

DELTA



MANAGEMENT  
SCHOOL



# Wharton Global Modular Course: **Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

LGST 899/MGMT 897

U.S., Latvia and Estonia  
Philadelphia, Riga, Tartu, and Tallinn

---

**May 25 to May 31, 2022**



---

## WHARTON SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

[www.wharton.upenn.edu](http://www.wharton.upenn.edu)

### Instructors:

Professor Philip Nichols / [nicholsp@wharton.upenn.edu](mailto:nicholsp@wharton.upenn.edu)

Professor Tyler Wry / [twry@wharton.upenn.edu](mailto:twry@wharton.upenn.edu)

TAs: Timo Vaimann / [tvaimann@wharton.upenn.edu](mailto:tvaimann@wharton.upenn.edu)



---

## DELTA MANAGEMENT SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

[majandus.ut.ee/en](http://majandus.ut.ee/en) / [delta.ut.ee](http://delta.ut.ee) / [deltaschool.ut.ee](http://deltaschool.ut.ee)

### Instructors:

Professor Kadri Ukrainski / [kadri.ukrainski@ut.ee](mailto:kadri.ukrainski@ut.ee)

Visiting Professor Ott Pärna / [ott.parna@ut.ee](mailto:ott.parna@ut.ee)

Associate Professor Anne Reino / [anne.reino@ut.ee](mailto:anne.reino@ut.ee)

Associate Professor Kertu Lääts / [kertu.laats@ut.ee](mailto:kertu.laats@ut.ee)



---

## STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS IN RIGA

[www.sseriga.edu](http://www.sseriga.edu)

### Instructors:

Executive MBA Associate Programme Director

Kate Priede-Trauberga / [kate.priede-trauberga@sseriga.edu](mailto:kate.priede-trauberga@sseriga.edu)

Assistant Professor Dmitrijs Kravčenko / [dmitrijs.kravcenko@sseriga.edu](mailto:dmitrijs.kravcenko@sseriga.edu)

## WHARTON GLOBAL MASTER CLASS OVERVIEW

---

The Baltic nations offer a special opportunity for business students with an interest in digital innovation, economic transformation, and entrepreneurship. The Baltics have long been at the crossroads of commerce: the region was integral to several European trading networks, and were at times part of the Danish, Livonian, Holy Roman, Teutonic, German, Swedish and Russian empires (thus, the countryside is studded with old castles and other culturally enjoyable sites). The Soviet Union illegally annexed the Baltics 1939, but the countries regained independence in 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and each has since joined both the European Union and NATO. Since independence, technology and innovation have blossomed.

This course examines digital innovation and commercialization, with a particular focus on how Latvia and Estonia have fostered cross-sector collaborations as a way to support technology innovation, entrepreneurship, and ultimately the creation of globally significant startups. We will also learn about how the nations became leaders in virtual citizenship and social services; how this differs from the United States; and the synergies that this creates for local business.

The Global Course starts with virtual lectures connecting the students and instructors in three countries. We will visit two nations in this course – Latvia and Estonia – which are among the most digitally advanced and entrepreneurial in the world.

Our site visit begins in Riga, Latvia. We will meet with government and business leaders who will provide insight into the local history and culture, and how these have contributed to the country's unique approach to economic and technological development. We will then move on to Tartu, which is the intellectual hotbed of Estonia. We will meet with idea generators and leaders who create a supportive environment for innovation. From Tartu we will travel to Tallinn, the economic and cultural heart of Estonia. We will meet with leaders of firms involved in sectors such as digital communications, electronic payments, telehealth, automated accounting, virtual contracting, and robotics. We will also meet with leaders of some of Estonia's tech unicorns to discuss their journeys.

Course participants will collaborate with peers at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, University of Tartu Delta Management School and the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga to work directly on projects with Baltic startups. Results of these projects will be presented to business and other leaders at the end of the course.

## WHARTON GLOBAL COURSE OBJECTIVE

---

Participants in this program will experience the vibrancy of two Baltic nations, and will explore more deeply how these nations have transformed their economies and policies by prioritizing digital innovation, entrepreneurship and technology commercialization. Students will also gain insight into the startup supporting ecosystems in these nations, and how these contribute to country-specific approaches to building and scaling new technology ventures.

## WHARTON GLOBAL COURSE CONSISTS THREE FOLLOWING INTERLINKED AREAS:

---

### **(I) Global trends and economic transformation**

Baltic countries have developed by quite different patterns while transforming from systems of the former communist regime. Although their history has been considered quite similar, they are likely to remain also somewhat parallel mini-universes, using different languages and interacting comparatively less than Nordic countries. In the context of fast-changing technologies and global challenges, the question remains, will forward-looking innovation and social policies transform the differences among the Baltic states even more noticeable?

## **(II) Digital governance**

Supported by active policy interventions, digital commerce is ubiquitous, e-governance advanced, and innovation cutting edge. Each nation has a thriving startup scene, producing technology unicorns at per-capita rates on par with the world's most robust startup ecosystems.

## **(III) Technology Entrepreneurship**

It has been claimed that Estonia, in particular, has the most startups per person in the world: Skype, Bolt, Wise, Pipedrive, ID.me, Zego, Gelato, Veriff, and Playtech are some of the tech unicorns born in Estonia. In Latvia, Printful has claimed the first unicorn status. There are future unicorns to be spotted.

