100%**

1. *Attendance and Class Participation*

Your attendance is required in every class. I understand that an absence may be necessary in some circumstances (e.g., sickness, job interviews, family emergency). You can have up to **3 absences** without any penalty and without needing to notify the TA or the professor. Each additional absence will result in a deduction from your participation grade. Institute approved absences (for example, official Georgia Tech activities, or absences documented by the Office of the Dean of Students) are excused and do not count toward this limit; please send the documentation to the TA, CC'ing the professor.

An attendance sheet will circulate at the beginning of each class. Once it has gone around the room, it will be collected, and students who arrive after that point will be marked absent. Leaving class early without notifying the professor in advance also counts as an absence. Signing the attendance sheet for a session you did not attend in full is considered falsification of attendance under the Honor Code.

The participation grade is also based on your participation in class. I will solicit widespread participation to ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to speak and will try to call more frequently on those who have not been frequent contributors to prior class discussions. Positive contributions include:

- Insightful analysis supported by appropriate logic and evidence.
- Perceptive questioning.
- "Process comments" offering insights into the class's pattern of reasoning.

You will have to bring to class a "name tent" on which each student should legibly print using a bold black magic marker their first and last name. 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. Also, it is responsibility of the student to sign attendance sheets or any other participation tool we will use to track presence in class.

To ensure a productive learning environment, I may deduct participation points when students create disruptions or appear not to be paying attention, for example through laughing at inappropriate times, chatting, or engaging in other distracting activities.

2. Exams

We will have two **closed book in-class** exams. Each exam will cover key concepts and frameworks covered up to that point and may include multiple-choice as well as short-answer questions. The purpose of the exams is to assess your knowledge of important concepts and frameworks as well as

your understanding of key insights from our case discussions (i.e., major insights/issues in a case but not minor details). If you miss an exam without a legitimate schedule conflict, no make-up exam will be provided, and you will receive zero credit.

There will be no questions specifically about cases, although they are helpful in enhancing understanding of the theoretical lectures. There will be questions about the guest speakers' lectures.

Format:

- Mostly multiple-choice questions (~75% of the exam)
- A few (2-3) short essay questions (~25% of the exam)

3. Final Team Project

As a final project, your team should generate and evaluate a business idea for a new entrepreneurial venture. This could be a brand-new startup idea generated by all the members of the group, or it could be an existing idea that one of the members had but has not pursued in practice, yet.

The project asks teams to apply the frameworks covered in class to their idea: to analyze the key strategic choices for the venture, to gather evidence from potential customers, and to use experimentation to choose between alternative strategies. Deliverables include written materials and a final presentation in class, followed by questions from the instructor and the class.

Grading considers the coherence of the venture's strategy, the quality of the evidence and experimentation, and the presentation. Detailed instructions, templates, and deadlines will be posted on Canvas.

4. Peer Evaluation

At the end of the semester, team members will assess each other's contributions to the team effort for a total of 5% of the grade.

Also note that **extra-credit assignments are not allowed** per course policy.

Final Assessment and Final Instructional Days

This course does not have a final exam during the final exam period. The final assessment for the course is the final team project, which is submitted and presented in class before the final instructional days.

Expectations About Preparation and Professional Behavior

It is essential to the success of this course that you are both physically and mentally present in class, and that you come fully prepared to discuss the material. It is my responsibility as instructor to foster a mutually respectful learning environment in the classroom. Accordingly, I set high expectations regarding professional behavior in class. The following should be avoided:

- Arriving late
- Holding side conversations
- Inattention (e.g., reading unrelated materials, surfing the web, or texting, working on unrelated assignments)
- Laughing in class
- Personal attacks or comments of a disrespectful or insulting nature

The instructor reserves the right to deduct participation points at any time for such behaviors, without notifying students.

Communication, Team Formation, and Confidentiality

Announcements will be posted in Canvas on a regular basis. They 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 certain to check them regularly, as they will contain any important information about upcoming projects or class concerns.

I encourage you to contribute to our class discussions by drawing on your own experiences or to discuss entrepreneurial ideas you are considering. However, by participating in this class you acknowledge that all information you share is "open" and that confidentiality cannot be assured.

Honor Code

Academic dishonesty (plagiarism, falsification of attendance or assignment materials, etc.) is considered a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Georgia Tech has established a clear honor code that can be viewed in its entirety at: *http://honor.gatech.edu*. In cases which I strongly suspect violations of academic integrity, I will directly file a case to the Office of Academic Integrity. If a student is found accountable, he/she may be subject to sanctioned as outlined in *http://osi.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/documents/academic_sanction_guidelines.pdf*. Violation will result in zero credit on the entire assignment/exam, and course failure or a drop in the final letter grade depending upon the severity of the circumstances. Note that even one violation, depending on the severity of the situation, may lead to a failure of the course.

Non-Academic Misconduct: Any behavior that may be distracting or disrespectful to the instructor or other students is strictly prohibited (e.g., inappropriate or offensive language use or attitude toward others). Repeated occurrences of disrespectful behavior will result in zero credit for class attendance and/or a drop in letter grade, as well as a report to the Office of Student Integrity as non-

academic misconduct (http://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/code-conduct). In cases of severe misconduct, students may be asked to drop the course entirely.

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. See http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/ for an articulation of some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, 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.

Disability Accommodation

The Georgia Institute of Technology has established policies with respect to disability accommodation through Office of Disability Services. These policies may be accessed at the Office of Disability Services website located at disabilityservices.gatech.edu. Students seeking disability accommodation should refer to the student guide and documentation pages on this website. Students must comply with the requirements set forth by the Office of Disability Services to receive accommodation.

Generative AI

You may use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude) in this course, including to build the prototypes for your final project, as long as you disclose how you used them. However, I strongly discourage you from using AI to generate your business idea in the first place: the idea should come from you, and ideally be something you are passionate about. Keep in mind that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic, and that you are responsible for everything you submit. AI cannot replace your own evidence: making up interviews, customer feedback, data, or test results, with or without AI, is a violation of the Honor Code and will be dealt with severely under relevant Georgia Tech policies.