



BAEP 554 - Venture Initiation

THU, 6:30p – 9:30p (JFF 414)

Units:	3
Professor:	Dr. Hovig Tchalian
Office:	JFF 520 (5th floor of Fertitta Hall)
Office Hours:	By appointment (<i>please email 24 hrs in advance to help ensure a meeting slot</i>)
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Course Description

How do you build a viable business? In BAEP 554, we will learn frameworks and apply a process for expanding a feasible business concept or solution into a functioning, and potentially investable, venture. The course is aimed at both standalone ventures as well as ones inside an established business. Although much of what we discuss and apply are for scalable, high-growth ventures, we are not limited to them.

Students who took BAEP 552 (Venture Feasibility) or BAEP 556 (Technology Feasibility) learned how to identify a problem or opportunity for a particular segment and test whether it was *feasible* from a technical and market perspective. In this course, students will extend that experience to the larger business that takes a concept to market. A critical component of the course is a semester-long, team-based, and 'live' (i.e., actual) project in which you will build out all aspects of a functioning business — from founder agreements, through customer discovery and acquisition, to product / service prototyping, financing and investment, and launch.

The class will be run in an 'incubator-like' setting: sessions will be interactive and hands-on. We will have some readings and discussions but many more product sprints, customer research, product iterations, team standups, and mentor meetings.

NOTE: while you will be able to toss your venture concept into the ring, there is no explicit guarantee that it will be chosen. It will have to compete with other concepts and potential founders. Regardless, what you learn in this class will be transferable across domains — to your own venture, to working in a one, and to larger and more established settings.

Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to understand and apply the fundamental principles and practices involved in launching a scalable venture, including but not limited to:

1. Gaining direct, hands-on experience in solving common and difficult challenges in the early stages of building and launching a venture
2. Developing an iterative, problem-solving, 'fix-it' attitude and perspective
3. Developing collaborative skills to jointly research, launch, and build a functioning, viable business
4. Developing the practical and conceptual skills of generating a coherent business model whose building blocks reinforce each other and make up a coherent whole
5. Crafting a clear and compelling pitch and story around a business that is attractive to potential customers, investors, and stakeholders

To achieve these objectives, we will use a combination of methods in the course – including brief readings, an online platform, class discussions, team exercises, and external feedback

Course Materials

We have several reading sources for the course:

- Constable, Rimalovski, & Fishburne, *Talking to Humans: Success Starts with Understanding Your Customers* ([text](#), or [free download](#))
- Mollick, *The Unicorn's Shadow: Combating the Dangerous Myths that Hold Back Startups, Founders, and Investors* ([text](#), or access through USC library)
- Online Resource: [OneMauve](#) (free with registration, mobile-friendly)

Other readings are provided free of charge in Blackboard or can be accessed via USC libraries (login, go to their website, type author last name and title of journal in search bar, article should come up with online access). If you have any questions or need assistance with the Blackboard Course Pages, please contact the Marshall HelpDesk at 213-740-3000 or HelpDesk@marshall.usc.edu.

You're also welcome to consult two useful optional sources (easy reads, especially the first):

- Osterwalder & Pigneur, *Business Model Generation — A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers* (The Strategyzer Series; ISBN: 9780470876411) ([text](#), or access through USC library)
- Bland & Osterwalder, *Testing Business Ideas: A Field Guide for Rapid Experimentation* ([text](#))
- Udacity Business Models Course, esp. Chapters 2 and 3 ([online](#))

You'll also be provided access to any relevant videos or exercises through Blackboard (**BB**) and / or OneMauve (**OM**). In most cases, I'll also post in-class materials or content to Blackboard for reference. These will not necessarily be comprehensive and are meant for your own personal use in supplementing any notes you take during class. Often, I'll post these only *after* the corresponding class session.

Students are responsible not only for this posted content but also the additional content presented in all class discussions, activities, and feedback. While you're encouraged to take independent notes when you feel the need, your primary goal should be to engage in and absorb in-class activities, discussions and experiences instead of trying to 'capture' everything – see grading policies, below.

