**EPFL**

| MGT-498 | **Platforms & digital business models** |

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| Cursus | Sem. | Type |
|---|---|---|
| Managmt, dur et tech | MA2, MA3 | Obl. |

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|---|---|
| Language of teaching | English |
| Credits | 3 |
| Withdrawal | Unauthorized |
| Session | Winter, Summer |
| Semester | Spring |
| Exam | During the semester |
| Workload | 90h |
| Weeks | 14 |
| **Hours** | **2 weekly** |
| Lecture | 1.71 weekly |
| **Number of positions** | |

## Summary

This course is a hands-on introduction to platform strategy and digital business models. Students will apply theoretical insights to practical cases and will work in groups to develop own business ideas. You will be guided by interventions from experienced practitioners and group coaching sessions.

## Content

You will learn how platform strategy differs from traditional organizational forms in terms of supply chains, innovation, and marketing. Then you will apply this knowledge and develop your own business model ideas. You can either start from scratch with your own startup idea or develop a plan to transform an existing company's business into a platform model. To guide you in this process, we will have inputs from experienced practitioners and regular group coaching sessions. You will be evaluated based on a midterm group presentation and written group assignment

## Keywords

Platform strategy, Digital business models, Design thinking, Digital transformation, Data-driven innovation, Project-based learning.

## Learning Prerequisites

### Recommended courses

Students with a background in competitive strategy and business analytics will find the course more accessible, but it is not a mandatory pre-requisite.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:
- Discuss key concepts of platform economics, define core aspects of digital business models
- Apply concepts to case studies and generalize
- Coordinate effectively with team mates
- Analyze market data that students need to collect themselves
- Plan market research and small experiments
- Conduct market research and small experiments
- Develop a plan for scaling a business idea
- Produce a concise report of a semester long group project

## Transversal skills

- Assess progress against the plan, and adapt the plan as appropriate.
- Plan and carry out activities in a way which makes optimal use of available time and other resources.
- Set objectives and design an action plan to reach those objectives.
- Communicate effectively, being understood, including across different languages and cultures.
- Communicate effectively with professionals from other disciplines.
- Identify the different roles that are involved in well-functioning teams and assume different roles, including leadership roles.
- Demonstrate a capacity for creativity.
- Demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking

## Teaching methods

This is a Project-Based-Learning course. We have three types of interactions:
- Theoretical input sessions, some from experienced practitioners
- Presentation of group projects
- Individual group coaching sessions

The course will have short interventions of experienced practitioners.

## Assessment methods

We will start with a conceptual framework to clarify some theoretical aspects of digital markets and platform business models. We will then have practical sessions on examples of cases of (not) successful platforms, a workshop on how to structuring business ideas.

You are front and center in the main part of the course. You develop business models in small groups and get feedback in group coaching sessions. You will prepare a mid-term presentation of your ideas to get back feedback from everybody in class. This presentation and accompanying material will be graded and worth 40% of our final grade.

You will incorporate this feedback, refine your business model and then submit a written final assignment of up to 12 pages (60% of final grade).

Active contribution are important for lively and interesting class meetings, so reading and thinking before class, and debating during class is important. The goal is for you to contribute to everybody's learning by providing new insights to the discussion, or by asking good questions, or by reacting to comments from other students or guest speakers. In addition, I will ask for someone to summarize the key takeaway of each class. Good answers are another great opportunity to contribute to everybody's learning.

## Resources

### Bibliography

There is no text book for this class, but we will relate to:

- Parker, G.G., Van Alstyne, M.W. and Choudary, S.P., 2016. Platform Revolution: How Networked Markets Are Transforming the Economy and How to Make Them Work for You. WW Norton & Company.
- Gassmann, O., Frankenberger, K. and Csik, M., 2014. The Business Model Navigator. Financial Times Publishing.

### Ressources en bibliothèque

- Platform Revolution / Parker
- The Business Model Navigator / Gassmann

### Moodle Link

- https://go.epfl.ch/MGT-498