

SUMMER 2022

ORGB 434: Special Topics in OB

Comparing Startup Ecosystems of Israel and Canada: OB perspectives

3 Credits | Coordinating Professor: Brian Rubineau (brian.rubineau@mcgill.ca)

A collaborative 3-week Canada & Israel study trip offered by:
the Desautels Faculty of Management at McGill University &
the Hebrew University Business School

Co-Requisite

FINE 434: Special Topics in Finance – Comparing Startup Ecosystems of Israel and Canada: Finance Perspectives is a co-requisite for this course. FINE 434 is also 3 credits. The two courses must be taken together for a total of 6 credits. For FINE 434, please contact Professor Jiro E. Kondo (BRONF 511, jiro.kondo@mcgill.ca).

Course Description

This course consists of a collaborative 3-week study trip between the Desautels Faculty of Management at McGill University and the Hebrew University Business School (HUBS) at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel (HUJI). The trip involves 1 week of content and site visits in and around Montreal, Canada, and 2 weeks of content and site visits in Israel. The course provides a practical introduction to startup ecosystems by comparing and contrasting the cultural, social, financial, governmental, and policy contexts between Canada and Israel. Groups of Canadian and Israeli students will collaborate on projects applying course concepts towards identifying opportunities for improving upon a startup ecosystem.

The course is tentatively scheduled to begin in early August in Montreal Canada for one week and continue for two additional weeks in Israel. International round-trip air travel is provided to course participants. Flight times and dates to be finalized by May before the start of class.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To understand how OB topics such as organizational culture, cross-cultural issues, and HR practices affect the outcomes of startups;
- To gain an integrated perspective of how these OB issues interact shape the structures and types of startups observed in particular ecosystems;
- To observe and experience the integration of these topics in real-world startups in both Canada and Israel;
- To experience and negotiate first-hand international collaborations via group-work involving students from Israel;
- To experience first-hand the challenges and pace of startup organizations as course is run as its own version of a startup organization, with each student taking on one or more job roles, complete with peer feedback and real-time performance evaluations.
- To broaden students' cultural exposure via a 3-week study trip including 2-weeks in Israel.

NOTES AND RESTRICTIONS

- Course is offered contingent upon sufficient student enrollment.
- Students must take the Summer ORGB 434 and FINE 434 courses together for 6 credits.
- Instructor's permission is required for enrollment.
- Students must take part in both the Canada (1 week) and Israel (2 week) portions of the study trip.
- There is a non-refundable program fee (CAD\$1750) for enrolling students. This fee is the total fee for program participation including FINE 434. Enrolling students will NOT be assessed this fee twice.
- Most expenses associated with the course – Round-trip air travel to/from Israel, course-related collective ground travel in Canada and Israel, accommodations in Israel, entrance fees for tours and experiences on the course itinerary, and selected meals in Israel – will be covered by McGill.
- Students are responsible for: obtaining the proper documentation to travel & remain in Israel (e.g., passport, visas, etc.); any sightseeing, trips, entertainment or activities not included in the itinerary that you choose to pursue; some meals and snacks; regular tuition costs for the course (3 credits); a non-refundable deposit of CAD\$1750 that is billed to your student account upon your acceptance of an offer to enroll.

Course Content

The course consists of three core parts, each part presenting Finance and OB perspectives:

- Part 1: An introduction to the life-cycle of startups.
- Part 2: An outline of the landscape of startups in Canada and Israel, and the concept of startup ecosystems.
- Part 3: Case studies drawn from prominent startups.

The OB perspectives for each part is briefly described below.

To build the needed shared understanding of the social, cultural, and historic context of both Canada and Israel, the course will also feature some cultural and historic tours, trips, and lectures about both settings.

Part 1: An introduction to the life-cycle of startups.

The OB perspective. The introduction to the life-cycle of startups will discuss: the genesis and consequences of the nature of the startup's organizational culture; topics related to growing and staffing a startup; and consequential social dynamics taking place within founding teams and the staff within emerging startups.

The goal here is for students to build a solid foundation on startups and a framework for thinking about them.

Part 2: An outline of the landscape of startups.

The OB perspective. The second part of the course offers an overview of the role of cultural contexts on startup activities. The environment for entrepreneurial activity can vary widely from country to country and even region to region. Cultures, norms, and structural features of society can influence the appeal of engaging with startups, and the types of startups likely to emerge and succeed.

In addition, startups from one ecosystem seeking to enter other foreign markets will encounter cross-cultural issues. Disruptive technologies and new competitors both meet active resistance from incumbents and skepticism from investors. Surmounting these challenges are challenges in themselves.

The goal here is for students to learn about the important role of external contexts in startup success.

Part 3: Case studies and site visits involving prominent startups and startup-promoting agencies.

This part integrates the finance and OB perspectives using a common set of organizational exemplars. Here, students engage with select startups and related organizations illustrating concepts from the first two parts of the course.

COURSE MATERIALS

Course Website

McGill's MyCourses online courseware system will be the main resource for distribution of class materials, online discussions, assignments, and more. MyCourses allows access by students outside of McGill, so both HUBS and McGill students will be able to participate equally.

Reading Materials

There is no required textbook for this class. Instead, required reading materials will be distributed electronically via the course website. Nonetheless, the following e recommended books contain partial coverage of the course. At least skimming these books is part of the recommended preparation for the course:

1. Bill Aulet, *Disciplined Entrepreneurship*, John Wiley & Sons, 2013.
2. Reid Hoffman and Chris Yeh, *Blitzscaling*, Currency (Part of Crowne Publishing Group), 2018.
3. Senor, Dan, and Saul Singer. *Start-up nation: The story of Israel's economic miracle*. McClelland & Stewart, 2009.

