

HWR Berlin Summer School 2026

Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Venture Creation

Overview

This course offers students a strong grounding in how to start and grow a business in a dynamic market, using the Berlin startup scene as an example. In two modules “Entrepreneurship in Berlin” and “Design Thinking in Early-Stage Startup Development”, students are introduced to the responsible and ethical use of artificial intelligence as a supportive tool, without requiring prior technical or programming knowledge. Students will participate in the development of new innovative business models for real startups. As a result, they will have developed a portfolio of design thinking skills and experiences that they can apply to a wide range of problems and industries.

Date

28 June – 18 July 2026

Course Content

- Entrepreneurship in Berlin
- Design Thinking in early-stage startup development

The course programme also includes:

- Study visits to companies
- Module on German culture and society from an intercultural perspective

Course Language

English. Proof of English proficiency (TOEFL iBT 90 or equivalent) is required.

Prerequisites

Advanced undergraduate students of all fields (after two years of study) and graduate students with good standing.

Number of Participants

20–25

Course Fees

€ 995 (without accommodation)

This includes tuition and programme fees, health, accident and liability insurance, study visits, most parts of the culture and leisure time programme.

Credits

- 6 ECTS: Entrepreneurship & Innovation Management Programme
- 1 ECTS: German culture & society module
- Up to 7 ECTS credits

Accommodation

- Student hotel (double room)
- Arrival 28 June (move-in), departure 18 July (move-out)
- Optional booking upon request

Culture and Leisure Time Programme

The summer school team offers participants a wide variety of optional cultural and social events in Berlin and surrounding area (e.g. museums, boat trip, palaces, trips to Potsdam and Sachsenhausen) about twice a week.

Registration Deadline

- 1 April 2026
- 15 March 2026 for nominated students from partner universities
- Early-Bird 10% by 10 March 2026

Contact, Enquiries and Registration

HWR Berlin Summer and Winter School

Email: summer@hwr-berlin.de

www.hwr-berlin.de/summerschools

Syllabus

Berlin is home to a flourishing startup scene and the HWR Berlin with its startup incubator, also plays a significant role in the city's entrepreneurial eco-system.

This course analyses key issues related to innovation and entrepreneurship from a German perspective. It offers students a strong grounding in how to start and grow a business in a dynamic marketplace using Berlin's vibrant startup scene as an example. This course will provide students with a practical and hands-on approach to innovation, and equip them with skills that are highly sought after in today's fast-paced and rapidly changing business environment. By the end of the course, students will have developed a portfolio of design thinking skills and experiences that they can apply to a wide range of problems and industries.

For a more detailed syllabus, please email summer@hwr-berlin.de

Lecturers

Prof. Dr. Sven Ripsas, Prof. Dr. Hannes Kübel, Christian Klang (HWR Lecturer)

Week 1

The first week introduces students to entrepreneurship as a structured yet iterative process of opportunity recognition, experimentation, and value creation. The module combines conceptual foundations (entrepreneurial mindset, startup phases, and business models) with the exploration of the Berlin startup ecosystem.

Day	Entrepreneurship in Berlin
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome Day
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction• Entrepreneurial identity & mindset• Myths of entrepreneurship• The art of the start
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phases of a startup• Startup Simulation
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lean Startup• Problem solving & ideation• Video prototyping
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lean canvas• Pitching• Assessment: Written test

Week 2 & 3

Week 2 and 3 build on the foundations of Week 1 and focus on human-centered innovation through design thinking and AI tools. Students work in interdisciplinary teams on real-world challenges. The course emphasizes deep user understanding, deep problem analysis in the

market, experimentation and prototyping, and financial modelling. Through interviews, ideation workshops, prototyping, and testing, students experience how Design Thinking supports evidence-based product development in uncertain environments. By the end of the module, teams synthesize their insights into a first prototype, develop a financially sound business model and present their outcomes in a final project presentation and pitch their project to a jury.

Day	Design Thinking in Early-Stage Startup Development
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kick-Off: Introduction, Organization, Startup Challenges & team building
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problem statement, Persona
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problem interviews, Point of view
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities, Ideation
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prototyping I
Weekend	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prototyping with AI
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Testing
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formulating assumptions about pricing, competition, and value creation
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business modelling and financial modelling
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of project work

Weeks 1–3: Additional Module

German Culture and Society: Intercultural Perspectives

- Students will be exposed to various aspects of German culture and society through a series of site visits and reflective papers
- The reflective papers (one per study week) should be related to an aspect of German culture and society and/or students' intercultural experience

* Course content/lecturers may be subject to change

Last but not least: Get more out of your Summer School experience!

Combine this programme with our add-on "Cross Cultural Management: Culture, Diversity and Sustainability"