Course Communications & Submissions

When contacting me, please use email (tchalian@marshall.usc.edu – quickest response) or our Slack channel (link to be provided – occasional response). Please *schedule an appointment in advance (preferably at least 24 hours)*. I am happy to schedule a time to meet or talk over phone / Zoom.

Course submissions and announcements will be made through BB (blackboard.usc.edu) and sometimes in class or by email. Many of the emails I send will go directly through BB, and you will access and submit assignments there. *Please include your name(s) and page numbers on submissions.*

By default, BB uses your USC email address (username@usc.edu). It is therefore imperative that you *have a fully operational Blackboard account linked to a current and correct email address*. If your USC email is not your primary, please make sure to forward it to the account you regularly check. **You are responsible for ensuring that messages do not bounce back due to your storage quota being full.**

Assignments, Deliverables & Grading Policies

To achieve an A or A- in this class, you will need to go well beyond the minimum requirements as stated in the syllabus in terms of the quality of your work and your involvement in and contribution to the class. An A is a sign of exceptional work and, much like the efforts of entrepreneurs, reflects the fact that you stood out from the crowd. **Historically, the “target” grade for required classes at the Marshall School has been 3.5.** This is *not a curve* but the *most likely* grade for the average student.

I will do my best to make my expectations for our different assignments clear and to evaluate them as fairly and objectively as I can. If you feel that an error has occurred in the grading of any assignment, you may, within one week of the date the assignment is returned to you, write me a memo (one page max.) in which you request that I re-evaluate the assignment. Attach the original assignment to the memo and explain fully and carefully why you think the assignment should be re-graded. *Be aware that the re-evaluation process can result in three types of grade adjustments: positive, none, or negative.*

Finally, if you have questions about your assignments during the semester, make an appointment to discuss your concerns. Please don't wait until the last minute or the end of the semester to do so.

Your overall class grade will be based on the following components and associated point totals:

In-class contribution and engagement	200 (individual)
Customer interviews (≥25 per team member)	250 (individual)
Founder agreement (1 per team member)	50 (individual)
OneMauve activities, discussions and assignments	500 (team)
MVP demo (+ feedback)	300 (team)
Elevator pitches (≥5) + standup meetings (≥10)	300 (team)
Investor pitch (slides + presentation + BMC)	200 (team)
Teammates' evaluation of your contribution + project self-reflection	200 (individual)
TOTAL:	2000

Please be aware that **this is a hands-on, experiential course**, which means *you'll need to be involved, active, and engaged* in class activities and exercises, online discussions and assignments, and team-based projects and deliverables. It isn't possible to simply 'get by' on effort, ability, or talent alone. This is also a *fun course* and meant to directly impact your personal passions and your professional options. So, in order to get the most out of the class, care, commit, and bring your best.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is a *residential* class and **in-person attendance is expected**. Unless students provide an accommodation letter from USC OSAS requiring remote attendance, there is *no option to attend class via Zoom*.

Course Components & Assignments

There are four major components, or assignment blocks, in our course: OneMauve activities; customer interviews; an MVP; and an investor pitch. Instructions will be distributed on BB. Most of the assignments comprise activities tied directly to your semester-long venture and are primarily team-based. Others are primarily individual.

Deadlines are listed in the schedule at the end of this syllabus and *may be updated on BB and OM*. These components will be supplemented by readings (tied to individual participation), a founder agreement (individual exercise) and mentor meetings (for team feedback).

Below are summary descriptions of the components.

OneMauve activities: We are using an online resource called OneMauve OM developed by a Marshall Greif student / alum and designed for the activities and advising opportunities early-stage ventures engage in. This will be a *free resource* made available to all student teams. You and your team will need to regularly complete and update the activities on OM. *Engaged and consistent use is critical*. I will be paying close attention to teams' activity levels on OM.

Customer interviews: Like you learned in previous courses, gathering real-life data is critical to making effective decisions about a new product or service. Gathering data is doubly critical when you build a venture around a product or service. We will be asking all of you to continuously gather data by talking to potential customers and iterating on and refining a venture concept. Each of you will be conducting a total of 25 customer interviews across the semester to help develop your venture.