The first book in this list focuses on the search for product-market fit - but in a far more detailed manner than we will cover in this course. The second book focuses on a particular form of aggressive scaling called "Blitzscaling" and is based on a popular course taught at Stanford University (which is available on YouTube). The third book describes the unique features of Israeli society that promote entrepreneurial activity. None of these books perfectly matches the course. Each has material that will not be covered in class and each lacks substantial coverage of the full set of course concepts.

EVALUATION METHOD

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

- Participation and Professionalism: 30%
- Group Project 30%
- Individual Reflection Journal: 20%
- Job performance: 15%
- 360 Peer evaluation: 5%

GRADED ELEMENTS

Participation and Professionalism (30%)

The success of the course requires the active and thoughtful participation of all students. Punctual, respectful, mature, and responsible behavior is required of all students during all class activities. Students are expected to be inquisitive, attentive, and participatory during all site visits. Failures to meet these expectations will be reflected in this component of the course grade. **ON TIME** attendance along with respectful dress and comportment are mandatory for all class meetings and all scheduled events and activities during the study trip.

Individual lateness that disrupts the group, even once, will be reflected in the final course grade.

Severe breaches in conduct that collectively affect other students, course instructors, or the reputation of the program sponsoring organizations, can result in the immediate cancellation of a student's participation in the course and a failing grade.

Individual Reflection Journal (20%)

You will be expected to maintain a journal throughout the course. This will provide you with an opportunity to work on one of the essential practices of entrepreneurship, reflection, while at the same time helping you ‘codify’ your learning experiences. It will also require you to become aware of your thinking, evaluate your thoughts, and communicate them clearly. Students are responsible for at least 10 days of journal entries. Be advised that selected quotes from submitted journal entries may be used for promotional materials and program reports. No quotes will be attributed by name without express approval from the student.

Group Project (30%)

The group project is to be completed in teams of 4 students. All final project materials (slides + write-up) are due at the end of the study program. All groups will present their project, and all group members are expected to share in the presentation. Project topics are flexible but will likely be in the theme of using lessons learned from the course to suggest improvements to the Canadian or Israeli startup ecosystem.

Managing group dynamics: Group projects, like any group work, can be a challenging experience. Group members sometimes feel that the division of labor is not equitable. However, learning how to effectively manage the group work experience and outcome is essential to successful professional performance; you need not only to contribute yourself but also encourage others to contribute to the group assignments. Setting clear and explicit expectations of the group at the outset and communicating frequently and openly throughout the course are key. All problems arising within the group, including those related to relative contributions of the group members, are to be handled internally by the group; this is an essential part of the group project experience.

Any group member with serious concerns about another group member at any time may issue a “yellow card” regarding the group member of concern by sending an email to Prof. Rubineau identifying the group member and the concern. Prof. Rubineau may reach out to the student and/or group to discuss the group challenges.

At the sole discretion of Prof. Rubineau, a group member may be issued a “red card.” Receiving a red card means that the student is removed from their group and becomes responsible for completing the group project as an individual project.

In addition to this yellow/red card system, please note that you will have the opportunity to evaluate your group members at the end of the course based on the quality and quantity of their contributions. Your individual grade may go up or down based on these evaluations if there is consensus regarding over- or under-contribution.

Job Performance (15%)

This course about startups will be run as a type of startup organization. All students participating in the course will have one or more jobs that work towards the smooth operations of the course. Jobs include

- Social jobs - helping to organize outside-of-class activities for class members during the Canada portion.
- External relations jobs - helping to coordinate site visits or guest speakers during the Canada portion - these jobs will require work prior to the start of the course.
- Logistical jobs - helping to ensure class members assemble and travel in a smooth and timely manner.
- PR/Media jobs - photo taking, wrangling, culling, saving, etc.; social media posting, and more
- HR/Analytics jobs - job scheduling, processing 360 evaluation data, and providing feedback

Initial jobs assignments come from course instructors. Switching jobs is allowed. Students will be evaluating each others’ job performance, will receive real-time feedback, and be provided with opportunities to improve.

360 Peer Feedback (5%)

This course relies on all students helping each other to yield a good experience for all. Peer ratings on jobs and general course citizenship will be a part of students’ grades.

1. **Academic Integrity**

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information)

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le [guide pour l'honnêteté académique de McGill](#)).

2. **Language of Submission**

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

3. **Additional Statements**

- The University Student Assessment Policy (http://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/2016-04_student_assessment_policy.pdf) exists to ensure fair and equitable academic assessment for all students and to protect students from excessive workloads. All students and instructors are encouraged to review this Policy, which addresses multiple aspects and methods of student assessment, e.g. the timing of evaluation due dates and weighting of final examinations.
- © Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.
- If you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009, <http://www.mcgill.ca/osd>.
- In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.
- McGill University is on land which long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.
- It is our individual and collective responsibilities to require that our governments and organizations act to address the enduring legacies of colonialism and their associated injustices and inequalities.
- As the instructor of this course, I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. I work to include topics related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the class, to use gender neutral language where possible, and to include diverse representation in cases and class perspectives. If you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009. If you experience or are aware of other EDI-related issues (e.g., micro-aggressions, inappropriate language, harassment) in or out of class, please see the Desautels EDI webpage for information on your options for reporting.