Cosi102r - Software Entrepreneurship

Cosi102r 2020 Syllabus

Instructors  Pito Salas

Class Times  TBD

Location  https://brandeis.zoom.us/j/99813181589

On-demand office Hours  http://www.calendly.com/pitosalas/ftf

Prerequisites  None, but Sophomore standing required

Homework  Daily homework assignments; major term project; team assignments.

Credit Hours  Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.)

Email contact:  pitosalas@brandeis.edu

Office  Zoom

Course Description

Introduction

The most common trap that we all fall into when we become enamored with a new product or business idea is to assume that our own personal experience and intuition is a valid measure of the likelihood of success. At the highest level then, this course is about thinking, measuring and experimenting, before taking the leap to start implementation.

This course is built around “The Lean Startup” by Eric Ries. The concepts, theories and techniques we cover were first made famous in that book, and by now have become more or less part of the common language in the field. While this is not a business course per se, there are a number of foundational concepts that every technical co-founder and technology entrepreneur needs to be familiar with. We will cover the basics of finance, product pricing, venture capital and funding.

We believe that the great majority of worthy endeavors are the result of team's collaboration. Therefore we put a high value on being successful working on a team for a major product. Teams invariably experience challenges in setting and agreeing on goals, making and meeting mutual commitments, accepting team members' diversity of interest, talent, motivation. These will all be occasions for learning and improving students success.

Learning Objectives

- Implement Agile project management on a small team
- Read and design a business model spreadsheet
- Plan, prioritize and reprioritize work on a team
- Analyze a pricing model

INTRO

Cosi102r 2020 Syllabus
Getting Started
List of Lectures
Major Deliverables
Weekly Homework Schedule

LECTURES

Stage 1

Welcome!
Lean Startup
Ideas
Working on Teams
Minimum Viable Product
Term Project Kickoff
Build Measure Learn

Stage 2

The Pivot
Metrics
Estimation and Planning
The Engine of Growth
Mockups & Prototypes
Testing Techniques
Business Model Canvas
Pricing Models

Stage 3

It's all about growth!
Your life in spreadsheets
Finance for Geeks
TBD
TBD
Founding a company
Management and Leadership
Financing
Intellectual Property
Real World Survival Kit
Last day conversation

COURSE RESOURCES

Product Ideas
Minimum Viable Product Info
The Lean Startup by Eric Ries
Hypotheses
Course Old Outline
Links of interest
Guide for TAs
• Identify, enumerate and articulate product hypotheses
• Plan and conduct “out of the building” product interviews
• Use Trello to manage team work
• Able to organize, prioritize, and be effective as a remote team member over zoom

How the course will work

Classes will be conducted over Zoom. All students are expected to attend with their cameras on throughout the formal class time. Also team work and customer interviews and discussions will be conducted using Zoom. We will make extensive use of breakout rooms in zoom to allow for small group work.

Team work has always been essential to getting anything real done. And with Covid now more than ever, organizations are encouraging or even requiring remote work. And in most cases remote team members are not self-selected, they are chosen based on organizational requirements. And so in this course also, remote team work will fundamental to success.

All students will be placed into teams of 4 very early in the semester and will work with this group throughout. We will do our best to create reasonably matched teams but you will also have to understand the reality of not being able to handpick your teammates.

This web site is the repository of all information related to this course. Slides, homework assignments, course notes, additional background information. You will have access to it directly or through Latte. All lectures will be video and audio recorded, and available directly from Latte as well.

Change Policy

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus and the associated curriculum web site if he deems it necessary. Any changes will either be announced in class or through e-mail. All students are responsible for finding out about such changes. Each student must be aware that not all assignments are listed in the syllabus. Students must use their common sense and not look for loopholes in the syllabus because, ultimately, the instructor has the final say in all matters. If you are confused on any assignment, ask the instructor for clarification.

By deciding to stay in this course, you are agreeing to all parts of this syllabus. In fairness to everyone, the syllabus must apply equally to all students without exception.

Prerequisites

This course has no pre-requisites. It is open to Sophomores and above

Credit Hours

Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of nine hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.)

Evaluation

The final grade in this course will reflect my assessment of your performance in the course. This includes your participation; your mastery of the key learning objectives; your demonstration this both in written form and in code (if applicable); your application of what you’ve learned to working on a team; building an interesting product; and communicating what you achieved at the end of the semester.

Individual assignments are scored and weighted (see below), and used to determine class rank which in turn is used to determine your grade. Note that you will not get a numeric “final score”, just a final grade. I will follow the guidelines from the University Bulletin:

• A -> High Distinction
• B -> Distinction
• C -> Satisfactory
• D -> Passing, but Unsatisfactory

Marks for assignments
Throughout the semester, there will be homeworks, assignments, presentations, quizzes etc., small and large. Those assignments are all given a 0-100 mark in Latte.

**Note:** You have a maximum 3 weeks after a mark has been posted to call our attention to a possible error, oversight or misunderstanding. That is your responsibility. After that, the mark as recorded in Latte will not be changed.

**Note:** All submitted written assignments (excluding blog posts, emails, etc) should be in pdf format, with your name and assignment number at the top. This is to maintain the sanity of your instructors as we sort through the submissions. 20 points are deducted for non-pdf submissions, and another 20 for submissions without your name at the top.

- **Class Participation:** ~25%: Attendance is required either in person or on zoom. On zoom you will need to have your camera on to be considered in attendance. Also look for you to engage in discussions, both with the class and in breakout rooms. Also to make good faith efforts to respond to assignments marked as “participation” by submitting responses.

- **Team Contribution (based on peer and self assessments) ~15%**: A major aspect of this course is your work on your team. Do you contribute personally to your team? Are you a positive influence on productivity? Are you a reliable team member? Do your team mates like working with you? Are you at the center of problems or of solutions?

- **Individual Assignments:** ~25%: I will pay attention to whether you are just regurgitating the reading or really engaging with it. So, give a personal perspective or insight, make connections with other readings, your other classes, your own reading and research. Pay attention to writing good, professional English. Use the tools. Many students find that they benefit from using the Brandeis Writing Center to review first drafts.

- **Final Term Project:** ~35%: How well are the Lean Startup principles understood, documented and applied? Is the result based truly on hypotheses that are tested, getting out of the building, iterating, and getting true and challenging validations? How much did team members engage in the project? How compelling is the final case? Is it based on real evidence? Does the team explain and persuade in their presentation? Am I convinced that this is a real business that will make money and grow? How interesting is the product? What is the quality of writing, organization, clarity, fit and finish of a the final deliverables?

### Course Requirements

**Academic Integrity**

Every member of the University community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. A student shall not submit work that is falsified or is not the result of the student’s own effort.

Infringement of academic honesty by a student subjects that student to serious penalties, which may include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension from the University or other sanctions (see section 20 of R&R). Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality.

A student who is in doubt regarding standards of academic honesty as they apply to a specific course or assignment should consult the faculty member responsible for that course or assignment before submitting the work. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Department of Student Rights and Community Standards. Citation and research assistance can be found at [Brandeis Library Guides - Citing Sources](http://0.0.0.0:3000/).

**Participation**
Attendance is required either in person or on zoom. On zoom you will need to have your camera on to be considered in attendance. Also look for you to engage in discussions, both with the class and in breakout rooms. Also to make good faith efforts to respond to assignments marked as “participation” by submitting responses.

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