MVP: In previous courses, you learned to think through a feasible solution to a real problem and to think through a simple proof-of-concept, wireframe, or prototype. In this course, you will be building a more full-scale MVP or late-stage prototype. The MVP can be a product (a piece of software or hardware, say) but can also be a service. In either case, we expect you to have a concrete, early-stage artifact, object or even a process that your potential customers can react to. The goal is not to go into full-scale development but have a way of interacting with your market to understand and design what it needs.

Investor Pitch: You will complete your venture initiation by presenting a full-scale pitch in front of experienced advisors or investors. Your prior efforts all feed into this final experience with the additional benefit, in this course, of robust data, a solid MVP, and a rich understanding of what your market can bear, genuinely needs and would be willing to pay for. You will not yet be experts in your market. But in order to initiate a venture, you need to reach a sophisticated level of understanding about the market you will be launching into, something this final exercise helps you confirm.

Course & Project Contribution

This class is treated like a business meeting. Our motto is: *“treat each other as you would a customer.”* Therefore, tardiness and absences without notice are not acceptable. If you had a customer meeting, you’d be expected to be on time. If you couldn’t be on time, you’d call well in advance. Similar etiquette is required in this course.

Your overall course grade will therefore include a substantial component for your overall contribution to the opportunity project and the class as a whole, through discussions, activities, and engagement. You’ll be expected to:

1. **Attend all classes, barring a personal or medical emergency.** Attendance is critical and a *minimum requirement* of course contribution. We may discuss material in-class not found in the readings as well as conduct in-class exercises. If you miss a class, you are responsible for staying up-to-date on course content and assignments. Please download class slides from BB and check with classmates, our student assistant, or me regarding possible handouts and announcements;
2. **Show up on time and stay until the end** – it is disruptive to your classmates’ learning experience if you arrive late or leave early;
3. Complete all assigned projects;
4. **Contribute actively to teams and in classroom discussions and in-class activities.** Effective class contribution consists of analyzing, commenting, questioning, discussing, and building on others’ ideas and perspectives. The ability to present one’s ideas concisely and persuasively and to respond effectively to the ideas of others is a key entrepreneurial skill;
5. Make good use of students and guest presenters’ time. Ask thoughtful questions after guest speaker and student presentations

Participation is evaluated based on your level of involvement in class discussions – both the quality (relevance and insightfulness) and quantity (frequency) of your participation, as outlined above, with a particular focus on the quality.

Our course contribution rubric appears below (and is reflected / repeated in Appendix B):

- *Outstanding Contribution.* Your contributions reflect considerable preparation; they are substantive and supported by logic and evidence. Your comments or questions create a spring-board for discussion by providing an insight or synthesizing and building on what has already been said. The class learns from you when you speak; in your absence, discussions would suffer.
- *Excellent Contribution.* You come prepared with substantial comments. You demonstrate good insight and clear thinking. You are able to make some connection to what has been said in prior discussion. The class notices when you’re not part of the discussion.
- *Good contribution.* You come prepared with a few relevant comments and / or questions. You pay attention to the ongoing discussion and add to it.
- *Minimal Contribution.* You participate occasionally but are unprepared. You rarely offer interesting insights into the discussion. It appears that you are not paying attention to what others are saying during discussion.
- *Barely Acceptable / No Contribution.* You say little or nothing in class. If you were not in the class, the discussion would not suffer.

At the end of the semester you will be asked to complete a team and self-assessment of project contribution. (See Appendix A.) I'll assign scores for individual student contributions to team projects, based on my observations of the team's dynamics, my assessment of the project quality, and thoughtful consideration of the information provided through your peer evaluations and your own self-evaluation.

Assignment Submission & Late Policy

All assignments will be submitted on BB. Please consult assignment due dates in the class schedule and on BB. Our readings and assignments are aligned closely with course content and sequenced with content that preceded and follows them. So, everything we do is time-critical.

As a course policy, therefore, **I will accept no late assignments**. It is your responsibility to turn in all assignments (quizzes, case responses, project deliverables) on time. While we all have things come up once in a while, **it is your responsibility to communicate (preferably well in advance) with me and your team if something unexpected happens**. Some assignments (such as BB case discussion posts) have a built-in buffer (more cases / readings than required responses). Regardless, our standard rule for late assignments is **one excused late submission per semester**, subject to the advance communication rule.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Technology Use Policy

*Laptop and Internet use is not permitted during academic or professional sessions unless otherwise stated by the professor and/or staff. Use of other personal communication devices, such as cell phones, is considered unprofessional and is not permitted during academic or professional sessions. **Bring your laptops along, in case we need them. But please keep them stored until (and if) we have to use them.***

ANY electronic devices (cell phones, iPads, other texting devices, laptops, I-pods) must be completely turned off during class time. Upon request, you must comply and put your device on the table in off mode and FACE DOWN. You might also be asked to deposit your devices in a designated area in the classroom. Your primary objective during class is to focus, contribute, and engage.

Videotaping faculty lectures is not permitted due to copyright infringement regulations. Audiotaping may be permitted if approved by the professor. Use of any recorded or distributed material is reserved exclusively for USC students registered in this class.

AI (Artificial Intelligence) Policy

In this course, I encourage you to use artificial intelligence (AI)-powered programs such as ChatGPT, Bard or Claude, to help you with assignments that indicate the permitted use of AI. You should also be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses; thus they are not yet prepared to produce text that meets the standards of this course. To adhere to our university values, you must cite any AI-generated material (e.g., text, images, etc.) included or referenced in your work and provide the prompts used to generate the content. Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the

Office of Academic Integrity. Please review the instructions in each assignment for more details on how and when to use AI Generators for your submissions, if applicable.

Add / Drop Process

Most Marshall classes are open enrollment (R-clearance) through the Add deadline. If there is an open seat, students can add the class using Web Registration. If the class is full, students will need to continue checking the *Schedule of Classes* (classes.usc.edu) to see if a space becomes available. Students who do not attend the first two class sessions (for classes that meet twice per week) or the first class meeting (for classes that meet once per week) may be dropped from the course if they do not notify the instructor prior to their absence.

Retention of Assignments & Deliverables

Projects, assignments, and any and all graded work that comprised the course grade will be retained for one year after the end of the course *if* the graded work was not returned to the student. If I returned a graded paper to you, it is your responsibility to file it. Please keep copies of all submissions, regardless.

Grade Disputes

All grades assigned by faculty members are final. Students have the right to seek explanation, guidance, counsel and reasons for the assignment of a grade. Faculty may initiate a change in grade if there is an error in the calculation of a grade. Students may appeal a grade according to university policy as set forth in *SCampus*. A faculty member may not change a disputed grade outside the formal appeals process. In response to a disputed academic evaluation by an instructor, a student is entitled to two levels of appeal after review by the instructor: first to the chairperson of the department and then to the appropriate dean of the school. The full university policy can be found in *SCampus* under University Governance / Academic Policies at <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-c/>.

Incomplete Grades

A mark of IN (incomplete) may be assigned when work is not completed because of a documented illness or other emergency that occurs after the 12 week of the semester (or the twelfth week equivalent for any course that is scheduled for less than 15 weeks).

An “emergency” is defined as a serious documented illness, or an unforeseen situation that is beyond the student’s control, that prevents a student from completing the semester. Prior to the 12 week, the student still has the option of dropping the class. Arrangements for completing an IN must be initiated by the student and agreed to by the instructor prior to the final examination. If an Incomplete is assigned as the student’s grade, the instructor is required to fill out an *Assignment of an Incomplete (IN) and Requirements for Completion* form which specifies to the student and to the department the work remaining to be done, the procedures for its completion, the grade in the course to date, and the weight to be assigned to work remaining to be done when the final grade is computed. Both the instructor and student must sign the form with a copy of the form filed in the department. Class work to complete the course must be completed within one calendar year from the date the IN was assigned. The IN mark will be converted to an F grade should the course not be completed within the time allowed.

Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies Confidentiality Policy

Throughout this class and related entrepreneurship activities and events, students will be exposed to proprietary information from other students, guest lecturers, and faculty. It is the policy of the Greif Center that *all such information is to be treated as proprietary and confidential*.

