WHCP 6120 Advanced Persuasion: Fundamentals for Prospective Entrepreneurs
Spring 2023

Course Objectives: In this course, students will learn communication frameworks and best practices for pitching innovative ideas in a way that persuades others to appreciate their value. Students will practice developing clear, concise, and compelling startup stories, from pitches to pivots. Practice contexts will include pitching a startup to potential investors and pitching a new idea to an internal leadership team. Students will use provided business ideas and will have the option of using a self-generated idea for some assignments.

This course offers students the opportunity to improve in **four skills that are essential for success as a business leader pitching new ideas:**

1. **Advanced Persuasion:** Demonstrate skills in framing, storytelling, team delivery and other advanced frameworks and techniques for pitching new ideas.

2. **Concise Communication:** Distill an idea to its most meaningful elements in a way that is clear, concise, and compelling.

3. **Impromptu Speaking:** Respond 'on your feet' and adapt a pitch to different audiences and contexts (including investor Q&A and networking events).

4. **Presenting with Slides:** Build a slide deck that tells a cohesive startup story, demonstrating effective structure, design, and delivery.

The major components of this course include:

Class 1: Understanding Startup Audiences and the Seeds of Story
Class 2: Distilling Your Idea
Class 3: Telling Your 'Spark' Story
Class 4: Analyzing Investor Audiences and Storyboarding Your Pitch
Class 5: Pitching to Investors in Teams
Class 6: Reframing the Opportunity: Communicating Change to an Internal Audience

Assignments and Grading:

Class Assignments:	# Points
Concise Startup Story (Class 2):	5
Elevator Pitch (Class 2):	10
Spark Story (Class 3):	15
Investor Audience Worksheet and Storyboard Outline in Teams (Class 4):	5
Business Opportunity Pitch in Teams (Class 5):	25
Reframing the Opportunity: Pivot Story in Teams (Class 6):	10
Total for Assignments	**70**
Class Participation:	**30**

Please note the following details about the assignments:

- Final details for all assignments are on Canvas.
- **You must complete all assignments** in order to pass the course and do so **on time** to receive full credit.
- All assignments, including presentations, submitted more than 1 week late will receive zero points.
- Class participation will be graded on attendance, class contributions (including discussion board contributions, providing meaningful feedback in class, meeting with the TA, and being an attentive audience member) and timely completion of ungraded assignments.
- Attendance at each session is very important. Any unexcused absence will have a negative impact on your grade. Note: students with more than two absences (for any reason) cannot pass the course.
- Students are responsible for compliance with the [Ethics Matrix](#).
- **Instructors and students agree to hold each other accountable to the standards set forth in the [Wharton Learning Agreement](#).**

Absences & Make-up Information: For each class session, there is a make-up module on Canvas that outlines how students should make up work for the class. Any student who is unable to attend a given class session should complete the corresponding make-up module.

Required Reading: All required readings can be accessed from the *WHCP 6120: Fundamentals for Prospective Entrepreneurs* site. On the left side of the page, you'll find the Study.Net Materials link. Use that link to access all required readings unless otherwise noted. Readings are also listed in weekly overview pages in the Modules tab on Canvas.

Electronics & Note-taking Policy: All students are expected to be fully engaged with the instructor, class content, and one another throughout the entirety of the class session. Use of mobile or electronic devices without instructor permission may result in the deduction of participation points.

WHCP 6120 Prospective Entrepreneurs Course Deliverables

CLASS	CONTENT/FOCUS	DELIVERABLES	POINTS
1	Course Overview, Understanding Startup Audiences and the Seeds of Story	**Read:** Course Syllabus **Sign Up (2 Days After Class 1):** Choose a startup idea	-
2	Distilling Your Idea	**Read:** Gallo and Goller **Present:** 1-min elevator pitch (10 points) **Submit:** concise startup story (5 points) **Post (2 Days after Class 2):** to Canvas discussion board)	**10** (elevator pitch) **5** (concise story)
3	Telling Your 'Spark' Story	**Read:** Bluestein, Tjan, Peterson, and Walker **Present:** 2-min 'spark' story pitch (15 points) **Sign Up (2 Days After Class 3):** choose a team business idea	15
4	Analyzing Investor Audiences and Storyboarding in Teams	**Complete and Upload:** Investor Audience Worksheet and Storyboard Outline (5 pts) **Read:** Fenzi, Founder's Institute, Holt, and Lenaerts	5
5	Pitching to Investors in Teams	**Meet:** With TA for coaching before your Class 5 team pitch **Read:** Barnard, Harroch, and WHCP material on pitch elements and Q&A **Present in Teams**: 4-minute business opportunity pitch (25 points) **Submit**: Slide deck	25
6	Reframing the Opportunity: Communicating Change to an Internal Audience	**Read:** Pivot case, Dawes, Dell, Knowledge at Wharton, and McDonald and Bremner **Present in Teams**: 3-minute pivot story presented to an internal audience, without slides (10 points)	10
ALL	Attendance, class contributions (providing meaningful feedback to peers and being an attentive audience member), meeting with TA, and timely completion of ungraded assignments.	**Class Participation**	30
		Total Points	**100**

