ENTREP 395 – Seminar: Entrepreneurship Demystified

**Class Schedule:** Tuesdays, 9:30a – 12:30p

**Location:** Kresge 2-335

**Faculty:** Elizabeth Lukehart, Associate Director, Farley Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, e-lukehart@northwestern.edu or 847-467-4432

**Office hours:** Tuesday 1-3p and Thursday 10-12p, in MFC 4-138 or by appointment

**Texts**

*Disrupted* by Dan Lyons  
*Creativity, Inc.* by Ed Catmull  
HBS Coursepack  
Articles and videos available on Canvas

**Introduction**

Entrepreneurship Demystified pulls back the veil on Silicon Valley and startups. Specifically designed for students with some extracurricular experience in entrepreneurship, we will explore current issues in the startup world and challenges students may face in the workplace.

This discussion-based class will ask students to think critically about topics such as: building and working on a team, the pros and cons of “startup culture,” how to navigate the industry as a woman or minority, and how to manage for innovation. Students are expected to participate actively in weekly discussions and openly reflect on their own career experiences and goals.

**Assignments and Expectations**
This class is heavily discussion-based. Expect very little in the way of lectures. For it to work, students are expected to prepare for class by doing the readings and actively participate in conversation each week.

Excused absences will not be penalized unless they become excessive. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade.

**Assignments**

Readings/Videos/Podcasts: Each week students will have assigned readings, videos or podcasts. I expect everyone to be prepared to speak about the assigned content and topic for the week.

Co-leading discussion: One or two students will be assigned each week to co-lead discussion with me on that week’s topic.

BYOT: Bring your own topic! Each week one or two students will be responsible for assigning the class a reading (or video, TEDTalk, podcast, etc.) on a topic of your choice related to entrepreneurship, and leading discussion on that. It can be drawn from your own experience, current events, or just something you’re passionate about.

Final presentation: Presentations should be approximately 10 mins, and should reflect on the following questions - Are you thinking differently about your startup career after this quarter? If so, how and why? If not, what’s the path you envision going forward & what help do you need to get there? What are the biggest challenges you expect to face? Slides are optional.

Final reflection paper: The paper should be 3-5 pages, double spaced, and can be on a topic of your choosing. Was there something we didn’t cover in class that you wanted to talk about? Was there something we discussed that you want to go deeper on? We will discuss the assignment in more detail in class.

**Grading breakdown**

Participation: 40%
Co-leading discussion with Prof. Lukehart: 10%
Leading discussion on topic of your choice: 15%
Final presentation: 20%
Reflection paper: 15%

**Week 1, 9/19**

Topic: Why entrepreneurship?
Videos:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action](https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVfy2T0rzMc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVfy2T0rzMc)

- Course introduction & expectations
- Student & faculty introductions
- Discuss videos: What drives someone to do a startup? What’s the why behind your company?
- Guest speaker: Samir Mayekar, Co-founder & CEO, SiNode Systems

**Week 2, 9/26**

Topic: Who is an entrepreneur?
Videos:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/adam_grant_the_surprising_habits_of_original_thinkers](https://www.ted.com/talks/adam_grant_the_surprising_habits_of_original_thinkers)

[https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/297935](https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/297935)

Revisit Yvon Chouinard video

- Discuss videos: What qualities do entrepreneurs need? How do the different stages of business affect what skills you need? Can employees be entrepreneurs?
- Guest speaker: Gregg Latterman, Founder & CEO, Aware Records and A-Squared Management

**Week 3, 10/3**

Topic: Building a team and working on a team
Readings: HBS Core Curriculum reading – Leading Teams

- In-class exercise
• Discuss readings: What are best practices/considerations when building, leading, and working on a team?
• Guest speaker: Adam Goodman, Director, Center for Leadership

Week 4, 10/10

Topic: Competitions, incubators, accelerators & community
Readings: AirB&B case

• Discuss readings
  o Pros & cons of competitions, incubators, etc.? How do you assess a community? Where should you start a company and does it make a difference?
• Guest speaker: Aidan Mouat, Co-founder & CEO, Hazel Technologies

Week 5, 10/17

Topic: CYA or “How not to get screwed”
Reading: HBS Industry Note on equity compensation


• Discuss readings: What legal issues do startups and startup employees need to look out for? How do you allocate equity? Discuss Steve Ballmer example.
• Guest speaker: Mike Moyer, Founder & Managing Director, Fair and Square Ventures

Week 6, 10/24

Topic: Startup culture & Ethics
Readings:

Disrupted by Dan Lyons


https://www.newyorker.com/business/currency/silicon-valley-has-an-empathy-vacuum

https://nyti.ms/2vkej9m

• Discuss readings
  o What are the pros and cons of “startup culture”?
  o What role does ethics play in business and startup culture?
  o Where do issues of free speech and political views fit in?
• Guest speaker: Hillary Hass, Analyst, M3 Capital Partners

**Week 7, 10/31**

Topic: Startup Culture & Ethics, week two – Gender, diversity, inclusivity & shifting paradigms

Readings:


• Discuss readings
  - How do we address the experience of women & minorities in startups & the tech world? How can you handle issues of discrimination/harassment and/or support those around you? How do you shift the current paradigm and build a company that embraces gender, ethnic & age diversity?

• Guest speakers
  - Alex Batdorf, Co-founder & CMO, ZipFit Denim
  - Cayla Weisberg, Partner, InvestHer Ventures

**Week 8, 11/7**

Topic: Entrepreneurs in the Media

Videos:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzPQ8TdXIWy


Steve Jobs (movie)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gV6hP9wpMW8

• Discuss videos: How are entrepreneurs portrayed in the media? Why?
  - What are the pros & cons? How can startups leverage the media?
  - Apple vs. Tesla events – what are the differences? What’s good and bad about each? What do these events tell you about the company?

• Guest speaker: Ben Parr, Co-founder & CMO, Octane AI
Week 9, 11/14

Topic: Failure, Pivoting & the Founder’s path

Videos:

https://www.ted.com/talks/astro_teller_the_unexpected_benefit_of_celebrating_failure

https://thefoundation.com/podcast/episode52

- Discuss readings: How do we learn from failure? How do we know when to pivot? How do we navigate the founder’s path?
- Guest speaker – Suneel Gupta, Co-founder & CEO, Rise

Week 10, 11/21

Topic – Innovation & Disruption
Readings:

Creativity, Inc. by Ed Catmull

https://www.ted.com/talks/steven_johnson_where_good_ideas_come_from

- Discuss readings: What is innovation? What fosters innovation? How do we manage for it and build a company of creative risk takers?
- Guest speaker – TBD

Week 11, 11/28

Final presentations

Week 12, 12/5

Finals week, no class, final paper due