By enrolling in and taking part in Greif Center classes and activities, students agree not to disclose this information to any third parties without specific written permission from students, guest lecturers, or faculty, as applicable. Students further agree not to utilize any such proprietary information for their own personal commercial advantage or for the commercial advantage of any third party.

In addition, students agree that any legal or consulting advice provided without direct fee and in an academic setting will not be relied upon without the enlisted opinion of an outside attorney or consultant without affiliation to the Program.

Any breach of this policy may subject a student to academic integrity proceedings as described in the University of Southern California University Governance Policies and procedures as outlined in *SCampus* and to any remedies that may be available at law.

The Greif Center, the Marshall School of Business, and the University of Southern California disclaim any responsibility for the protection of intellectual property of students, guest lecturers or faculty who are involved in Greif Center classes or events. Receipt of this policy and registration in our classes are evidence that you understand this policy and will abide by it.

*NOTE: You may also be asked to sign an **NDA (Non-Disclosure)** or **IP (Intellectual property) agreement** as part of this class, in order to ensure legal protections for the local organization(s) providing project materials.*

USC Statement on Academic Conduct & Support Systems:

Academic Integrity:

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

Open Expression and Respect for All

An important goal of the educational experience at USC Marshall is to be exposed to and discuss diverse, thought-provoking, and sometimes controversial ideas that challenge one's beliefs. In this course we will support the values articulated in the USC Marshall "[Open Expression Statement](https://www.marshall.usc.edu/open-expression-statement)" (<https://www.marshall.usc.edu/open-expression-statement>).

APPENDIX A: Team Project Peer & Self-Evaluation

Each team member must complete this form along with the final team project. Please submit under the BB link *individually* and in confidence – all information will be treated as confidential.

Project Team Name: _____

Team Member's Name: _____

Instructions: All team members are asked to assess the relative contributions / efforts of all members of their team (including themselves) in order to reward excellence and avoid free-riding. Assessments weigh both the quality and quantity of contributions to different deliverables, positive contributions to team cohesiveness and energy, and overall engagement with the project. Please elaborate thoughtfully and in some detail on the rationale for each evaluation and add any comments at the end.

Here are the ratings you can select for each team member evaluation, including yourself:

- 5 – *Outstanding:* went far beyond the call of duty and made an exceptional contribution
- 4 – *Excellent:* made many major contributions to the project and always delivered
- 3 – *Solid:* was a competent contributor to the project throughout all of its phases
- 2 – *Good:* team player who usually (but not always) did his or her assigned part
- 1 – *Barely acceptable:* did the minimum to get through
- 0 – *Unacceptable:* did not do the work and / or was disruptive to the team

Team Member Name:	Rating:	Elaboration / Rationale:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Additional comments (if any):

APPENDIX B: Self-Assessment of Class Contribution

Each student must complete this form at the end of the course. Please submit under the BB link *individually*, filling out frankly by considering your contribution to the class and your own learning goals. I will consider your self-assessment along with my own assessment of your contribution (50 pts) and pair that portion of the score with your personal reflection essay (50 pts) in calculating the total score

Your Name: _____

Instructions: All students are asked to assess their relative contributions / efforts to their and their classmates learning in order to reward excellence and avoid free-riding. Assessments weigh both the quality and quantity of contributions to different discussions, positive contributions to classroom atmosphere and civility, and overall engagement with the learning process. Please elaborate thoughtfully and in some detail on the rationale for each evaluation and add any comments at the end.

Here are the ratings you can select for each self-evaluation criterion, which I will average across all 3:

5 – *Outstanding* [=100%]: You are in the top 5-10% of participating students, i.e., only a few other students in the class have participated more actively or equally actively. You have been well-prepared for every class discussion. Your comments and questions have been consistently insightful.

4 – *Excellent* [=90%]: You have tended to offer frequent comments or questions in every class. You have been well prepared for class discussions in nearly every class. If called on, you have been able to provide insightful, well-prepared comments.

3 – *Good* [=80%]: You have offered at least one comment or question in most classes and have often been well-prepared for discussions. If called on, you have been able to provide well-prepared comments.

