

# Startup Lab

Last Updated: April 9, 2026

## Course Information

- **Course Title:** Startup Lab
- **Course Number(s):** COE 2701 / CS 2701 / MGT 4803
- **Credits:** 3
- **Term:** Fall 2026
- **Sections Offered:** 6
- **Instructor:** TBA
- **Delivery Method:** In-person

## Course Description

Startup Lab is a 16-week, studio-based course designed to **build entrepreneurial confidence and evidence-driven practice**. Students engage in guided inquiry, field research, and **iterative experimentation** to identify meaningful problems, **evaluate opportunities**, and make **reasoned decisions under uncertainty**.

The course enables students to **define problems** through **experiential learning** that is **transferable across industries, disciplines, and career paths**. Students learn to distinguish evidence from assumptions, test hypotheses through experimentation, and communicate venture logic transparently and coherently.

The course is organized into three sequential phases:

- **Phase 1: Problem Discovery (Weeks 1–4)**  
Students independently conduct structured field research to identify authentic user problems, analyze evidence, and synthesize problem spaces.  
**Focus:** Evidence collection, insight generation, problem definition.
- **Phase 2: Opportunity Exploration (Weeks 5–12)**  
Teams explore and evaluate venture opportunities using business modeling, value proposition development, experimentation, and economic reasoning.  
**Focus:** Opportunity framing, discovery expansion, experimentation, and strategic decisions.

- **Phase 3: Venture Integration & Coherence (Weeks 13–16)**

Teams refine their venture logic for coherence, differentiation, and feasibility while developing personal entrepreneurial confidence and founder identity.

**Focus:** Venture coherence, refinement, presentation, and forward planning.

Startup Lab is open to students from all academic majors with no prerequisites. Diverse disciplinary perspectives are treated as analytical assets in addressing complex, ambiguous problem spaces.

## Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Identify real-world problems** using evidence rather than assumptions.
2. **Evaluate and revise venture decisions** based on discovery findings and experimental results.
3. **Construct clear Business Model Canvases** that distinguish hypotheses, decisions, and unresolved questions.
4. **Design and execute Minimum Viable Experiments (MVEs) and Minimum Viable Propositions (MVPs)** to test critical assumptions.
5. **Apply foundational economic reasoning** to assess feasibility and sustainability.
6. **Communicate a coherent venture narrative** grounded in evidence and explicit uncertainty.
7. **Use structured reflection tools** to improve personal effectiveness and learning habits.
8. **Collaborate productively in teams** using shared norms and constructive conflict practices.
9. **Demonstrate entrepreneurial thinking** by recognizing evidence-based opportunities.
10. **Assemble a professional Continuity Pack** for documenting insights, decisions, and forward plans.

## Weekly Course Outline

### Phase 1 – Problem Discovery (Project 0)

- **Week 1:** Orientation, Entrepreneurial Uncertainty, and Not-Knowing
- **Week 2:** Problem Discovery Methods & Early Interviews
- **Week 3:** Field Research, Sensemaking, and Insight Formation
- **Week 4:** Project 0 Synthesis: Problem Spaces, Bricolage, and Alignment

## Phase 2 – Opportunity Exploration (Project Startup, Part A)

- **Week 5:** Team Formation, Strategic Decisions, and Venture Framing
- **Week 6:** Deep Discovery & Value Proposition Foundations
- **Week 7:** Customer Segments, Channels, and Relationships
- **Week 8:** Capabilities, Partnerships, and Bricolage
- **Week 9:** Innovation Under Constraints & Key Resources
- **Week 10:** MVP/MVE Design and Pivot Decisions
- **Week 11:** Cost Structures and Financial Feasibility
- **Week 12:** Revenue Models and Payment Alignment

## Phase 3 – Venture Integration & Coherence (Project Startup, Part B)

- **Week 13:** Venture Coherence, Differentiation, and Strategic Focus
- **Week 14:** Refinement, Confidence, and Founder Development
- **Week 15:** Final Presentations & Reflective Synthesis
- **Week 16:** Transition Planning and Individual Reflection

## Required Materials

No textbook is required. All course materials are provided digitally via the learning management system.

Core tools used throughout the course include:

- **Evidence Logs:** Interview transcripts, observations, and field notes
- **Opportunity Profiles:** Structured summaries of users and problem contexts
- **Decision Frameworks:** Tools for reasoning under uncertainty
- **Experiment Plans:** Goal-oriented test designs and evaluation criteria

No additional purchases are required.

## Course Format and Pedagogy

Startup Lab uses a **studio-based instructional model** that integrates experiential learning with analytical structure.

## Instructional Components

- **Mini-Lectures:** Brief concept introductions (e.g., discovery methods, experimentation, economic basics).
- **Studio Workshops:** Guided application of tools and frameworks.
- **Team Studios:** Supervised collaboration and coaching.
- **Feedback Cycles:** Regular formative feedback from peers and the instructor.

## Engagement Expectations

Because learning is cumulative and experiential, students are expected to:

- Attend sessions consistently and punctually
- Participate actively in discussions and workshops
- Contribute meaningfully to teamwork
- Apply feedback to subsequent deliverables

## Assessment and Grading

**Total Points: 100**

Component	Description	Points
Quizzes	Weekly short assessments	15
Individual Artifacts-Project Zero	Ongoing studio deliverables	30
Team Milestone Deliverables	Major reports and presentations	30
Attendance	Based on attendance policy	10
Participation & Engagement	Studio engagement and peer feedback	15
Total		100

**Grading Scale:**

- A: 90–100
- B: 80–89
- C: 70–79
- D: 60–69
- F: < 60

Late work is not accepted unless an extension is approved in advance for documented circumstances.

## Course Policies

### Attendance Policy

Class attendance and active participation in class are mandatory. Regular attendance is required due to the studio-based nature of the course.

- Two unexcused absences permitted without penalty
- Two excused absences upon notifying the TA
- Excused absences require official documentation
- Missed deliverables receive a zero unless the absence is excused
- All absences beyond these will need to be approved by the Georgia Tech Office of the Dean of Students.

### Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review [Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the student [Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, which will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

On one hand, we strongly encourage collaboration in this class. On the other hand, we will respect Georgia Tech's honor code of academic conduct. This means that any work submitted by a student must be their own.

Students are encouraged to consult resources available on the web and elsewhere. However, any material taken from any resource must be properly attributed.

All submissions must:

- Represent authentic, student-collected evidence
- Accurately report findings
- Appropriately attribute AI-assisted revisions

Fabrication, plagiarism, or misrepresentation of evidence is a serious violation and may result in disciplinary action.

## Core IMPACTS

Not applicable.

## Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

AI tools may be used **only as learning aids**, under the following conditions:

1. Core ideas and analyses must be student-generated
2. AI may support editing, critique, labeling, or organization
3. AI may not generate evidence, insights, or reflections
4. Submissions must clearly distinguish:
  - Real-world evidence
  - Student-generated reasoning
  - AI-assisted refinement

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodations, contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to schedule an appointment to discuss your needs and obtain an accommodations letter. Please also email me as soon as possible to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

## **Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement**

At Georgia Tech, we believe it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgment, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to Georgia Tech's ideals throughout this class.

## **Official Course Communication**

The Canvas site for the class will provide information about the course, including a day-by-day class schedule and assignments.

Georgia Tech generally recommends students check their Georgia Tech email once every 24 hours.

## **Campus Resources for Students**

A list of resources for undergraduate students' academic success, along with information about advising, can be found on [Success at Tech](#).

## **Student Well-Being**

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A comprehensive list of wellness-related resources has been compiled and maintained by the [Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being](#).