**NEXT HEI - Venture Building Course Syllabus**

**Course Information**

Course Title: NEXT HEI - Venture Building

Credits: 2 ECTS

Duration: 8 weeks

Format: Online (Lectures + Team Projects)

Level: Undergraduate (Advanced) / Graduate

Prerequisites: No

Digital badge and certificate of attendance at the end

**Schedule :** Starting from Monday October 27th to Monday December 15th 2025

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| --- | --- |
| Monday 27th October | 17:00 (GMT+1) – 20:00 |
| Monday 3rd November | 17:00 (GMT+1) – 20:00 |
| Monday 10 th November | 17:00 (GMT+1) – 19:00 |
| Monday 17th November | 17:00 (GMT+1) – 19:00 |
| Monday 24th November | 17:00 (GMT+1) – 19:00 |
| Monday 1st December | 17:00 (GMT+1) – 19:00 |
| Monday 8th December | 17:00 (GMT+1) – 20:00 |
| Monday 15th December | 17:00 (GMT+1) – 20:00 |

**Course Description**

This course is designed to guide students through the complete process of venture creation—from opportunity recognition to launching a viable startup. The course combines lean startup methodologies, team-based projects, case studies, and industry engagement. Students will prototype and test real venture ideas, engage with customers, and pitch to external evaluators.

The course's purpose is to enable students to deal with the unpredictability intrinsic in developing new products, services, and lines of business, regardless of their chosen path as venture builders. Students will participate in the venture building process in groups, creating ideas, identifying and sizing market opportunities, segmenting clients, and defining a distinctive value proposition and business strategy.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply lean startup principles to ideate, test, and refine a business idea.

2. Use tools such as Business Model Canvas and Value Proposition Canvas.

3. Conduct customer discovery and validation interviews.

4. Analyze market size, competition, and customer segments.

5. Develop a go-to-market strategy and basic financial plan.

6. Deliver a persuasive investor pitch.

**NEXT HEI - Venture Building Course – 8 Week Plan**

Course Format: “Online”

Every Monday – during 8 weeks

Start time for Online Lectures: 17:00 (GMT+1)

Total Online Live Lecture Time: **20** hours

Practical, Self-Study & Assignment Work: Asynchronous : **32** hours

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week | Theme / Chapter | Main Topics | Online Lecture | Asynchronous Work | Assignments / Notes |
| 1 | Venture Building Foundations  Opportunity Identification: Customer & User Insights | Course intro, Entrepreneurial mindset, Key roles in a venture, Types of ventures  Customer / user discovery, Observation, Interviews, Ethnography, Trend Spotting | 3hrs | 2 hrs self-study | Reading assignment: HBR article #1, #2, and #3 (1 hr)  3 hrs self-study |
| 2 | Opportunity Identification (Cont’d)  Creative Thinking, Ideation and Validation | Personas, Journey mapping, Pain points, Problem framing  Ideation techniques, Minimum viable product (MVP) design and iteration, Idea validation techniques | 3 hrs | 3 hrs self-study | Reading assignment: HBR article #4 (1 hr)  Reading assignment: HBR article #5 (1 hr)  2 hrs self-study |
| 3 | Business Model Development | Value proposition design, Business model canvas (BMC) overview, Real-world examples | 2 hrs | Group exercise: Value proposition canvas design | Reading assignment: HBR article #6 (1 hr)  2 hrs self-study |
| 4 | Go-to-Market Strategy | Competition analysis and positioning, Pricing models, Channels, Launch plans | 2 hrs | Group exercise: Business model / lean canvas design | Reading assignment: HBR article #7 (1 hr)  2 hrs self-study |
| 5 | Sustainability | Planetary boundaries, Doughnut Economics, Cradle-to-Cradle | 2 hrs | 3 hrs self-study |  |
| 6 | Sustainable Business Models | Regenerative models, Sustainable BMC | 2 hrs | 3 hrs practice (case study) |  |
| 7 | Entrepreneurial Finance | Intro to entrepreneurial finance, Debt financing  Equity & alternative financing | 3 hrs | 4 hrs self-study  1 h Case study analysis |  |
| 8 | Final Pitches | Group pitches presentations to panel | 3hrs | 2hrs self-study prep time | Peer feedback |