2 – *Minimal* [=70%]: In general, you have spoken up only when called on but have occasionally offered a comment or question proactively. If called on, you have not always been able to provide well-prepared comments.

1 – *Barely acceptable* [=40%]: There are only a few other students in the class who have participated less actively. In general, you have spoken up only when called on and have not been prepared.

Self-Assessment Criteria:	Rating:	Elaboration / Rationale:
1. Contribution to online & in-class discussions (readings + cases + guest speakers)		
2. Contribution to positive classroom atmosphere & civility		
3. Contribution to overall engagement with learning process (of self + classmates)		

Reflection on your contribution to team and your own learning (200 - 250 words):

COURSE SCHEDULE

BB = Blackboard; OM = OneMauve; US = Unicorn's Shadow (text); TH = Talking to Humans (text)

NOTES:

- Most assignments (indiv. or team submissions) are due by **Thursday before class, by 12 noon**
- All assignments and readings will be **posted on BB and OM**; guest speakers TBA
- Syllabus is **not meant to be definitive or comprehensive** and may be updated occasionally; check date (upper right) for most recent version; **check BB or most up-to-date info**

Class	Topics	Readings & Advance Prep	Deliverables
1 (1.11)	- Course intro (venture launch) - Founding myths / misconceptions - Elevator pitches - Pitch competitions	- US: Intro + Chapter 1	- <i>Take BB Pre-Class Survey (1 to 3 venture concepts)</i> <i>[Due day of class, Wk 2: by 12 noon]</i>
2 (1.18)	- Teams selection + fit - Accountability groups - Types of markets (<i>where to play</i>)	- US: Chapter 2	- <i>Pre-Class survey due</i> - <i>Add Slack</i> - <i>Start navigating through OM</i>
3 (1.25)	- Customer segments (<i>how to play + win</i>) - Value propositions - Accountability groups	- TH: Intro+ "The Story"	- <i>Team elevator pitch (#1), in class</i> - <i>Prep for accountability group standup</i> - <i>Launch discovery interviews, Phase 1 (5 per team member)</i>
4 (2.1)	- Prototypes + MVPs - Mentor assignments	- TH: "How To" (pp. 30-43) + Appendix (Cold Approach)	- <i>Prep for accountability group standup</i> - <i>Post team elevator pitch (#2) to BB</i>
5 (2.8)	- Analyzing interviews - Mentor feedback - Pivoting	- TH: "How To" (pp. 44-65) + Appendix (Business Assumptions)	- <i>Launch discovery interviews, Phase 2 (10 per team member)</i>
6 (2.15)	- Business models - Hiring plan - Advisory boards		- <i>Prep for accountability group standup</i> - <i>Start customer validation / prototyping</i>
7 (2.22)	- Unit economics - Financials / P&L		- <i>Submit BMC (draft)</i> - <i>Submit hiring plan + board plan</i>
8 (2.29)	- IP protection - MVP demos		- <i>Prep for accountability group standup</i> - <i>Submit MVP demo to BB</i>
9 (3.7)	- Customer validation - Willingness to pay		- <i>Launch discovery interviews, Phase 3 (10 per team member)</i>
SPRING BREAK (3.14)	NO CLASS	NA	NA
10 (3.21)	- Market sizing - Product roadmap		

11 (3.28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raising capital - VC decision-making - Cap tables / options - Bootstrapping <p>(NOTE: YPO Event Today)</p>	- US: Chapter 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Prep for accountability group standup</i> - <i>Submit BMC (updated)</i> - <i>Start on product / service roadmap</i>
12 (4.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PMF / why now - Pitching a venture - Competitions (results) 	- US: Chapter 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Post team elevator pitch (#3) to BB</i> - <i>Submit TAM / SAM / SOM to BB</i>
13 (4.11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Storytelling - To grow or not to grow 	- US: Chapter 5	- <i>Submit BMC (final)</i>
14 (4.18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pitch prep - What next? 	- US: Conclusion	- <i>Practice pitches</i>
15 (4.25)	Wrap-Up: Presentations / Submissions		<i>Submit + present team final pitches (+ team evals & individual reflection)</i> <i>[Time / Date TBD]</i>