# Launching Your Startup

Professors:

Brendan Burns, Dave Lerner  
TA: ------

Mondays 2:15pm-5:30pm

**Location**: The Design Lab @ CU, Riverside Church Room 490

**Prerequisites**

* Interest in discovering how an idea can become a real company

### Pre-Assignment

Submit a short powerpoint deck with MAX 3 Slides that communicates the following:

* The problem your startup solves and how it will solve this problem. Who experiences these problems primarily? What key benefits (value proposition) will your customers derive if they use your products or service
* The team (can be just you), detailed background on each member, and why it is particularly suited to addressing this problem successfully

## 9/11 – Class 1: Welcome

### Lecture

* Class overview and expectations, teaching team introductions, expectation setting

**Introductions for half of the class**

* Give your 30 second pitch to the class and
* Tell the class why (and why not) is your team suited to build this product/tackle this problem

### Lecture

* People, Team, Founders, Ecosystem

### Assignment

### Part 1: Detailed exploration of the competitive landscape around your product/idea:

### Current participants

### Substitutes

### Who do you think is the best alternative today, why?

### Elaborate on current value proposition

### Competitive advantage

### What do you think will drive value and the winners longer term?

### How might this market evolve in 5 years?

### Part 2: Your team

### What is your self-assessment (and personal interests), strengths/weaknesses

### Ideal team composition

### What kind of culture will you try to build/develop

### What are your ideas around accountability?

### Success examples

### Not so successful/failures you have been exposed to

### Sitting here today, what do you hope the team looks like 1 year from now?

### Reading

[Founder/Market Fit by Chris Dixon](http://cdixon.org/2011/06/20/foundermarket-fit/)

## 9/18 – Class 2: Intro to Design Thinking

### Introductions (continued)

* Give your 30 second pitch to the class or
* Tell the class why (and why not) is your team suited to build this product/tackle this problem

### Lecture

* Intro to Design Thinking (Adam Royalty, Designer-in-Residence Columbia University)
* Building skills for conducting customer discovery

### Assignment

* Come to next class prepared to talk about who you assume your customers are
* Talk to 3-5 potential customers
* Solidify your team, come to office hours if you need help forming or finding a team
* Send out your weekly update email

### Reading

[An Introduction to Design Thinking](https://dschool.stanford.edu/sandbox/groups/designresources/wiki/36873/attachments/74b3d/ModeGuideBOOTCAMP2010L.pdf?sessionID=9a5d0a2a0cd5fb6c26a567b2636b19513b76d0f4)

## 9/25 – Class 3: Need-Finding & Re-Framing

### Lecture

* Need-finding and Re-Framing (Adam Royalty, Designer-in-Residence Columbia University)

### Workshop

* Exercises

### Assignment

* Perform at least 10 interviews of potential customers
* Synthesize what you learned and share in your update email

## 10/2 – Class 4: Building a Product While at Business School (“hustling”)

### Panel: CBS grads who built product while in school

### Drew Silverstein, founder, Amper Music

### Luis Sanz, co-founder, Olapic

### Liz Wilkes, founder of Exubrancy

### Jeremy Miller, founder of FSA Store

### Assignment

* Come to the next class with an exhaustive list of tests against your problem statement. These tests should be quick/easy/manual.
* Build a simple prototype

### Reading

[Lean Prototyping a Practical Guide](http://www.slideshare.net/framebench/lean-prototyping-a-practical-guide)

[DS by Paul Graham](http://paulgraham.com/ds.html)

## 10/9 – Class 5: “Tooling Up”

### Lecture

* Keith Gonzalez of Digital Ocean, founder of Stirplate, tool guru
* Will take class through a practical immersion into all the tools, sites, resources available and particularly useful to startup teams

### Workshop

### Exercises

## 10/16 – Class 6: Prep for Demo Day

### Flex Time

* Preparing and iterating on your prototype and pitch for next class
* Feedback sessions, pitch prep

### Reading

[Early Beta](http://www.instigatorblog.com/be-selective-in-early-beta-programs/2011/11/16/)

[The 10X Product Launch](http://leanstack.com/the-10x-product-launch/)

[Your First Customers](http://leostartsup.com/2012/06/the-first-people-using-your-product-are-an-amazing-breed/)

## 10/30 – Class 7: DEMO DAY

### Workshop

* Demo what you’ve been working on in front of NYC investors and Entrepreneurs

### Assignment

* Come to next class prepared to give a two minute pitch for you company
* Optional: Make a fundraising deck

### Reading

[Demo by Nate Westheimer](http://innonate.com/demo/)

## 11/13 – Class 8: RAISING MONEY

### Lecture

* “The Elephant in the Room” with Dave Lerner and Brendan Burns
* Raising Money in NYC: Raj Patel, serial entrepreneur, EIR at Techstars NYC

**Discussion:**

* Technique

### Assignment

* Come up with a list of pressing legal questions regarding your startup

### Reading

[A Simple Approach to Pitch Decks](http://robgo.org/2015/02/05/pitch-decks/)

## 11/20 – Class 9: Startup Law

### Lecture

* Startup Law seminar with Charles Torres from Perkins Coie

### Workshop

* Are you ready to incorporate? Do you have a founder’s agreement? If so start now.

## 11/27 – Class 10: Venture Storytelling

### Lecture

* Storyteller’s Arc with Adam Royalty
* Venture Storytelling (Dave Lerner and Brendan Burns)

### Workshop

* Iterate on your story and pitch

### Assignment

* Get ready for your final presentation

## 12/4 – Class 11: Final Presentations

**1st half of class presents**

## 12/11 – Class 12: Final Presentations

**2nd half of class presents**