**Instructors Information**

Topics 1-5 Name: M. Can Arslan Ph.D. Assistant Professor in Industrial Engineering and Operations Management, Faculty of Engineering, Fenerbahce University (FBU), Istanbul. [can.arslan@fbu.edu.tr](mailto:can.arslan@fbu.edu.tr)

Topics 5 and 6 , Leo Coppens, Associate Professor in Sustainable Economics, Warocqué School of Business and Economics, University of Mons, Belgium. [leo.coppens@umons.ac.be](mailto:leo.coppens@umons.ac.be)

Topics 7, Loredana Cultrera, Assistant professor in Finance, Warocqué School of Business and Economics, University of Mons, Belgium. [Loredana.cultrera@umons.ac.be](mailto:Loredana.cultrera@umons.ac.be)

**Coordinators Information**

Bilge Çağatay, Economy and Finance Department, Fenerbahçe University, [bilge.cagatay@fbu.edu.tr](mailto:bilge.cagatay@fbu.edu.tr)

Laetitia Pozniak, Associate Professor in Finance, Warocqué School of Business and Economics, University of Mons, Belgium. [Laetitia.pozniak@umons.ac.be](mailto:Laetitia.pozniak@umons.ac.be)

**Policies**

- Attendance: Mandatory for all workshops and pitch days.

- Academic Honesty: Zero tolerance for plagiarism.

- Team Dynamics: Peer evaluation will impact individual grades.

**Tools & Platforms**

- Collaboration: Miro, Slack, Trello

- Pitching: Canva, Google Slides

- Research: Statista, Google Trends

- Submission & LMS: Moodle / Canvas

- Online lectures on MS TEAMS

**Reading Materials**

**Required:**

- The Lean Startup by Eric Ries

- Business Model Generation by Osterwalder & Pigneur

- Zero to One by Peter Thiel

- Harvard Business Review (HBR) Articles on Entrepreneurship

[1] https://hbr.org/1985/03/the-heart-of-entrepreneurship

[2] https://hbr.org/2020/07/so-you-want-to-be-an-entrepreneur

[3] https://hbr.org/2025/07/how-to-identify-the-perfect-cofounder

[4] https://hbr.org/2024/07/why-entrepreneurs-should-think-like-scientists

[5] https://hbr.org/2013/05/why-the-lean-start-up-changes-everything

[6] https://hbr.org/2021/05/why-start-ups-fail

[7] https://hbr.org/2002/12/why-entrepreneurs-dont-scale

https://hbr.org/1985/03/the-heart-of-entrepreneurship

https://hbr.org/2020/07/so-you-want-to-be-an-entrepreneur

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https://hbr.org/2021/05/why-start-ups-fail

<https://hbr.org/2002/12/why-entrepreneurs-dont-scale>

**Supplementary:**

- Zero to One by Peter Thiel

- HBR Articles on Entrepreneurship

https://hbr.org/1985/03/the-heart-of-entrepreneurship

https://hbr.org/2020/07/so-you-want-to-be-an-entrepreneur

https://hbr.org/2025/07/how-to-identify-the-perfect-cofounder

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https://hbr.org/2021/05/why-start-ups-fail

<https://hbr.org/2002/12/why-entrepreneurs-dont-scale>

**Supplementary:**

- The Innovator’s Dilemma by Clayton M. Christensen

- The Hard Thing about Hard Things by Ben Horowitz

- Startup School by Y Combinator

https://www.startupschool.org/

- Design Thinking Approach by Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford University (a.k.a. d.school) https://dschool.stanford.edu/ & by IDEO https://designthinking.ideo.com/

- The Top 12 Reasons Startups Fail by CB Insights <https://www.cbinsights.com/research/report/startup-failure-reasons-top/>

**Assessment Structure**

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| --- | --- |
| Component | Weight |
| Class Participation & Reflections | 15% |
| Final Investor Pitch | 85% |

**Registration link (before 24th October 2025)**

<https://forms.gle/UicP4Bt4vivVjDYx6>

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfksE7EfcYfxbI9D9EmQBzQfaE0XVKyvp6mpNXX9EQOBHdWyA/viewform>