

PROGRAM SYLLABUS (last updated 3/4/2024)

ENTREPRENEURSHIP – CSE 589, CSE P589, ENTRE 532A,B
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, WINTER 2024
WEDNESDAYS, 6:00-9:15 PM, PACCAR 291

Greg Gottesman & Ed Lazowska

Greg's Mobile: (206) 399-7810 (greg@psl.com)

Ed's Mobile: (206) 499-0303 (lazowska@cs.washington.edu)

Office Hours (via appointment, on Zoom)

Greg and Ed: Saturdays (and Sundays if needed), 9:00-11:00 - [schedule here](#)

Andrey: Mondays 12:30-1:30 and Fridays 11:30-12:30 - [schedule here](#)

Lawrence: Mondays 2:30-3:30 and Fridays 2:30-3:30 - [schedule here](#)

Assignments

All assignments should be emailed to Matt Wang (matt@psl.com)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course objectives are twofold: (1) to develop an awareness and understanding of the range, scope, and complexity of issues involved in starting a technology business; and (2) to gain insight into how entrepreneurs conceive, adapt, and execute strategies to create new, successful businesses.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is about entrepreneurship and specifically about starting, growing, managing, leading, and ultimately exiting a new venture. Of all the courses you take at the University of Washington, this one will likely be the most hands-on. Sixty percent of your grade will be based on pitches, product demos, and a business plan that you develop with your team.

The course sessions will follow the natural order of starting a new business: choosing your idea and your team, validating that idea with customers, honing your initial pitch, dealing with the legal issues of starting a business, building a great product, deciding among financing strategies, developing a go-to-market and operating plan, and exiting successfully. We will spend part of nearly every three-hour block giving you feedback on your actual pitches, your product, and your business generally. To ensure that this course is practical, we will invite numerous guests who are currently working in the venture and entrepreneurial ecosystem: founders, CEOs, venture capitalists, lawyers, journalists, and others involved in the startup community.

BACKGROUND READING

Peter Thiel, [Zero to One: Notes on Startups, or How to Build the Future](#)

Colin Bryar & Bill Carr, [Working Backwards: Insights, Stories, and Secrets from Inside Amazon](#)

Brad Feld & Jason Mendelson, [Venture Deals: Be Smarter Than Your Lawyer and Venture Capitalist](#)

GRADING

Grading for the course will be roughly as follows:

Class Assignments	15%
Team Project (in-class presentations, final presentation, written material, progress)	60%
Engagement (class contributions, office hour interactions, project contributions, etc.)	25%

NO RECORDING! NO SOCIAL MEDIA!

Our guests must be able to speak candidly. No recording! No social media! What our guests tell us remains among us.

DETAILED SYLLABUS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Class #1: Wednesday, January 3, 2024 Introduction to Entrepreneurship

Read: [Some Thoughts on Business Plans](#) (HBS Case #9-897-101)

- What are the key components of a successful venture?
- What are the key components of a business plan?
- How do the key components of a successful venture and the key components of a successful business plan differ?

Hour 1: Course Overview and Expectations (Greg Gottesman)
[Startup Weekend Pitch for Rover.com](#) (Greg Gottesman)
Intro to Entrepreneurship and Company Building (Greg Gottesman)

Hour 2: Coming Up With an Idea to Pitch (Greg Gottesman)
Choosing Your Teams (Greg Gottesman, Ed Lazowska)

Hour 3: The latest in GenAI Startups, with several GenAI founders and builders at PSL describing new startups (Guests: **Ford Davidson** (Jarvis), **Adam Loving** (Edgar), **Kevin Leneway** (Otto, renamed JACB), and **Brian Fioca** (Clara))

Assignment Due on January 10: Come to class prepared to make a persuasive one-minute pitch of a new business idea and product that you would like to build. Reading *Zero to One* might help with idea generation. No slides - just an oral pitch. Have a several-word “tagline” for referring to your idea.

Class #1.5: Wednesday, January 10, 2024 (5 pm - PACCAR 291) Optional Book Discussion Session

Read: Peter Thiel, [Zero to One](#)

Hour 1: Discuss *Zero to One* and new ideas for potential pitches

Class #2: Wednesday, January 10, 2024
Generating Startup Ideas

Read: Guy Kawasaki, [The Art of Pitching](#) (Chapter 3 of *The Art of the Start*)
Peter Thiel, [Zero to One](#)
[Madrona Venture Group Seed Pitch Deck Guide](#)

Watch: <https://www.geekwire.com/2012/favorite-pitches-techstars-demo-day-robert-scoble/>

Hours 1 & 2: Student One-Minute Business Pitches and Initial Winnowing

Hour 3: Choosing Final Ideas and Forming Teams

Assignment Due on January 17: Prepare as a team a three-minute pitch (up to 10 slides) of your team's startup idea. (**Note: These pitches will be a recurring assignment for the rest of the course.**) (Read [The Art of Pitching \(Chapter 3 of The Art of the Start\)](#) and [Madrona Venture Group Seed Pitch Deck Guide](#).)

Class #3: Wednesday, January 17, 2024
Customer Validation

Hour 1: Acquiring Customers Using Facebook and Google (Guest: **Peter Denton**, Head of Growth, XMTP)

Interlude 1: The Bandcamp Story (**Ethan Diamond**, former CEO & Founder Bandcamp)

Hour 2: Working Backwards: Amazon's Approach to Innovation (Guests: **Bill Carr**, co-author of *Working Backwards*, former COO OfferUp, former Amazon VP of Prime Video, Amazon Studios, and Amazon Music, and **Colin Bryar**, co-author of *Working Backwards*, former Amazon VP as COO of IMDb.com, then COO of RedMart)

Interlude 2: **John Volquez**, Partner, Drive Capital

Hour 3: Student Pitches with Feedback (**Peter Denton, Ethan Diamond, Bill Carr, Colin Bryar, John Volquez**)

Assignment Due on January 24: Prepare as a team a one-to-two page Amazon-style, customer-centric press release about your startup idea. (Read [PR FAQs for Product Documents](#), [Amazon Kindle Press Release](#), [Working Backwards PR FAQ Template](#), [Google Doc from Bill & Colin's class exercise](#).)

Class #4: Wednesday, January 24, 2024
Building Product

Hour 1: Prototyping Your Product (Guest: **David Zager**, Pioneer Square Labs)

Hour 2: Building Products that Customers Love (Guest: **Emily Pesce**, CEO of Joon)

Hour 3: Student Pitches with Feedback (**David Zager, Emily Pesce**)

Class #5: Wednesday, January 31, 2024
Market Environment, Timing & Storytelling

- Hour 1: Building A Personal Board of Directors (Guest: **Julie Sandler**, Managing Director, PSL)
- Hour 2: Timing is everything: The Case Study of Convoy (Guest: **Dan Lewis**, Founder & CEO, Convoy - a conversation with Greg Gottesman and Ed Lazowska)
- Hour 3: Student Pitches with Feedback (**Dan Lewis**)

Class #6: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 [Ed absent]
Go-to-Market & Marketing Strategies

- Hour 1: Secrets of Growth Marketing (Guest: **Kieran Synder**, CEO & Founder, Textio)
[Kieran's blog](#)
- Read:** [*Every Company Needs A Strategic Narrative. Here's Why \(And How To Build Yours\)*](#)
- Hour 2: Go-to-Market Case Study: Rover (Guest: **Aaron Easterly**, CEO, Rover)
- Hour 3: Student Pitches with Feedback (**Kieran Snyder, Aaron Easterly**)

Class #7: Wednesday, February 14, 2024
Financial Modeling & Financing Dynamics

- Resources:** [Simple template financial model](#) (for a SAAS startup)
[Medium post on creating a financial model](#) (also for a SAAS startup)
- Hour 1: Financial Modeling (Guests: **Hope Cochran**, Madrona Venture Group, and **Elisa La Cava**, Trilogy Equity Partners)
- Resources:** [Annotated Term Sheet for Venture Capital Financing](#)
[WSGR term sheet](#)
- Hour 2: Term Sheet Negotiation (**Oren Etzioni**, AI2 Incubator, and Greg Gottesman)
- Interlude: **Yuanling Yuan (YY)**, Partner, SignalFire, and **Anu Maheshwari**, Partner, Stage 2 Capital
- Hour 3: Student Pitches with Feedback (**Elisa La Cava, Yuanling Yuan, Anu Maheshwari**)