Course Content
Assignment Details Posted on Canvas

Class 1: Course Overview, Understanding Audience and the Seeds of Story

Learning Objectives:
- Discern course objectives and expectations
- Differentiate pitches in your toolkit based on stakeholder audiences
- Apply framing techniques to tell a clear, concise story of who you are (in-class exercise)

Assignments due:
- **Read:**
    - The course syllabus
- **Sign Up Two Days After Class 1:** Indicate which business you will be using for your Class 2 and 3 assignments and submit your choice to Canvas. You may use:
    - a nascent startup idea you are working on or thinking about, including a social impact idea or a new product or service aimed at MBAs
    - A provided business idea Dis

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Class 2: Distilling Your Idea

Learning Objectives:
- Apply the elevator pitch framework in a 1-minute elevator pitch; no slides
- Identify the "must-haves" of an elevator pitch
- Explain the importance of storytelling in a startup context

Assignments due:
- **Read:**
    - "How to Tell Your Business Story in 60 Seconds or Less" by Gallo
    - "Your Business Story in Six Words" by Goller
- **Prepare and Deliver:** 1-minute elevator pitch that communicates the essence of your idea. The elevator pitch should be in response to the invitation: "Tell me about your business…"
- **Submit to Canvas:** a concise story that distills what your business does.
- **Post (Two Days After Class 2):** To the Canvas discussion board on which elevator pitch was most memorable and why.

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Class 3: Telling Your 'Spark' Story

Learning Objectives:
- Deliver a compelling origin story for the business and engage in a followup dialogue
- Concisely answer questions and stay on message
- Compare and contrast potential investor-audience types

Assignments due for Class 3:
- **Read:**
  - ○ "The Indispensable Power of Story" by Tjan
  - ○ "The Science Behind the Art of Storytelling" by Peterson
  - ○ "How to Tell Your Company's Story" by Bluestein
  - ○ "How I Got the Idea for My Startup" by Walker
- **Complete Canvas Module and Quiz:** Q&A as Dialogue
- **Prepare and Deliver:** 2-minute spark story for the same business idea you pitched in Class 2
- **Sign Up Due Two Days After Class 3:** Select your team business idea. Teams select from the list of provided business caselets. You will not be allowed to use your own idea for the second half of the course.

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Class 4: Analyzing Investor Audiences and Storyboarding in Teams

Learning Objectives:
- Analyze investor-audience motivations and concerns in teams
- Identify the essential elements and flexible structure of an opportunity pitch
- Practice storyboarding key messages as a team

Assignments due for Class 4:
- **Read:**
  - ○ "What Accelerators Really Want in Start-up Founders," by Fenzi
  - ○ "Decoding Entrepreneurial DNA," by the Founder's Institute
  - ○ "6 Powerful Pitch Decks to Get Seed Funding" by Holt
  - ○ "10 Presentation Design Tips (to Make the Best Pitch Deck)" by Lenaerts
- **Upload Two Days After Class 4:**
  - ○ Investor Audience Analysis Worksheet and Storyboard Outline of 4-minute team pitch

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Class 5: Pitching to Investors in Teams

Learning Objectives:
- Deliver a compelling business opportunity pitch as a team
- Apply slide design and storyboarding techniques to tell a compelling story of the business
- Anticipate and address key investor questions

Assignments Due for Class 5:
- **Read:**
  - ○ "50 Questions Angel Investors Will Ask Entrepreneurs" by Harroch
  - ○ "Guide for Giving a Group Presentation" by Barnard
  - ○ Elements of Persuasion for Pitching (WHCP)
  - ○ Preparing for Questions (WHCP)
- **Prepare and Deliver**: A 4-minute team pitch to investors outlining the business opportunity, with Q&A
- **Submit to Canvas by 8 PM the Night Before Class 5:** Your team's slide deck (5-8 slides not including title slide).

Class 6: Reframing the Opportunity: Communicating Change to an internal Audience

Learning Objectives:
- Communicate a change in the business using a 'pivot story' arc
- Apply best practices for message framing and team delivery in a 'town-hall' context
- Identify the broader implications and contexts for communicating change

Assignments Due for Class 6:
- **Read:**
    - "When and How Entrepreneurs Pivot" by Knowledge at Wharton
    - "When It's Time to Pivot, What's Your Story?" by McDonald and Bremner
    - "How I Saved My Company After My Cofounder (My Father) Died" by Dawes
    - "How I Became an Entrepreneur Again" by Dell
    - Team Pivot scenario
- **Prepare and Deliver as a Team**: a 3-minute change message to an internal audience (no slides)