

1. Please comment on the individual instructors with regard to effectiveness and attitude toward students:

Strengths

- Interesting and fun business class. Good discussions.
- Very approachable and demonstrates genuine interest in students.
- Fred is extremely good at facilitating classroom discussion. I've honestly never met another instructor who was so good at encouraging participation. He listens very well and is extremely respectful of all viewpoints. He also showed a lot of enthusiasm for all the material and was very prepared for every lecture.
- Fred did a great job getting everyone in the class involved in the discussions. He is a great discussion leader and was very well organized. He guided the discussion but also allowed students to shape the discussion.
- The discussions were really engaging due to Fred and the teaching staff were great
- Open, inquisitive, curious, personal, challenging
- Excellent discussion leader and facilitator. You manage to make the class challenging, informative, fun, and professional. I am so glad that I took this class and got to know you!
- Fred and the TAs were fantastic!
- The professor is highly competent and creates an atmosphere in the classroom that encourages discussion. He ensures that all students are given a fair chance to speak.
- very helpful. available to advise students not only on class materials but on other topics regarding career, how to deal with certain situations, etc.
- Great knowledge and experience.
- Really great class. Instructor was very clear and very informative. Really opened up new perspectives
- Fred is lots of fun and I really enjoyed listening to him and he was very encouraging. When he commented on my participation to me directly after class, it helped me feel confident to speak in class in the future.
- Amazing understanding of incorporating different student personalities and characters into a fluid classroom discussion. The TAs and professor were all very approachable and had very positive attitudes throughout.
- Fred is very dedicated to knowing the strengths and goals of each student, making sure that they are comfortable in class, and making as personal of an experience as possible. He makes efforts with his teaching aids to contact students in and out of class to reinforce good performance during class. He's the only professor I've had who has directly interacted with the students and their education experience. With most classes, I feel a divide between teacher/student, but with EE204, I really feel that Fred is alongside his students case by case.
- This was a very fine course indeed!! Professor Gibbons has a deep knowledge of tech in business, and used a combination of technical material, personal anecdotes, and engaged discussion that led to a very interesting class. I never wanted to leave when lecture was over! The assignments were clear and fair, and the TA staff was fantastic.
- Prof. Gibbons was fantastic in guiding the discussion but not dominating it. This class was a simulation of boardroom, and we learned a lot about how to interact and make arguments with his guidance.
- Fred was an excellent instructor. He did a great job at facilitating the discussions and getting us to get at the heart/core of some of the more important topics in the cases that we looked at.
- Fred's awesome, the TAs were great.

Suggestions for Improvement

- I would have liked to incorporate outside information beyond the scope of the cases.
- None.
- I don't like how Fred begins every class with a summary of the previous lecture discussion. Providing a summary is OK, but I feel like it doesn't have much value without Fred's own opinion about the issues. Fred does sometimes offer his own viewpoint, but he always tried to frame it in a politically correct way. Maybe there's a reason for doing this, but I would have liked to have heard him open up a bit more and share more of his true thoughts on the issues.
- It might be good to change up the format of the class a bit towards the second half of the quarter since it gets a little repetitive. Perhaps we can have small breakout discussion sessions where we discuss in small groups and then re-group and summarize as a big group.
- none
- Please be more sincere
- None
- None
- None.
- The only area of improvement I would suggest is that Professor Gibbons should occasionally break his professional veneer and give more idealistic/inspirational explanations for what the companies we discuss are doing. For example, Tesla is not just carving out a niche and ensuring a great user experience, they are trying to

revolutionize the way we use energy and killing themselves to do it. My complaints are few though - this was an excellent course.

- We did a simulation of the startup cycle, which went poorly. My results were not shown in the final table. I think its a cool concept but it wasn't quite ready yet.
- Sometimes I felt that Fred drove the conversations in a way that rehashed the content in the cases, rather than actually pushing us to solutions or decisions to be made. I felt most of the class was buildup, rather than actually figuring out how to execute on the decisions presented.

2. Please comment on the strengths and weaknesses, if any, of the textbook(s) and reading(s). What materials were most and least valuable? Why?

