COURSE SYLLABUS

# AI for Entrepreneurs & Business Startups Course Online

Create a personalized Claude-powered business system that helps you research, write, plan, and operate more effectively across every stage of launching and growing your startup.

> Group classes (Live Online) and onsite training are available for this course. For more information, email partnerships@vdci.edu or visit: https://vdci.edu/courses/ai-for-entrepreneurs-business-startups-course-online



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## Course Outline

**Module 1: Getting Started with Claude AI**

- Explain how Claude works in plain language and identify the model tiers, plans, and interface
- Understand the context window, how Claude processes information, and when to start new conversations
- Practice your first Claude conversation using an entrepreneur-specific prompt
- Identify what Claude does well, what it doesn't, and when founder judgment is essential

**Module 2: Prompting Fundamentals**

- Apply the five-part prompt framework: context, task, format, constraints, and examples
- Write effective prompts across five use cases: writing, summarization, analysis, research, and creative problem-solving
- Recognize and fix common prompting mistakes that produce vague or unusable output
- Practice prompting with startup scenarios: drafting a cold outreach email, summarizing a competitor's website, and writing a company description for a pitch deck

**Module 3: Working with Files & Documents**

- Upload and analyze images, PDFs, spreadsheets, and documents directly in Claude
- Use Claude to extract, compare, and summarize information from uploaded files
- Work with startup-specific file types: business plans, pitch decks, financial projections, market research reports, and customer survey results
- Complete a hands-on file analysis exercise using provided startup sample documents

**Module 4: Projects & Knowledge Bases**

- Explain how Projects use custom instructions and knowledge bases to organize ongoing work
- Write effective Project instructions that encode your role, audience, format preferences, and rules
- Upload reference documents and understand how RAG retrieves relevant content
- Create a startup Project for your business with business plans, competitive research, and brand guidelines

**Module 5: Artifacts, Styles, Memory & Usage Management**

- Create reusable deliverables with Artifacts and edit them directly or through conversation
- Build custom Styles that match your professional communication voice
- Configure Memory to retain key context about you and your work across conversations
- Apply usage management techniques to extend your plan value

**Module 6: Advanced Prompting & AI Tool Selection**

- Use role-based prompting, chain-of-thought reasoning, and multi-step workflows
- Apply Extended Thinking, web search, and the You Ask Me technique for complex tasks
- Compare Claude with ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini to choose the right tool for each task
- Practice advanced prompting with startup scenarios: stress-testing a business model, building a go-to-market plan, and researching a new market opportunity

**Module 7: Introduction to Claude Cowork**

- Explain what Cowork is and how it differs from the claude.ai chat interface
- Read, write, and manage files from your desktop environment
- Configure guardrails, file permissions, and network settings for safe use
- Understand prompt injection risks and how to protect against them

**Module 8: Context System, Connectors & Integrations**

- Build foundational context files and set Global Instructions for every Cowork session
- Connect Claude to Slack, Google Drive, Gmail, and workplace tools
- Use Claude in Excel and PowerPoint with the Office add-ins
- Configure your context system and connections for startup workflows, including Excel modeling and investor presentations

**Module 9: AI for Entrepreneurs — Core Workflows**

- Use Claude and web search for market research, competitor analysis, and customer validation
- Draft and refine business plan sections, executive summaries, and pitch deck narratives
- Build customer outreach and sales communications: cold emails, follow-up sequences, demo scripts, and partnership proposals
- Create marketing content: website copy, launch announcements, social posts, email campaigns, product descriptions
- Produce financial projections, investor update templates, and operational documentation
- Complete a hands-on lab producing a multi-document startup content package

**Module 10: Capstone — Build Your Startup Claude System**

- Audit your daily and weekly tasks to identify where Claude creates leverage
- Configure a personalized startup Claude system with Projects, context files, Styles, and tool connections
- Run a complete end-to-end workflow: market research brief, pitch deck narrative, outreach sequence, investor update
- Create a Week 1 action plan for integrating Claude into your daily operations