The below syllabus is for Spring 2018. The 2019 edition will aim to include similar companies and readings, but may contain slight differences depending on the availability of external speakers and company hosts.

Professor Bo Cowgill
Professor Office Location: Uris Hall, 705
E-mail: bo.cowgill@gsb.columbia.edu
Office Hours on Mondays, 3-4PM.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS
Yoonjin Choi, yc2695@columbia.edu

Course Meeting Times:
Four Fridays (see schedule below), 10:00AM to 03:00PM
Location: URI 333 and on site at our corporate partners.

Communications from professor and teaching assistants about the course will take place through Canvas. Students should make sure they regularly check for announcements and messaging notifications.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This is an immersion class in which trips to local technology companies will be paired with in-depth discussions of strategy, technology and internal organizational issues for firms in quickly-evolving product and service markets. This class’ title is “Technology Disruption,” which alludes to a popular and influential theory of innovation, firm growth and industry lifecycles.

Many students will notice that some of the firms in our class are not “disruptive” in this traditional sense. Our class is 100% guilty of blurring those boundaries. We aren’t limiting ourselves to technological “disruption” in the narrow Clayton Christensen way. We’re talking about what normal people mean by disruptive innovation: Pathbreaking technology that upends markets, organizations and ways of living and doing business. But fear not! Our third session will contain an overview of traditional “disruption theory” along with an application to one of New York’s fastest growing technology firms.

The course will give students tools and concepts for the following applications:
- How to understand and apply the now classic Clayton Christensen theory of disruption.
- How machine learning will (and won’t) disrupt subjective decision-making for workers, executives, consumers and households.
- How consumer and enterprise technology co-evolve, and the implications for enterprise-focused startups and incumbents.
- How firms respond organizationally to fast-changing and disruptive product and service markets.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS
Each session will feature assigned readings which can be downloaded from the links below, or
CONNECTION TO THE CORE

- Managerial Statistics and Business Analytics: We will review data analysis from field experiments of disruptive new technology inside organizations.
- Strategy Formulation: We will discuss entry strategy for firms seeking to automate business (and personal) decision-making.
- Managerial Economics: Can organizations adapt to disruption by becoming more like markets?

CLASSROOM NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to adhere to CBS Core Culture in this class by being Present, Prepared, and Participating. In particular:

1. Please use the bathroom and eat before and after class, and before and after our site visits. If you must go to the bathroom during class, please exit through the back of the classroom.
2. You are required to fill out a course evaluation. These help our program develop over time. You will also have an opportunity to submit course feedback during the class so that we can tailor the experience to your reactions and interests as the class proceeds.
3. Please do not use electronic devices during class.

In addition to the normal expectations, we have additional requirements for immersion classes. Please note the following.

Before Class:

1. Complete the reading and discussion question assignments. These will be useful in making our time together more intellectually substantive.
2. Use the bathroom and/or buy food if you need. Note that Columbia will provide lunch, so it isn’t necessary to buy lunch unless you don’t want Columbia’s.
3. Dress intelligently. We realize that many technology companies have very casual dress codes, but please help us present yourself (and our business school) thoughtfully and professionally. If you are confused, go with business casual.
4. Bring your ID. Many companies require visitors to show government-sponsored ID and will leave you outside if you forget. If you do not have a US government ID, bring your passport.

During the Academic Portion of the Class (10-12):

Our class time will be structured as follows:

1. The professor will present and discuss academic theories about technological business disruption. In addition, I will provide real-world background facts and institutional details for the companies and decisions we will discuss.
2. As a class, we will debate critical business decisions, and the application of the theories to particular scenarios.
3. Attendance and participation are important. One class is an entire 25% of the course.

Schedule within our Fridays:
1. Our classroom experiences will take place at Columbia from 10AM to approximately noon. In some cases, lecture will end earlier or later, depending on how much time we need to arrive onsite. In those cases, we will announce different times for the end of class and our bus departure at the beginning of the academic portion of our day.

2. At the end of our lecture and discussion, Columbia will provide a box or sack lunch. We will pick up the box or sack lunch after the lecture part of the class and proceed to the bus. Plan to eat your box lunch on the bus. Do not eat during class.

3. The bus will be parked and waiting for us 120th Street between Broadway and Amsterdam. See the map at the end of this syllabus.

4. We will plan to leave at 12:15 or at an earlier time (announced in class) depending on our transportation needs.

5. If you would like to eat something besides Columbia’s boxed lunch, purchase it before class begins. You will not receive a break from class time to purchase food.

6. Do not provide your own transportation to the host site. Take the bus provided by Columbia Business School. Our host companies have asked that everyone arrive together at once.

At our Host’s Offices

1. The professor will distribute a Q&A sheet beforehand. Please enter questions two-three days in advance. Our hosts want to know what you’re interested to learn more about, so that they can better prepare substantive answers and discussions.

2. Treat our hosts respectfully. Do not eat or leave during their talks.

3. Stay with our group if we are offered a tour.

COURSE ROADMAP/SCHEDULE

Session 1: Consumers and Enterprise as co-Disruptors
Date: March 23, 2018
Site Visit: Work-Bench. Add your questions for our panel of VCs and entrepreneurs here.
Required Reading:
- Academic/Theory Background:
  - The ‘Consumerization’ of Information Technology, by David Moschella, Doug Neal, Piet Opperman and John Taylor.
  - Chat and the Consumerization of IT. By Ben Thompson. Stratechery.

