Course Title: Learning Entrepreneurship Through HBO’s Silicon Valley
Course Code: BUS 151
Instructor: Joe Augenbraun and Linda Pouliot

Course Summary:

Ever wonder if the trials and tribulations of the popular HBO Silicon Valley show happen in actual startups? Learn entrepreneurship by comparing and contrasting the situations depicted in this hit TV series with those of real life entrepreneurs.

We will dig into the situations shown in HBO’s Silicon Valley and describe the underlying contract terms, issues, and dynamics that lead to those situations. We will watch excerpts of Silicon Valley in class and discuss these lessons as well as the underlying entrepreneurship topics. We will talk about entrepreneurs’ real life experiences that mimic the show to further enlighten how art imitates life.

This class is suitable for anyone who is or wishes to be an entrepreneur. Even though Silicon Valley is used as the jumping off point for discussion and topics, it is not directly a class on Silicon Valley as a TV show.

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

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 Score will be determined by student attendance and participation. To earn a grade of CR a student must attend 6 out of the 8 sessions.

• Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
  o Your grade will be based on a paper of 4 to 6 pages.

*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:

NOTE: We will show video in class for the most important scenes and segments from HBO’s Silicon Valley. But it will deepen your engagement to watch (or re-watch) the assigned episodes before class.

All episodes are available on HBO’s website, hbo.com.

Class 1: From Concept to Company
Before class: Watch episodes 1 to 4 from season 1 (S1E1 to S1E4)
Class introduction - expectations, grading requirements, etc.
Is your business a good idea? - SWOT analysis and strategic analysis
Cofounders - choosing co-founders, splitting equity
Memorializing your choices - founder’s agreement, vesting, etc.

Class 2: Fundraising
Before class: Watch episode 1 from season 2 (S2E1)
When - Phases and how much to raise
Who to raise from - Friends, Family, Angels, Institutions
Structure - Convertible Notes and Priced Rounds
Term Sheets explained

Class 3: The Pitch: How to tell your story
Before class: (same as previous class) Watch episode 1 from season 2 (S2E1)

Class 4: Institutional Investors
Dynamics of how a VC works internally
Guest speakers: Real live VCs (Guests TBD depending on availability)

Class 5: Now you are Funded!
Before class: Watch episodes 3 to 6 from season 3 (S3E3 to S3E6)
Building a team
Creating a culture
Spending habits
Investor relations
Board Meetings

Class 6: Launching your product
Before class: Watch episodes 2 and 8 to 10 from season 3 (S3E2, S3E8 to S3E10)
Sales & Marketing
PR and trade shows
Tradeoffs
Metrics of success
Possible guest speaker (TBD)
Class 7: The end game

Before class: Watch episode 1 from season 3 (S3E1)
Firing a co-founder
Firing an employee
Firing a CEO (or being fired)
Getting your company acquired
Going public

Class 8: Review and summary