

USC Annenberg X Program

Founding and Leading Enduring Startups

Room: Ann L116

Thu 3:30 pm – 6:50pm, Oct 19th – Dec 14th

2 credits, 400 level course

Dinesh Moorjani

Description

Founding and Leading Enduring Startups will focus on the rigorous academic grounding, tools, and leadership skills to build and manage a startup digital media and technology ventures through its early stages of growth. The class will begin with a quantitative grounding in financial forecasting, unit economics of profitability, and evaluating market opportunities in media and broadly in the technology space. Once students feel comfortable with basic quantitative tools, the course will uncover how to craft an enduring business model in light of market dislocations, how to attract customers & users, and eventually how to monetize the business. The course will set itself apart by emphasizing practical tools and applications vs. only theoretical knowledge. In addition, the course will draw upon prominent startup and investor guest lecturers to round off the diversity of thought in the classroom. It's important to note that attendance and participation in the classroom is highly recommended, as the reading material alone will be insufficient to achieve the course objectives. It's also recommended that students come to class with a healthy curiosity about the commercial value of startups as the class will take an interdisciplinary approach to various domains including business, finance, media & marketing, human capital management and most importantly, leadership. Undergraduates and graduate students are both welcome. Exposure to basic spreadsheets is preferred.

Class Outline

Class 1:

- Introductions to the course / Anecdotes
- Share goals of the course
 - Leave the class with foundational hard skills and leadership tools to start your own new venture.
- Roadmap of Class / Reading Material review
- Questions from students about what they want to learn (make class adaptive)
- Discuss grading policy and expectations
- Basics of Financial planning and exposure to spreadsheets

Class 2

- Vision, Mission, Strategy and Hypothesis Creation
- Business Model Review
 - Value Proposition
 - Operating Model
 - Revenue Model
 - Functional Models mapped to Revenue Models
- Understanding how to create a compelling Business Plan
- Homework in excel for new venture concept idea
- Financial modeling of startup concept - Q&A
 - Template walk through
 - Excel Advanced tutorial

Class 3

- Introduction to markets, S-curves, dislocations, and opportunity analysis
- Basic functional review of key roles in a startup / organizational design
- Introduction to Software Product Development, engineering and user design
- Introduction to basic product management – agile methodology, product releases
- Guest speaker

Class 4

- Digital Marketing 101
 - 4Ps / levers of marketing and how they work together
 - Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP)
 - Signal to Noise Ratios / Tipping Point(s)
 - Growth Hacking
 - B2C, B2B, Channel Partnerships
 - Case Study review
 - Guest Speaker (tbd)

Class 5

- Recap of last two classes and reading
- Case Study review
- Business Strategy 101
 - Goal, Approach, Competitive Advantage(s)
 - Walk through and critique prominent business models
- Raising Capital – guidance / approach
 - Guest Speaker (tbd)
- In Class exam - Case Study write-up
 - HBS case to work with
 - Research Assistant to proctor exam

Class 6

- Review In-class exam and learnings
- Recap of key principals discussed in the class
- Submit Financial Models and Business Plans for review
- Homework (bring examples of leadership and tech and why they were good leaders)
- Leadership - case studies

Class 7

- Presentations of Final Group Startup Projects
- Themes
 - Managing Controllable and Idiosyncratic Risk
 - Giving Credit / Cofounders
 - Overcoming Adversity
- Guest Speaker (tbd)
- Class recap

About the instructor

As an instructor, Dinesh Moorjani brings the perspective of an entrepreneur, CEO and investor. He is currently a Managing Director and head of the LA office at Comcast Ventures. He was the founder & CEO of Hatch Labs, where he built ten mobile enterprise software and consumer companies from ground up. Dinesh cofounded Tinder in 2012. He is an LP and advisor at Warburg Pincus, a global private equity firm that has invested \$60B in nearly 800 companies globally, where he previously served as an Exec-in-Residence. Dinesh held leadership roles at IAC/InterActiveCorp and Samsung Electronics in the US & Asia. He co-founded numerous companies, including Saffronart, a global fine art marketplace and auction house. Dinesh spent his early career at AD Little, Mainspring (acquired by IBM, post-IPO) and Goldman Sachs.

Dinesh serves on the faculty at UCLA's Anderson School of Management and USC, and guest lectures at Harvard and Columbia. He serves as a board director at numerous tech companies, and serves on the advisory boards of American Express and Assurant.

Dinesh earned his B.S. in Chemical Engineering from Northwestern and his MBA from Harvard.