



MBA/ M.Sc.

1231.3962.01 – Building Unicorns

Prerequisites: none

Parallel requirements: none

Summer Semester – 2024/2025

Section	Day	Daily Hours	Final Task	Lecturer	Email	Telephone
01	Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday	15:45- 20:45	No exam	Uri Levine	ulevine@faculty.ie.edu	

***Note: this is a crash course over 4 days**

August 17 to August 20 (inc.)

We will be discussing two topics daily and there will be time to guide you through your assignments.

Pre-requisites: working experience to the level of basic understanding of the product, business and challenges of your company.

Uri Levine

Uri Levine (<http://urilevine.com/>) is a passionate entrepreneur and disruptor, a 2x 'unicorn' builder (Duocorn), and author of *Fall in Love with the Problem, Not the Solution – A Handbook for Entrepreneurs*.

He is co-founder of Waze in 2007, the world's largest community-based driving traffic and navigation app, which Google acquired for \$1.1 billion in 2013, and then Moovit, 'the Waze of public transportation, which Intel acquired for \$1 Billion in 2020.

Uri has been in the high-tech business for the last 40 years, more than half of them in the startup scene,

He is also a world-class speaker on entrepreneurship, disruption, evolution vs. revolutions of markets, mobility, and startups. Motivated to encourage the next generation of thinkers and innovators, he also leads an academic workshop entitled "building unicorns".

Levine is a BA graduate from Tel-Aviv University. Before attending University, he served in the Israeli special intelligence unit 8200 as a software developer. In his public activity, he serves on the board of trustees at Tel-Aviv University.

Academic Experience

- Professor of Practice, IE University, Spain, 2025- Present
- Adjunct Professor of Entrepreneurship, IE University, Spain, 2023-Present

Course Units

Course units: 1 YAS

1 course unit = 4 ECTS units

The ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) is a framework defined by the European Commission to allow for unified recognition of student academic achievements from different countries.

Course Description

Building a startup is a journey, a multi-dimensional and multi phases journey. The course is about this journey, how to build a successful one, understand the challenges and how to overcome them. It is very practical going through some of the journeys that I had abstract them and go apply them to your journey. To an extent it is a cook book for building unicorns, created by someone who have built 2 unicorns so far, and more to come, so more than anything – practical.

The reference book for the course is “Fall in love with the Problem, not the Solution” although it is not mandatory, it is highly recommended

Course Objectives

On successful completion of this course, students will have a basic understanding of:

How does a startup journey looks like

What does it take to build one

Understanding users and building products

Business models and growth strategies

Building awesome organizations

Raising capital

Evaluation of Student and Composition of Grade

Percentage	Assignment	Date	Group Size/Comments
10	active participation	During class	individual
40	quality and consistency of ongoing assignments	During class	group
50	final assignment	20.8.25	

* Students who absent themselves from classes or do not actively participate in class will not be able to take the exam or hand-in assignments. (Students remain financially liable for the course even if they are removed.)

Course Assignments

1. Course grade will be determined 50% by quality and consistency of ongoing assignments and 50% by final assignment (grand finale).
2. I don't bring the cases – you do, good news - it may be helpful literally today, bad news – you're being expected to bring working experience.
3. that's it, don't miss the opportunity to increase your likelihood of being successful.

Guidelines for AI Use

1. **Ethics and Academic Integrity** :It is important to adhere to ethical standards and maintain academic integrity when using these tools.
2. **Reliance on Personal Understanding** :Do not overly rely on AI-generated content. AI tools may be used for information retrieval, data processing, creating initial drafts, and providing inspiration for writing. However, it is prohibited to use these tools to create entire sections of a project and present them as original work.
3. **Transparency and Disclosure** :Clearly indicate when and how AI tools were used, explaining how they contributed to the learning process. This should be done in a dedicated paragraph at the end of the project.
4. **Personal Responsibility** :Vague or inaccurate writing may result in grade reductions, especially when the content does not align with the course material.
5. **Copyright Compliance** :Do not upload protected files, such as articles distributed in class, instructor presentations, or other course materials, into AI tools without explicit permission from the instructor. Uploading such documents to AI tools constitutes a serious disciplinary offense, as it may expose the content to the internet and third-party companies without authorization.

Grading Policy

In the 2008/9 academic year the Faculty instituted a grading policy for all graduate level courses that aims to maintain a certain level of the final course grade. Accordingly, this policy will be applied to this course's final grades.

Additional information regarding this policy can be found on the Faculty website.

[Score Retention Policy](#)

Evaluation of the Course by Student

Following completion of the course students will participate in a teaching survey to evaluate the instructor and the course, to provide feedback for the benefit of the students, the teachers and the university.

Course Site (Moodle)

The course site will be the primary tool to communicate messages and material to students. You should check the course site regularly for information on classes, assignments and exams, at the end of the course as well.

Course material will be available on the course site.

Please note that topics that are not covered in the course material but are discussed in class are considered integral to the course and may be tested in examinations.

Course Outline*

*Subject to change

Session 1 - Introduction

- Fall in Love with the Problem, not the solution
- Entrepreneurship journey
- Waze
- Unicorns
- Summary

Exercise – turn your story around to problem led or value led.

Session 2 – Disruption and Innovation

- Disruption
- Corporate innovation limitation

Exercise – what will make you irrelevant?

Session 3 – Understanding Users

- You are only a sample of one
- First time
- Users distribution
- Simplicity
- Features
- New users

Exercise – watch new users

Session 4 – Product Market Fit (PMF) or die.

- Measure
- New/next user
- Steps to retention
- Funnel of use
- Breaking barriers
- Simplicity

Session 5 – other journeys, business model

- Model
- Plan
- Unit economics
- Different models

Exercise – present your business model

Session 6 – other journeys, growth

- How do we grow
- The wholly grail

- Viral
- WOM
- On-line, off-line, BD
- Going global

Exercise – 50 ways

Session 7 – building awesomeness

- Nature of the beast
- DNA
- Firing
- Scale
- NPS metric
- Sociometric
- Hiring
- Training
- A player (going back to the scale)

Session 8 – founding team and CEO

- CEO
- Founders' agreement
- Separation
- Decision making

Session 9 – fund raising

- 1st time roller coaster
- Different ball game
- Do
- Don't
- Prepare for 100 nos'

Session 10 – the other side, how to invest in a startup

- What will make one successful
- CEO
- Value proposition
- DD

Session 11 – crisis management

- Recent years
- Stories
- It is only you
- Types of crisis
 - Analysis
 - Decision
 - Execution
- Summary

Exercise – bring yours

Session 12 – Focus

- There could be only one
- Company is defined by its product and product is defined by its value proposition and target audience
- Focus = simple
- De-focus (more products, features, nickels and dimes)

Session 13 – simply don't

- Better learning
- Validation
- Story
- MVP
- TAM
- Budget and Org.
- Journey and phases
- PMF
- People

Session 14 – prep for finale

Split into teams – founders seeking for funding and investors to decide to invest

Founders will prepare a pitch deck of 10 minutes

Investors will decide and justify (IM)

Session 15 – pitching session

Reading

The reference book for the course is “Fall in love with the Problem, not the Solution” although it is not mandatory, it is highly recommended