



Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
**15.718 Introduction to Disciplined Entrepreneurship**  
IAP January 2025  
**Course Syllabus (DRAFT subject to change)**

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**CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS:**

Friday January 10, 2025 & Saturday January 11, 2025, 8:30 am – noon, 1 – 4:00 pm, E62-233

**UNITS:**

3 units

**PRE-REQUISITES:**

No pre-requisites or co-requisites.

Students must be either current Executive MBAs (EMBA) from the 2025 or 2026 cohort or current Sloan Fellows due to graduate in 2025. Limited space for alumni.

All students taking the class for credit must have an account with orbit.mit.edu – you must use your MIT Touchstone credentials to complete this: <https://orbit.mit.edu/login>

**MAXIMUM CLASS SIZE**

Class size will be limited to no more than 90 students.

**LISTENERS**

This class will not be open to listeners.

**OVERVIEW**

This will be a fast-paced course exclusively for EMBA and Sloan Fellows who want to learn the Disciplined Entrepreneurship approach to:

1. Enhance their entrepreneurial skills to make themselves more productive in their current jobs,
2. Start their own new venture,
3. Interact and evaluate new ventures,
4. Simply understand what entrepreneurship is and what it is not.

It will be based off the recently released (April 2024) “Expanded and Updated Disciplined Entrepreneurship: 24 Steps

Version 4.1

to a Successful Startup.” This framework will be taught in a highly interactive, action-oriented workshop style. In this manner, we will be able to build not only knowledge but also skills on how to apply this proven first principles in a very short time while having fun. This seminar is for a full range of students. This elective has historically of great benefits to those who are curious about entrepreneurship or already believe they want to be a standalone, corporate or social entrepreneur. There is also compelling data that shows that even successful experienced entrepreneurs will benefit from getting expert advice on the latest developments as well as access to a uniquely powerful new AI tool which utilizes the material taught in this elective, the MIT DE JetPack AI assistant. The course is of great benefit to those who are curious about entrepreneurship or already believe they want to be a standalone, corporate or social entrepreneur. Even skeptical/reluctant will get a lot out of this short seminar. In every case, the students who come out of this elective will be dramatically better positioned to effectively connect into the vast resources of MIT in this area, starting with the Martin Trust Center.

NOTE: While the skills that we teach are very relevant beyond startups (and we will discuss this in the elective), the context we will apply them is a startup because it is the most effective way to teach them in such a short time frame. It is how the framework can be seen working in its most pure, but not only, form.

## PRE-WORK FOR COURSE

Before the course, all participants must read or at least skim the following book written by the instructor: *Expanded and Updated Disciplined Entrepreneurship: 24 Steps to a Successful Startup* (Wiley, released April 2024). This will be the foundation of the course and be an invaluable reference after you take the course.

Participants should read the Commerce Bank Case Study (Harvard Business School Case 9-603-080) and the “MITx Global Entrepreneurship Bootcamp: Entrepreneurial Culture” case study on Intergalactic Research (free and posted on Canvas).

Optional book for course that will be very helpful going forward for electives participants is:

Cheek, Paul. *Disciplined Entrepreneurship Startup Tactics: 15 Tactics to Turn Your Business Plan into a Business* (Wiley, released April 2024).

## SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

*This schedule and topics are subject to change.*

### **Day #1: Friday January 10, 2025 (Steps 1-11 plus SMR & PMR)**

|                   |                                                                                  |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:30 – 9:15 am:   | Welcome, Overview & What is Disciplined Entrepreneurship (DE)?                   |
| 9:15 – 10:00 am:  | Overview of DE in Action (Quick Pass thru the 24 Steps)                          |
| 10:00 – 10:30 am: | Who Is Your Customer? Market Segmentation & Beachhead Market (Steps 1-8)         |
| 10:30 – 10:40 am: | Break                                                                            |
| 10:40 – 11:30 am: | Who Is Your Customer? (Steps 1-8) (continued)                                    |
| 11:30 – noon:     | Groups Formed and Decide on Idea for a New Venture to Pursue for Class Exercise  |
| noon – 1:00 pm:   | Lunch and exercise break                                                         |
| 1:00 – 2:00 pm:   | What Can You Do for Your Customer?                                               |
| 2:00 – 2:30 pm:   | Secondary & Primary Market Research – MIT JetPack AI Assistant as a Game Changer |
| 2:30 – 2:35 pm:   | Break                                                                            |
| 2:35 – 2:50 pm:   | Quick Overview of Step #9 and Why It Is Important                                |

2:50 – 3:45 pm: What is Your Core (i.e., Ultimate Competitive Advantage)?  
3:45 – 4:00 pm: Wrap Up of Day/Review & Sneak Peek at Day #2/Overview of Final Deliverable

Homework on first night: Teams will input their team's idea/venture/product into MIT DE JetPack Entrepreneurship AI Assistant and iterate on it. They should also watch the youtube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ULuptPyECUA>. All individuals are expected to re-skim (or read) the aforementioned Disciplined Entrepreneurship (Expanded and Updated version) textbook again especially pages xli-xlix (Chapter titled "Tracking Your Progress: The Disciplined Entrepreneurship (DE) Canvas") along with the Additional Resources referenced at the end of that chapter.