Assignment Due on Feb 21: Prepare as a team a one-to-two page investment memo in which you choose another team you would invest in, detail why (team, opportunity, business model, etc.), and on what terms. You are playing the role of venture capitalist. You will be considering whether to make a \$1M investment in a Series Seed round in your classmates' company. The memo should contain the following: (1) one sentence about whether or not you are recommending an investment (if you want, you can use our 10-point scoring system to show how strongly you feel about the investment decision), (2) why you would (or would not) make an investment, covering items such as the (a) team, (b) product,

(c) market size, (d) business model, and (e) timing, but feel free to focus primarily on the areas most relevant to your investment decision or employ a framework like the one in *Zero to One*, (3) the terms of your \$1 million investment (if you are recommending not to invest, you can still cover the terms by saying if your partners approve it notwithstanding your negative recommendation, you would recommend investing on the following terms), covering (a) pre-money valuation (e.g., \$1M on a \$3M pre-money valuation would give the investors 25% of the company post-money, and you might say what your pre-money starting point for negotiation is and what your walk-away pre-money valuation might be), (b) the control provisions (e.g., you can say you just want the standard control provisions or specify one or two that are especially important to you and, if so, why), and (c) the board composition (e.g., we think it should be one founder/CEO, one investor, and one independent, and how important board control is to you if the founders push back and say the common/founders need to control the board).

Class #8: Wednesday, February 21, 2024
Scaling a Business

Read: [Amazon Leadership Principles](#)

- Hour 1: The AWS and Amazon Case Study (Guest: **Andy Jassy**, CEO of Amazon - a conversation with Greg Gottesman and Ed Lazowska)
- Hour 2: Sales Strategies (Guest: **Kelly Breslin Wright**, Founder, Culture Driven Sales, former EVP Sales, Tableau, former President & COO, Gong)
[Kelly's blog and podcasts](#)
[The Challenger Sale: Taking Control of the Customer Conversation](#)
- Interlude: **Vijay Reddy**, Partner, Mayfield
- Hour 3: Student Pitches with Feedback (**Kelly Breslin Wright, Vijay Reddy**)

Class #9: Wednesday, February 28, 2024
Exits & Final Thoughts

- Hour 1: How Microsoft thinks about AI, exits, and the future of tech (Guest: **Amy Hood**, CFO, Microsoft - a conversation with Greg Gottesman and Ed Lazowska)
- Hour 2: Student Pitches with Feedback
- Hour 3: Course recap, and final thoughts (Greg Gottesman and Ed Lazowska)

Class #10: Wednesday, March 6, 2024
Company Pitch Day
4:30 pm, Pioneer Square Labs, 240 2nd Ave S Ste 300

Assignment: Your team will have eight minutes to present your business to a panel of top venture capital and angel investors and then take five minutes of Q&A. In advance, please provide your complete pitch deck, a two-to-three-page executive summary, your financial plan, and some illustrations of your

demo (a few slides that will remind us of what you showed). The financial plan can use the templates from the financial modeling presentation. We would like to see more detailed financial projections month-over-month for the first 12 months and then higher-level year-over-year projections for three years (not more). We care more about the reasonableness of the assumptions in the financial model than about the numbers, so just be clear to show what the driving assumptions are. If one person is driving the model, make sure to sanity-check it with your teammates.

Hours 1-3: Final Company Pitches

Panelists: **Matt Dittrich (Cornucopian Capital)**
 Geoff Entress (PSL Ventures)
 Mike Fridgen (Madrona Labs)
 Bryan Hale (Anthos Capital)
 Geoff Harris (Flying Fish Partners)
 Scott Jacobson (Madrona Venture Group)
 Elisa La Cava (Trilogy Equity Partners)
 Sara Lindquist (FUSE)
 Annie Luchsinger (Breakers VC)
 T.A. McCann (PSL Ventures)
 James Newell (Voyager Capital)
 Tim Porter (Madrona Venture Group)
 Stephan Roche (SemperVirens VC)
 Jason Stoffer (Maveron)
 Kirby Winfield (Ascend VC)