

## COURSE SYLLABUS

2756 - Entrepreneurial Project , 7 ECTS

Spring Semester

202425

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### COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Brian Tam

### SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Brian Tam is the founder of Let's Make Great!, where he has supported innovators and entrepreneurs in transforming ideas into impactful ventures for the past 12 years.

As a consultant and coach, Brian has collaborated with hundreds of early-stage teams to systematically develop new products, services, and brands. He leverages his experience in founding multiple businesses to blend strategy consulting, design thinking facilitation, and empathetic coaching to guide founders in untangling their concepts, gaining clarity, and driving meaningful growth.

Brian is also the creator of PROTO startup cards, producer of The Rebuild documentary, and author of Awrignawl Creativity. He has delivered 3 TEDx talks and serves on the Board of Directors at Hands-On Shanghai. He frequently mentors within the startup ecosystem to empower founders, business owners, and creatives. Reach out! He is always curious to talk about startup projects and the founder journey.

### INSTITUTIONAL EMAIL

- Primary: [brian@letsmakegreat.com](mailto:brian@letsmakegreat.com)
- [brian.tam@novasbe.pt](mailto:brian.tam@novasbe.pt)

### OFFICE HOURS

By appointment: [Find time in Brian's calendar](#)

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### PREREQUISITE(S) / PRÉ-REQUISITO(S)

NA

### COURSE UNIT AIMS

In Entrepreneurial Project (2756) students will continue building from their first-semester projects OR start/join new ones. In this transition beyond the idea stage, students will tackle challenges to realize their vision with real-world execution. Therefore the course demands hands-on experimentation, quick iteration, and independent problem-solving. This emphasis on practicality is balanced by personal reflection, critical thinking, and relevant startup theory/frameworks.

By leveraging the unique characteristics of startups to solve social and environmental problems, students will create projects that personally resonate, catalyze change, and contribute to society. While the focus may be on developing impact ventures, the goal of Entrepreneurial Project is cultivating key entrepreneurial mindsets, skills and confidence to be able to navigate an ever-evolving world and marketplace.

### CRITERIA FOR PROJECT

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Projects must fulfill the following three aspects:

- **Impact:** What specific societal or environmental challenges does the project address? Beyond financial profit, what other value will be created? Why is that important?
- **Team Composition:** Does the team consist of at least 3 MIEI classmates? And are there no more than 6 total members?
- **Independence:** Is decision-making and execution led by MIEI students, or is the project incubated or affiliated with another organization?

The criteria are designed to be broad enough to accommodate individual diversity and creativity while ensuring a foundation for collaboration and mutual growth. If your project does not meet the criteria, you may email the instructor to request an exception. Include your project concept and status, which criteria cannot be met (and why), and how you plan to overcome this barrier. Every request will be considered, but note, exceptions will be limited.

Teams are encouraged to continue developing their project between semesters, either in the winter bootcamp or independently. For those who are interested in changing teams/projects, there will be time allocated in the first class of the semester. Lastly, students can leave/join new teams during the semester -- provided they negotiate with new/existing team members and let the instructor know.

## COURSE UNIT CONTENT

As each project's progress will vary, class time will be split between general topics and team-specific tools and frameworks. Furthermore, as a practical course, students will be given ample class time to experiment, strategize and build their startups together, both as a team and as a class.

- Week 1: Course Intro + Principles of Lean Startup + Team formation
- Week 2: Product-Market Fit + Startup Dynamics
- Week 3: Value Proposition Definition + MVP
- Week 4: Product Development
- Week 5: Impact Modeling + Business Model Development
- Week 6: Strategic Positioning
- Week 7: Go-to-Market Strategy
- Week 8: Pitch Development and Storytelling
- Week 9: Vision and Roadmap
- Week 10: Leveraging the Startup Ecosystem
- Week 11: Final Pitch Preparation
- Week 12: Final Presentations and Reflections

## LESSON PLAN

Lesson	Synopsis	Additional details	Materials/ Readings
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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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- A. Knowledge and Understanding  
«Describe Knowledge and Understanding»
- B. Subject-Specific Skills  
«Describe Subject-Specific Skills»
- C. General Skills  
«Describe General Skills»

### TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

The course employs a variety of active learning approaches to foster a rich educational experience:

- **Hands-On Learning:** Students engage in practical exercises and real-world project work, applying theoretical concepts to their startup ventures.
- **Team-Based Collaboration:** Group work is encouraged to develop teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills.
- **Workshops and Mentorship:** Workshops and sessions with guest speakers provide guidance, feedback, and insights from experienced entrepreneurs and industry experts.
- **Reflective Learning:** Students will maintain reflective journals to track progress, assess personal development, and capture key learnings throughout the course.
- **Peer Feedback:** Structured opportunities for peer assessment and feedback are included to enhance learning through collaboration.

### ASSESSMENT

**Each project's maturity will vary** - as some team/projects will be new and others will be a continuation of semester one's work. Therefore projects are assessed on their relative progress, its individual merits, and not as a class competition.

- **Weekly Assignments (30%):** There will be 10 submissions to track progress, learnings, and personal reflections (individual student)
- **Final Pitch Presentation (20%):** Looking at the entirety of the semester's work, this summarizes the team/project's value proposition, impact/traction and progress to a panel of judges (team)
- **Final Exam (20%):** Written paper assessing student's understanding of key entrepreneurial mindsets, skills and knowledge (individual student)
- **Participation and Attendance (30%):** Active engagement in class discussions, teamwork, and peer feedback sessions (individual student, see below for further details).

### Attendance Policy

All students are expected to attend all classes. In case the student cannot attend any class, they are expected to let the TA and instructor know 1 day in advance via email.

### Class Participation

- Makes valuable contributions about topics under discussion that demonstrates engagement with peers and reflection/research outside the classroom
- Accurately exhibits knowledge of content being discussed

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- Demonstrates excellent listening -- responds appropriately to comments others make
- Raises questions that lead to meaningful further exploration and discussion
- Clarifies points that others may not understand
- Draws upon personal experience or opinion when clearly relevant to class discussion
- Offers relevant, succinct insights and challenges to others
- Demonstrates ability to apply, analyze, and synthesize course material
- Demonstrates willingness to take risk in attempting to answer unpopular question

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following resources are supplemental and not required, intended for those interested in diving deeper into entrepreneurship and impact ventures:

#### Podcasts & Videos

- **Startup School | YouTube** - a playlist of talks by Y Combinator's alumni founders, partners and other experts sharing the foundational principles that helped them build startups
  - Recommended episode: How To Talk To Users | Startup School
- **The Pitch Show | podcast** - these are actual pitches from early stage startups pitching real investors, with additional behind the scenes discussion and the potential for actual investment
  - Recommended episode: #78 Got Goals? Grab a Cru
- **How I Built This : NPR | podcast** - these founder interviews illuminate their early insights, normalize non-linear paths and feature a diverse set of impact ventures/founders
  - Recommended episode: Canva: Melanie Perkins (2019) : NPR

#### Books & Articles

- **Almanack of Naval Ravikant** - an inspiring and easy to read book capturing the insights on growth and development by entrepreneur and investor, Naval Ravikant
- **1000 True Fans** - Kevin Kelly's foundational article that reframed the way entrepreneurs and creators look at the early stages of building
- **The Lean Startup** - For a deeper dive into the core methodology underpinning the class and the most recent generation of startups (by Eric Ries)
- **What I Wish I Knew When I Was 20** - a popular book by Stanford professor Tina Seelig, capturing the insights she shared to encourage students, future founders, and change makers.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION