Global Network Week
9 – 13 March 2026
Hong Kong University of Science & Technology

Hong Kong as an Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub?

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Course Description

Hong Kong's corporations, universities, and government have recently made massive investments in innovation and entrepreneurship. For instance, the HKSAR government recently approved a 10 billion HKD (1.2 billion USD) matching grant to Hong Kong's university-based startups, hoping to produce a new engine of growth to complement the city's traditional strengths in finance, real estate, and trade. However, whether HK can really emerge as a global hub for innovation and entrepreneurship remains up for debate. While HK has unique strengths, including its corporate sector, research universities, and connections across the region and the world, it also faces unique headwinds. During GNAM Week in HK, we will explore whether Hong Kong as an innovation and entrepreneurship hub is just a fantasy, already a reality, or a real possibility.

Learning Objectives

- Understand how innovation and entrepreneurship occur within localized ecosystems or habitats
- Understand Hong Kong's strengths and weaknesses as an ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship
- Understand how key players are strategically leveraging resources in the Hong Kong ecosystem while minimizing the impact of any shortcomings

Tentative course schedule and structure *(subject to change)*

The course will feature a blend of lectures, company visits, guest speaker sessions, group projects with presentations, networking opportunities, and cultural events.

	Mar 9 (MON)	Mar 10 (TUE)	Mar 11 (WED)	Mar 12(THU)	Mar 13 (FRI)
Morning	Lecture	Lecture	Lecture	Lecture	Presentation & Lecture
Afternoon	Welcome lunch & Company Visit	Company Visits	Company Visits	Group Project Preparation	Cultural activity

Course Requirements

- Complete all pre-course reading
- Attend all lecture sessions
- Attend all company and site visits
- Complete and present a team presentation on the final day of the academic program

Pre-course Reading. Prior to arriving in Hong Kong, students will be expected to have read the following materials:

- Kenney, Martin and Urs von Burg. 1999. "Technology, Entrepreneurship, and Path Dependence: Industrial Clustering in Silicon Valley and Route 128". This accessible article provides the classic account of Silicon Valley's success. Please pay special attention to the inter-relationships between Economy I and Economy II, which are crucial but often overlooked. Download from https://doc.rero.ch/record/293994/files/080067.pdf.

- Kushida, Kenji. 2023. "The Silicon Valley Model and Technological Trajectories in Context". This short reading provides an update on Silicon Valley today. Download from https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/01/the-silicon-valley-model-and-technological-trajectories-in-context.

- Schenk, Catherine, R. 2008. "Economic History of Hong Kong". Economic History Association. This reading provides an overview of Hong Kong's economic history. Download from https://eh.net/encyclopedia/economic-history-of-hong-kong/.

- InvestHK. 2024. "2024 Startup Survey." This marketing piece provides some idea of the scale of entrepreneurship in Hong Kong. https://www.startmeup.hk/about-us/hong-kongs-startup-ecosystem/.

- Choi, Joon Nak. 2018. "Samsung as a Silicon Valley Company". UST072. Download from the course Canvas site.

- Chheda, Tanesh, and Joon Nak Choi. 2022. "MTR Corporation". Draft. Download from the course Canvas site.

Assignments

Team project assignment. Students will be divided into roughly four-person teams, selected to maximize geographic diversity. Each team will identify one area of interest within Hong Kong's entrepreneurship or corporate innovation ecosystems under consultation with the instructor. During the morning of the final day (Friday, 13 March) each team will make a 20-minute presentation to the entire group that summarizes what they found. At least two members of each team must participate in the presentation.

Grading

Students will be graded on the team presentation. A passing grade will be granted if they can achieve a B or above as equivalent. Grades range in equal increments from A+ to F. A failed course (graded F) cannot be credited toward a program. C- to D- grades are not used in postgraduate courses. For calculating grade point averages, numerical grade points are assigned to each course grade. The grades used are shown in the following table.

Letter Grades	Grade Points	Definitions
A+	4.3	Excellent Performance
A	4.0	
A-	3.7	
B+	3.3	Good Performance
B	3.0	
B-	2.7	
C+	2.3	Marginal Performance
C	2.0	
F	0.0	Failure

Attendance Policy

Attendance and full participation are essential to the experiential learning for intensive programs. All students must attend all required sessions, which may include lectures and company visits. Due to the importance of the learning experience, failure to attend or arriving late to a required session will result in a lower final grade for the course. Any session or assignment that is missed will result in the deduction of a half letter grade.

Subject to faculty discretion, late students may not be allowed to join until the class break. Participation after 15 minutes or early departure is considered as absent.

Instructor

Joon Nak Choi, PhD

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Advisor to the MSc in Business Analytics, Department of Information Systems, Business Statistics & Operations Management

Faculty Associate, Institute for Emerging Market Studies

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Joon Nak CHOI (JC) is Adjunct Associate Professor at HKUST Business School and has also taught at Stanford University and NYU

Shanghai. He is a member of HKUST's Task Force on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence and formerly was a member of the Task Force on Innovation and Entrepreneurship, heading the Subcommittee on Incubation and Funding; he is also an Expert Delegate in Artificial Intelligence to the Digital Education Council, representing HKUST. He graduated from Brown with an AB in International Relations, Urban Studies, and Economics and from Stanford with an MA and a PhD in Sociology.

Professor Choi's current work focuses on the intersection of business and technology, encompassing AI, data science, business analytics, management consulting, innovation, and business ethics; he is co-teaching HKUST's award-winning undergraduate common core course on understanding and leveraging AI. His research has been published in academic outlets including Stanford University Press, the Strategic Management Journal, Routledge, and the American Journal of Sociology as well as newspapers of record including the South China Morning Post and Maeil Kyungjae Daily; his work has also been cited in the MIT Technology Review and Sina.com in addition to the the Hong Kong Economic Journal and The Standard. He serves as a board member of the Brown University Alumni Association of Hong Kong, a steering committee member of the Asia Technology Entrepreneurship Conference, and has been an invited speaker at events hosted by the World Economic Forum, UNESCO-ICHEI, the American Chamber of Commerce, the British Chamber of Commerce, the German Chamber of Commerce, the HK Institute of Human Resource Management, and various other corporate and industry entities.

Professor Choi has been involved with several startups. He was Chief Data Scientist for AssertID, which was spun out from the Stanford Graduate School of Business, and co-founded Zectr, which applied machine learning to automate survey-driven market research. More recently, he founded Learnovate, a HKUST spinoff that is applying AI to education. He also advises startups, Fortune Global 500 corporations, and private equity funds on AI.