**Grading:** This course will be graded in the usual curved letter grade or pass/fail basis.

The grade will be based on the following:

**Participation and attendance: 30%**

**Reflection papers: 20%**

**Project: 50%**

**Participation and Attendance:** While in Estonia and Latvia we will be visiting with leading figures in business, civil society, and government. You will also be working in teams with students from our partner institutions to collaborate and consult with local startups. You are expected to be on time for and to attend all presentations and visits. At these events, students represent not just themselves but also The Wharton School, the University of Pennsylvania, the Delta Management School of the University of Tartu, and the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga.

**Reflection Papers:** Students will write two reflection papers, each one page in length. The first is due any time before departure and asks students to reflect on the preparation materials. The second is due three days after returning home and asks students to reflect on their experiences in Estonia and Latvia.

**Project:** Prior to and during our visit, students will work in teams to address a challenge being faced by one of three partner countries, their organizations and enterprises. This may involve helping a local VC to analyze an investment opportunity; assessing growth strategy options for an emerging startup; helping a venture accelerator to hone its curriculum, or something else altogether. In addition to presenting on the last day of the program, each team will submit a 3-5 page write-up (due by 5:00 pm EST on June 10, 2022) detailing their analysis, and discussing how the unique features of Estonian entrepreneurship can inform venture creation practices in the USA, and vice-a-versa.

**Preparation Prior to Departure:** Students in this module are expected to participate in two types of sessions prior to departure and to read assignments. Participation in sessions may be in-person, virtual, or, for the first type of sessions, by recording.

**Sessions:** There are two types of pre-departure sessions. **(A)** Prior to departure for Riga, there will be two one-hour long sessions in Philadelphia, Tartu and Riga (connected by Zoom). One session will be a discussion of the history and culture of Latvia and Estonia. The other will discuss topics related to digital innovation, entrepreneurship, and technology commercialization, with a particular focus on how Latvia and Estonia have promoted activity in these areas (session times may be changed as this schedule is finalized). **(B)** Students will be assigned to a small group prior to departure; each group will be composed of students from Wharton, Tartu University, and Stockholm School of Economics, Riga. Each group will be assigned a project involving an organization in the Baltic startup ecosystem. Students are expected to meet with their group prior to departure, and to meet as a group with a representative from the assigned organization while onsite in the host nation.

**Session One:** May 17, 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM; class logistics and expectations, plus an overview of Latvia and Estonia.

**Session Two:** May 19, 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM; digital innovation and entrepreneurship in the Baltic states. Introduction to partner organization projects.

### **Readings:**

**(1)** In general, emerging economies such as Estonia and Latvia experience rapid and substantial change. News services, therefore, are a very useful source of current information. Scan through one or more of the following to get a snapshot of current events in the Baltics.

Baltic News Network at <https://bnn-news.com/>

The Baltic Times at <https://www.baltictimes.com/> (has separate sections on Estonia and Latvia)

Estonia Public Radio (in English) at <https://news.err.ee/>

Latvia Public Broadcasting (in English) at <https://eng.lsm.lv/>

(2) Any one of the following is a useful source of general background information on Estonia and Latvia:

CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/estonia/> and

<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/latvia/>

World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report:

<https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-competitiveness-report-2020>

Economist Intelligence Unit Colombia: <https://country.eiu.com/Estonia> and <https://country.eiu.com/latvia>

(3) Additional sources may be recommended throughout the semester.

## SESSIONS WHILE IN LATVIA AND ESTONIA

---

You are expected to attend every session while in Philadelphia, Latvia and Estonia, to be on time for each session, and to conduct yourself in a respectful manner during these sessions. Very busy people are giving their time to show us their countries and businesses, and each of us represents the good name of the Wharton School, University of Tartu, and SSE Riga.

**Schedule:** This is a rough schedule of the sessions and other activities while in Latvia and Estonia. Given the responsibilities of the persons with whom we will be interacting, as well as the possibilities that interesting opportunities might arise, this schedule is subject to change.

### **Wednesday, May 25 (Riga) / KICKOFF DAY**

- Kickoff Panel: Economic transformation and local, global, and regional trends
- Digital Innovation Panel: The history and development of the Estonian and Latvian startup ecosystem
- Technology Entrepreneurship Panel: Latvian entrepreneurs
- Tour of Riga
- Evening Event and team building

### **Thursday, May 26 (Riga) / STARTUP DAY RIGA IN LATVIA**

- Site visits to local startups
- Travel to Tartu, Estonia

### **Friday, May 27 (Tartu) / STARTUP DAY TARTU IN ESTONIA**

- Site visits to local startups and incubators
- Tour of Tartu
- Group project work and free time in Tartu

### **Saturday, May 28 (Tartu) / ECOSYSTEMS DAY**

- Site visits at local startups
- Panels and discussions at the University of Tartu Delta Centre
- Social Evening

### **Sunday, May 29 (Tartu) / PRESENTATIONS DAY**

- Presentations of startup case studies (projects)
- Large Group Discussion: Digital Innovation Live Case
- Evening Event

**Monday, May 30 (Tallinn) / VENTURE CAPITAL AND E-GOVERNMENT DAY**

- Travel to Tallinn
- Startup Funding Panel: Seed capital, Venture capital, and Venture Acceleration in Estonia
- Discussion in E-Estonia Showroom: E-Government and Digital Citizenship, Challenges and Opportunities
- US Embassy Visit
- Tour of Tallinn

**Tuesday, May 31 (Tallinn) / VISIT TO STENBOCK HOUSE (Government Office, tbc.)**

- Meeting with government and business leaders
- Wrap-up Event and Presentations

Please DO NOT arrange to travel before midnight on Tuesday May, 31.

**\*\*\* Note:** Course registration and practicalities will differ for students in Wharton, Tartu and Riga. Contact your home institution for more information!