### **Day #2: Saturday January 11, 2025 (Steps 12-19, 24 plus Raison d'Être)**

8:30 – 8:40 am: Welcome Back, Check In & Preview of Day #2 – Overview of DE Canvas  
8:40 – 9:40 am: How Does Your Customer Acquire Your Product (inc. Windows of Opportunities & Triggers)?  
9:40 – 10:20 am: How Do You Make Money (i.e., Unit Economics)?  
10:20 – 10:30 am: Break  
10:30 – 11:30 am: How Do You Scale Your Business (Brew Barrel II, Peloton)?  
11:30 am – noon: How Do You Apply This to Your New Venture?  
Noon – 1:00 pm: Lunch  
1:00 – 2:15 pm: Excellence in Entrepreneurial Operations & Leadership  
2:15 – 2:25 pm: Overview of Assignment for Elective  
2:25 – 2:35 pm: Break  
2:35 – 3:30 pm: Team Work Time with Coaching  
3:30 – 3:50 pm: Selected Team Present Progress  
3:50 – 4:00 pm: Elective Wrap Up: What Did We Learn and How to Apply It? Where Do We Go From Here?

*Note: Bill Aulet will stay around after 4:00 pm to answer questions for those who are interested in a round table format.*

### **INSTRUCTORS**

#### **Bill Aulet**

Ethnet Inventors Professor of the Practice & Managing Director of the Martin Trust Center for MIT Entrepreneurship MIT Office: E40-160, Email: [aulet@mit.edu](mailto:aulet@mit.edu)

#### **Konstantinos Ligris**

Senior Lecturer at MIT Sloan, EIR (Entrepreneur-In-Residence) at Martin Trust Center for MIT Entrepreneurship & EMBA 2018. Email: [kligris@mit.edu](mailto:kligris@mit.edu)

### **TEACHING ASSISTANT (TA)**

#### **Michael (Mike) Sanchez**

MBA Candidate '25

Michael Sanchez ([mikesdc@mit.edu](mailto:mikesdc@mit.edu))

## CLASS RESOURCES

Additional course materials for the exercises will be distributed as well during the seminar. Student will be required to have Kerberos access and utilize the Orbit.mit.edu platform as well as the MIT DE JetPack Entrepreneurship AI Assistant that is an option in Orbit.

## GRADING

- Class participation: 20%
- Final presentation (team assignment): 40%
- Final reflection paper (individual assignment): 40%
- All grading this year will be P/D/F only.

## DESCRIPTION OF DELIVERABLES AND EXPECTATIONS

- **Class participation:** It will be expected that students are not only present but also actively engaged in class for the exercises that will be a fundamental part of the educational process.
- **Final Presentation (team assignment):** Participants will be part of a 6-8 person team that will take a new idea and develop it using the DE JetPack tool to the point where the team can present a three slide overview of the strengths and weaknesses of their planned new venture. Teams will also be given the opportunity to analyze an existing organization using the JetPack tool but it is preferred that the team start with a de novo new idea. The framework of analysis will be the Disciplined Entrepreneurship (DE) Canvas. The team will be giving time on the second day in the afternoon of the elective. Some will get a chance to present their analysis in a very short presentation to one of the instructors or the TA to get feedback. This presentation will be three slides. The first slide will simply overview the idea or organization to give context. The second slide will be a high-level assessment (green, yellow or red) of the plan or organization using the DE Canvas. The third slide will explain succinctly the strengths and weaknesses and next action suggested by the team. Teams must submit their final slide decks by **11:59 PM EST, January 16, 2025**.
- **Final reflection paper (individual assignment):** Each participant must write a two-page individual reflection paper on what you learned and how it will apply in your work/life going forward. This paper should be specific to your personal situation and avoid clichés and generalities. This paper is due by **11:59 PM EST, January 16, 2025** and should be double spaced and in twelve-point font. Failure to submit a timely reflection paper will result in an “incomplete” if participation and a final presentation are satisfied. If you need these IAP credits for graduation, an incomplete can delay degree approval. Please contact the teaching team **BEFORE** the deadline if any exigent circumstances prevent timely submission.