Strengths

- Good diverse blend of cases used in the course.
- Great cases. Went well with student interests and class concepts.
- The case studies, in general, are very interesting and fun to read.
- The case studies were very interesting, current, and relevant to tech. I liked how each case study was paired with a good HBS article that discussed concepts which the case was an example of.
- Very interesting
- Foundational business readings were very good
- Readings were diverse and well-chosen. I liked how we had one "theoretical" reading and one "applied" case reading.
- All of the course material was relevant and interesting.
- very interesting and insightful reading materials. I learnt a lot about new concepts, including strategy, competitive forces, marketing, disruptive innovation, bridget, etc., which provides a framework when it comes to business management. Some topics are also helpful as life lessons, and are helpful to my engineering research.
- Excellent readings. Overall very informative without being overly dense. Perfect balance
- The readings were really good--both interesting themselves, and good for classroom discussions.
- Many of the readings tie in with each other really well, and they're all very interesting to read. Most of the cases (all but a couple, and the two that didn't quite fit I think I pointed out in a previous "keep" or "drop" survey on the cases) were also very compatible with the concepts taught.
- I love the cases and the case method in general.
- The readings were great case studies into relevant businesses. I really think the quality of the cases was much higher than anything I had read before when trying to learn about a company.
- I really enjoyed all of the cases that we looked at throughout the course. Sometimes there was a lot of reading to go through, but for the most part I really enjoyed the materials and cases that we looked at. S
- The readings are the best part of this class. I enjoyed 75% of the readings. Very well picked!

Suggestions for Improvement

- None.
- The hiring people case was a little weak and the videos were a bit fake and unrealistic. There could probably be a more valuable exercise to do to cover that topic. Like maybe some role plays in class.
- Very long. sometimes we didn't talk about half the reading
- Reading on sales management was a waste of time. Entrepreneurial readings, HR readings were meh.
- I fel that the start up game could have been better. I learned a lot through the process of it, but over all I didn't feel that it fit into the arc of the class. I don't mean that you should give up on it as an exercise, I just think it needs a bit more polishing and incorporation with class concepts.
- None
- For the startup games, it would be very helpful if the financial status of the companies can be made available to all students before class so that all can do some preparation for negotiation in class. Otherwise, it was very difficult to come up with a reasonable strategy and would cause some unnecessary confusions/bargaining given the short 1 min pitch and almost zero time to think about how much to negotiate.
- Would be great if the reader was available in paper
- None
- Since this is a class for techies, I feel people try to hold on to more "solid" parts of the reading. Like the 5 forces, or 5Cs and 4Ps, rather than broader conceptual things. I think the conceptual things feel too fluffy unless we really put them into practice, like we did with the start up game, the bay battery stimulation, or the finance balancing. Those were awesome!
- None.
- There was a portion of the course on start ups which had the potential to be really useful and applicable to us, but somehow it didn't seem useful to me. As enjoyable as the start-up game was to do, I thought it was poorly prepared. Most of the learning was done after the game was over, when we were presented the trade offs between, for example, rich and king. It might've been helpful to know those terms as we were in the game. After doing the first part of the evaluation, the "distinguish between more and less important topics" was brought to mind. I don't recall thinking that a particular concept was specifically emphasized more by Fred. I'm wondering if

that was intentional. If so, I still would've liked to have it made clear that all topics were equally important or if it was our choice to figure out which was the most important for us depending on where we saw it being useful in our careers. We did learn a lot, so it would've been nice to know which part of the course Fred would recommend that we don't forget (although he did give great advice the very last class directed specifically towards building our future).

- None. This was done right.
- Sometimes the theory articles were a bit dense and the cases did not directly pull from the theory articles when we discussed various solutions to the problems.

3. Please comment on assignments and exams (difficulty, length, frequency, usefulness, and their success at testing conceptual understanding rather than recall):

Strengths

- Enjoyed putting class concepts to work on cases.
- The Back Bay Battery simulation was a lot of fun. Very useful for seeing how difficult it is to make projections and maximize profit.
- The Coursera and Microsoft cases for the assignments were both really interesting and informative. The teamwork aspect is good too. The instructions were clear and the feedback was informative.
- Got to apply the class material. Not too difficult, just had to analyze a lot.
- super useful way to integrate all knowledge from the course
- The two writing assignments were a great exercise in developing business strategy
- Overall, the number, difficulty and usefulness of the assignments was very good. By design, the papers tested mainly conceptual understanding.
- Mid-term and final papers helped a lot to reinforce the topics learnt in class, and put me in actions to use the concepts and my analytical skills to analyze and address real business challenges. The feedback from mid-term paper is very helpful in improving my approach to final paper
- Great teamwork experience during each paper.
- Case studies tied together important concepts for class
- Deep; the papers allowed me to engage with topics and gain a much better understanding of the thought process when analyzing murky cases.
- The difficulties were fair. I like the group aspect of the written exams, which really reinforced the concepts through thorough discussion.
- The assignments were very clear and fair. My only suggestion, and it might be prohibitively difficult to grade, but I wish the last assignment of the course had been more open ended and we could choose our own company to write about.
- The Coursera and Microsoft assignments were really interesting exercises to pull from the different material that we learned in the course. Although it was a bit difficult to work on Microsoft with only half the number of people, I am glad we did because it really gave me an opportunity to further deep dive into the material.
- Good group experience.

