Quarter: Fall 2021  
Course Title: Accelerate Your Startup Idea  
Course Code: BUS 217  
Instructor: Bret Waters

Course Summary: In this fast-paced course we will explore an accelerated methodology for turning a startup idea into a launch-ready, investment-ready business in eight weeks. The course is structured to be highly-collaborative and the process is applicable to all kinds of ventures, including non-tech and social ventures. We will have a “pitch night” at the end of the course, where students will have the option of presenting their startup idea to guest investors who serve as judges. Mostly, we’ll have fun and create powerful connections together.

*Please see course page for full description and additional details.*

Note about live attendance and recording: The class sessions will be recorded, but the interactive nature of the course is such that students will get the most value if they attend the sessions live and participate in class discussion.

Grade Options and Requirements:

- No Grade Requested (NGR)  
  o. This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.

- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)  
  o. Students must attend at least 80% of class sessions and participate in class discussion.

- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)  
  o. Students must attend at least 80% of class sessions, plus complete and submit two pieces of written work (to be discussed further in class).

*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

Tentative Weekly Outline:

**Week 1: Listen to the waves.**  
Introduction to the course, including themes of idea vs execution, unit economics, and mythbusting. Most great startups begin by noticing a problem worth solving.

**Week 2: Create something people want.**  
The only thing that matters is getting to product-market fit. So how do we get there most efficiently? Concepts covered include Design Thinking, Lean Startup, and Landscape Analysis.

**Week 3: Create an engine of growth.**  
A business model is the rationale by which an organization creates, delivers, and captures value. Concepts covered include the Business Model Canvas, drawing diagrams of how the money flows, and other visualizations that help to inform how your particular venture creates, delivers, and captures value.
Week 4: Building an economic model.
Spreadsheets are fun! It ain’t gonna work if the numbers don’t add up. The leading cause of startup death is CAC > LTV. Most startups go broke – slowly at first, then all of a sudden. Let’s get the numbers right and avoid this. Spreadsheets are fun!

Week 5: Raising capital
There has never been a better time to raise capital. We’ll look at debt capital, angel capital, impact capital and venture capital. Term sheets, liquidation preferences, valuation, and so much more!

Week 6: Create a funnel.
Most startups fail from lack of customers. Everything was perfect, but the customers didn’t show up. Let’s avoid that. Concepts covered include marketing funnels, customer acquisition cost, market segmentation, personas, and more.

Week 7: Jedi Mind Tricks for entrepreneurs.
The human mind is a powerful thing. It also is a tricky thing – all of us have certain elements of our psychology that both drive us to success and can trip us up. What are the defining mindsets of a successful entrepreneur?

Week 8: Articulate the story.
Pitch Night, with Venture Capital Investors in the classroom as guest judges.

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions
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