- Company Primer:
  - Work Bench’s 2017 Enterprise Almanac. This is a slide deck, and should go fast. It will give an overview of Work-Bench’s perspective on their market.

Session 2: Machine Learning and the Disruption of Subjective Decision-making
Date: April 6, 2018
Site Visit: McKinsey Organizational Technology and People Analytics
Required Reading:
- Bias and Productivity in Humans and Algorithms
Session 3: *The Clayton Christensen Perspective on Disruption*

*Date: April 20, 2018*

*Site Visit: Peloton*

*Required Reading:*

- **Academic/Theory Background:**

- **Company Primer:**
  - *Peloton’s Treadmill and Cult Following*: Business Insider.
  - *Peloton Company Brochure*

Session 4: *When Product Market Disruption Creates Organizational Disruption*

*Date: April 27, 2018*

*Required Reading:*


*Site Visit: Facebook*

**METHOD OF EVALUATION**

Grading will be based on attendance, participation, case discussion responses (online), one case writeup and an optional final project.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Discussion Questions</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Writeup</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optional Final Project</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
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*All the components of the grade are individual assignments of type C with respect to the honor code.*

A student who only participates actively in class, answers pre-questions thoughtfully and does a good job on the case write-up can receive a maximum grade of HP. Students who wish to receive an H must also submit an individual final project as described below -- in addition to the other requirements. There is no reason to do a final project unless you are going to put forth a serious effort on all components of the grade.

*Class Participation*
An important course requirement is active involvement in class discussion. Your participation is essential for both your own learning and that of other students. Because the academic portion of our class is case-based course, much of the learning will take place in our class discussion of these materials.

I expect that every student will arrive well prepared and able to answer the day’s assignment questions. Students should also expect to be called in class.

In terms of the quality of participation, the best class comments:

1. Articulate a clear stance or argument (as distinct from reciting course facts).
2. Forward the conversation beyond what has already been stated. One could elaborate on a previously stated point, disagree or advance a new hypothesis.
3. Raise issues from past classes, current events, or other anecdotes that are relevant to the discussion.
4. Show curiosity and a willingness to experiment.
5. Use data, examples, or your own personal and professional experience to support arguments.
6. Takes others students’ ideas seriously and engage in good faith debate. You may disagree with your fellow students, but avoid questioning the motives, seriousness or integrity of other students’ perspectives.

Help others feel safe about participating by inviting further discussion or referring to points that have already been made by your classmates. Students are also expected to be present, prepared, and participate per the Columbia Core Culture. **Use of electronic devices in class is not allowed.**

Unexcused absences will affect not only your attendance grade but also your class participation grade.

**Case Discussion Questions**

There will be one case discussion question for each case we will study. Case discussion questions will be posted as assignments in your Canvas Calendar. They require you to read the relevant case or article and give a short response to 1-2 questions. You must submit your answer to the discussion question through Canvas by 8AM on the day we discuss the relevant case in class.

**Case Write-ups**

Please complete one case write-up of one of the materials in class. Your write up should address (in depth) one of the class discussion questions in greater depth. There is a 700 word limit. Write-ups should analyze and aim to persuade rather than recite facts. Write-ups should be uploaded to Canvas by 8AM on the day the associated case is covered in class.

**Optional Final Project**

The final project is for students that are hoping to receive an H in the course. Doing a final project does not guarantee that a student will receive an H, and receiving an H also requires doing well in class participation and on the two case write-ups.

In the project, an individual student should analyze a company or industry, ideally concerning a particular strategic decision or issue, using the concepts from the course. There is a 2500 word limit, including all exhibits. While providing
some details is necessary, you should emphasize analysis over description. Discussing your topic with me in advance is advised but not required.

Do not use cases covered in this course or other courses at Columbia Business School. You are welcome to make use of industry contacts. I am also happy to provide a real-world ‘case’ if you have trouble deciding on your own. Students who wish to do a final project must sign up on Canvas two weeks prior to the final class.
MAP TO BUS PICKUP:
INCLUSION, ACCOMMODATIONS, AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

At Columbia Business School, we believe that diversity strengthens any community or business model and brings it greater success. Columbia Business School is committed to providing all students with the equal opportunity to thrive in the classroom by providing a learning, living, and working environment free from discrimination, harassment, and bias on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or ability.

Columbia Business School will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact the Columbia University’s Office of Disability Services for information about registration. Students seeking accommodation in the classroom may obtain information on the services offered by Columbia University’s Office of Disability Services online at www.health.columbia.edu/docs/services/ods/index.html or by contacting (212) 854-2388.

Columbia Business School is committed to maintaining a safe environment for students, staff and faculty. Because of this commitment and because of federal and state regulations, we must advise you that if you tell any of your instructors about sexual harassment or gender-based misconduct involving a member of the campus community, your instructor is required to report this information to a Title IX Coordinator. They will treat this information as private, but will need to follow up with you and possibly look into the matter. Counseling and Psychological Services, the Office of the University Chaplain, and the Ombuds Office for Gender-Based Misconduct are confidential resources available for students, staff and faculty. “Gender-based misconduct” includes sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and gender-based harassment. For more information, see http://sexualrespect.columbia.edu/gender-based-misconduct-policy-students.