



WHCP 6150 – Communication Challenges for Entrepreneurs: Pitching Your Business Spring 2023 Syllabus

Course Objectives:

Designed for students who are actively working on a startup while at Wharton, this course focuses on persuasively communicating the startup story from inception to launch, including communicating the founder's story and the business opportunity. There will be multiple opportunities for robust feedback on pitch decks. Students will also receive coaching from a successful entrepreneur and will be given the opportunity to pitch their business idea to local investors during an end-of-year capstone event.

Before the first day of class, students must have these components of an executive summary: company description, product/service description, business model, market/industry analysis, marketing/sales plan, competitor analysis, risk factors, management team, current status, and biggest communication challenge. Later in the course students will present their financials – including funds required and how you will use it.

The major components of this course include:

- Class 1: Clarifying the Idea
- Class 2: Sharing Your Spark Story & Elevator Pitch
- Class 3: Presenting the Business Opportunity
- Class 4: Pitch Deck Workshop
- Class 5/6: Pitching to Investors and Responding to Questions

Assignments and Grading: Due dates vary so please read each assignment carefully on Canvas.

Class Assignments:	<u># Points</u>
Class 1: Business Summary	5
Class 2: 'Spark' Story Elevator Pitch	10
Class 3: Business Opportunity Pitch	15
Class 4: Draft Deck	15
Class 5/6: Final Investor Pitch with Q&A	<u>25</u>
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 6150: Communication Challenges for Entrepreneurs* Canvas 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 6150 Communication Challenges for Entrepreneurs: Course Deliverables

CLASS	CONTENT/FOCUS	ASSIGNMENT/ READINGS DUE	POINTS
1	Clarifying the idea	Due 48 Hours Before Class 1: Business Summary Read: Kander and Gallo	5
2	Sharing your 'spark' story and elevator pitch	Read: Tjan, Lipp, Peterson, Walker Complete: Pitch Deck Elements Module and Quiz on Canvas Present: 90-second elevator pitch with spark story	10
3	Presenting the business opportunity	Read: Springboard Learning Center (Part 1), Lenaerts, Abecassis Present: 3-minute, 3-slide business opportunity pitch Submit: Slides to Canvas Post (24 Hours After Class 3): to "Communication Challenge Check-in" Discussion Board	15
4	Pitch deck workshop	Review: Pitch Deck Template Read: Springboard Learning Center (Part 2), Holt, Hornik, Jensen Submit: Draft pitch deck	15
5/6	Pitching to investors and responding to questions	Present to advising entrepreneur: 5- to 6-minute investor pitch with slide deck. Due date dependent on Class 5/6 signup. Submit: Final deck via Canvas Meet: with your TA before your pitch.	25
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

Assignment Due Before Class 1: Submit Business Summary

Once Course Match assigns you to one of these sections, you must send your instructor a completed Business Summary Template at least **48 hours before Class 1**. The template addresses the following information: company description, product/service description, business model, market/industry analysis, marketing/sales plan, competitor analysis, risk factors, management team, current status, and biggest communication challenge. You can find the Business Summary Template on Canvas. The summary must be completed in its entirety - **slide presentations are not an acceptable substitute**.

Please Note: This course requires students to submit a basic financial model (business plan, unit economics, etc.) and funding needs by Class 4. You will be asked to defend all assumptions about your financials.

Class 1: Clarifying the Idea

Learning Objectives:

- Understand course objectives and expectations
- Practice a framework for distilling the value prop (in-class exercise)
- Identify structure and story components for a compelling elevator pitch

Assignments for Class 1:

- **Read on Canvas:**
 - The course syllabus
 - “I Have No Idea What Your Company Does!” by Kander
 - “The Art of the Elevator Pitch” by Gallo

Class 2: Telling the ‘Spark’ Story and Practicing Your Elevator Pitch

Learning Objectives:

- Combine a clear, concise, and compelling elevator pitch with a compelling origin story
- Understand Q&A as a conversation with the audience
- Identify the essential elements of an opportunity pitch

Assignments due for Class 2:

- **Read on Canvas:**
 - “The Indispensable Power of Story” by Tjan
 - “The Science Behind the Art of Storytelling” by Peterson
 - “Q&A as Dialogue” by Lipp
 - “How I Got the Idea for My Startup” by Walker
- **Prepare and Deliver:** 90-second elevator pitch that includes your spark story
- **Complete on Canvas:** module and quiz on pitch deck elements

Class 3: Presenting the Business Opportunity

Learning Objectives:

- Present a compelling opportunity in 3 minutes and 3 slides.
- Identify strategies for creating clear and impactful financial slides
- Reflect on the biggest communication challenge(s) based on pitch feedback

Assignments due for Class 3:

- **Read on Canvas:**
 - “Creating Your Pitch: Part 1” by Springboard Learning Center
 - “10 Presentation Design Tips (to Make the Best Pitch Deck)” by Lenaerts
 - “Five Mistakes Entrepreneurs Make When Pitching Their Ideas” by Abecassis
- **Prepare and Deliver:** A 3-minute, 3-slide presentation that illustrates the business opportunity and how your company will capture this opportunity.
- **Submit by 11:59 PM the Day Before Class 3:** Your 3-slide deck via Canvas
- **Post 24 Hours After Class 3:** to discussion board on “Communication Challenge Check-in”

Class 4: Pitch Deck Workshop

Learning Objectives:

- Hone pitch content (including financials), structure, and slide design based on peer feedback
- Identify the best structure for how your key messages will unfold
- Anticipate and address key investor questions

Assignments due for Class 4:

- **Read on Canvas:**
 - “Creating Your Pitch: Part 2” by Springboard Learning Center
 - “6 Powerful Pitch Decks to Get Seed Funding” by Holt
 - “Pitching a VC: Why Financials Matter” by Hornik
- **Review:** module on Pitch Deck Examples on Canvas
- **Prepare:** A slide deck **with a maximum of 10 slides** (not including the title slide). At least one of the slides should summarize the financials.
- **Submit by 11:59 PM the day before class:** Your draft slide deck on Canvas.

Classes 5 and 6: Pitching to Investors and Responding to Questions

Learning Objectives:

- Deliver the elements of the investor pitch framework with max 10 slides/6 minutes
- Use persuasive techniques and compelling slide design to effectively convey the opportunity
- Distill key messages about your business when answering questions

*Half the class will deliver final presentations in Class 5 and the other half will deliver their presentations in Class 6. The advising entrepreneur will be present in both classes. **All students must attend both Classes 5 and 6.***

Assignments due for Classes 5 and 6 (Dependent on Class 5 or 6 Sign-Up):

- **Prepare and Deliver:** A 5-6-minute pitch of your startup idea highlighting the elements discussed in class: real problem/opportunity, attractive market, unique advantage, and compelling investment.
- **Submit by 11:59 PM the day before class:** Your final slide deck to Canvas
- **Meet:** with your TA at least 48 hours before your final pitch