Suggestions for Improvement

- Hard to keep up with cases for class when completing midterm and final.
- I think that the topic for the midterm paper was poorly chosen. Coursera was a boring company to analyze because the scope of the problem seemed very narrow. Also, it's very difficult to analyze because we were given limited information and coursera is creating a new market for which it's very hard to make suggestions.

Startup game needs to be better organized.
- I liked the cases and the general assignment, I wouldn't change much here. Maybe the in-class discussion following the case could be more centered on finding out what everyone recommended as opposed to general discussion of context and stuff we were already given in the case.
- Maybe this was intentional, but it was difficult to offer recommendations in the paper because there was no clear answer.
- please give one clear centralized rubric, instead of making us treasure hunt to see if we missed anything
- Grading criteria relating to how the analysis should be performed were somewhat unclear.
- It took me quite a while to understand the impacts of financial data and the market data on the strategy suggestions. It would be very helpful if the instructor and the TAs can give some concrete examples (the revenue and profit of company X is like this, and the market potential is like this, so it is reasonable for company X to do this but not that, etc.), I learnt in a hard way from mid-term paper, and spent a lot of time struggling with the final paper to get understanding on what is reasonable suggestions with solid data backing up.
- Clearly criteria before first case
- None.
- After our midterm paper was turned in, we spent a large portion of the class analyzing risks with our recommendations. I think that's a really important part about recommending is also analyzing the consequences. Although the rubric does mention alternative and strengths/weaknesses, it doesn't mention "risk." I'd suggest putting emphasis on risk (since it was a big part of the critique for both the midterm and final

papers) throughout the course. When we're studying the cases, maybe include some discussions on trade-offs, alternatives, and risks to reinforce and make a habit out of this thought process. This might produce higher quality papers as well.

- It was great working with a public company because more financials were present. I liked the private company/startup and public company duo. Since coursera is also a startup, I felt that some of the lessons from the cloudflare scaling case would have come in very handy to think about when doing the Coursera case.
- It would have been infinitely helpful if the expectations were clearer. Example-papers from previous years would be great.
- The questions asked in the exam/papers are often hard to fit into a coherent structure, which was my grade's downfall.
- Grading seemed very rigid - follow a script to get the grade. Didn't distinguish between who had a solid understanding and who learned the basics.

4. Do you have any additional comments on the course over-all?

Strengths

- None.
- I would like to say thank you to Fred, Elizabeth and Charles for their fantastic effort in putting this great class together! I really enjoyed the class and highly recommend it to my friends. I think the cases were really interesting and well-paired with the articles, which generated great discussions that were very well moderated and guided by Fred in class. The receptions organized for mingling and getting to know people in the class were also valuable and fun. I think it's nice that we actually all got to know each other's names (for the most part) and backgrounds so that we can stay in touch after the class.
- Best discussion class I've taken
- awesome course staff!
- Five stars!
- Amazing course
- Excellent course. One of the best courses I've taken
- Excellent introduction to business for engineers.
- Great class overall. Really opened up new perspectives to electrical engineering students. Really valuable skills that are often overlooked in technical curriculum
- I had lots of fun! Thank you!
- Amazing class. One of the best I've ever taken.
- I really enjoyed the course and was able to meet really great engineers who also had the same business-related interest as I did. It's surprisingly rare to find those kind of people, and it was wonderful to have a class full of them to talk about subjects that piqued our interest.
- Thank you, this was great!
- Overall, this was by far one of my favorite courses here at Stanford. I gained incredible insights into the world of business and management that I otherwise would not have been able to achieve. I am so glad that I had an opportunity to gain certain insights and wisdom from
- Great course
- Incredible course. Said it was front loaded, but seemed like it was a fairly constant amount of work - students just got faster at doing the assignments.

Suggestions for Improvement

- Bring in a couple people that made some of the decisions we discuss to get their perspective.
- The second half of the class got a little bit repetitive, so perhaps things could be kept a little more exciting by changing up the format of some of the lectures (such as the startup game, that was pretty fun and different). I think the class about hiring could involve some role-play interviews, for example.
- Perhaps shorter readings, but it wasn't so bad.
- get a better website
- None
- None
- The more hands on and involved you get the students, the better. Bay batteries, startup game, and the financial balance sheet stand out as the most memorable and helpful classes.
- Keep it up!
- I would like to see more cases related to startup and entrepreneurship. I also want to get more insights into some of the finance and business operations that occur at large companies.
- Somehow develop a better grading method. Also, when discussing some technical topics would be nice if the instructor had a better understanding of what the technology actually was (though this didn't detract from the lesson being taught). Also, the professor seemed to pick favorites among the class and call on them more regularly. Otherwise a phenomenal class.
- Send a participation grade to each student after each class. It would be helpful to know how we are doing on a day-to-day basis.