

# WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

## CSE 098 – Section 010 (1 credit)

February 4 – March 18, 2021 · 3:00 pm – 4:15 pm Th · Zoom

### Instructors

Samantha Walravens, Adjunct Professor & Co-author, *Geek Girl Rising: Inside the Sisterhood Shaking Up Tech*  
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### Description

This class looks at the transformative role women play in promoting prosperity and human progress through technology and innovation. The class will shine a light on the remarkable women who are building companies and technologies that transform the way we live and work, and who are paving new paths for female entrepreneurship and gender equality. It will also look at the challenges that women in tech continue to face, including sexism, gender discrimination, unconscious bias, impostor syndrome and more. This one credit class will explore the issues over seven sessions, meeting once weekly. The class will feature a number of guest lectures by female tech leaders who will offer points of view on the issues, and share their experiences as a guidepost for success

Topics explored in the course will include:

- Why diversity (gender, race, culture) matters in the workplace, especially in tech
- Entrepreneurship and the challenges/opportunities facing female founders
- Breaking the glass ceiling: the path to leadership for women in tech
- The “leaky” pipeline: how do we attract and retain more women in tech?
- The importance of coaching and mentoring young women in tech
- Venture capital’s diversity problem, and how we fix it
- Why “soft skills” matter: emotional intelligence, authenticity, communication skills
- The next “big thing”: future trends in tech

### Text

- *Geek Girl Rising: Inside the Sisterhood Shaking Up Tech*, plus other weekly readings

### Grading:

- Participation (in-class & online discussion forums) 50%; Final Paper 50%

### Mentorship Program & Final Paper

For the duration of the seven-week course, you will be matched with a woman in the technology industry who will serve as your mentor as you examine the opportunities and challenges faced

by women in tech. As part of your final grade, you will conduct an interview with the mentor and write a three- to five-page paper regarding your findings from the interview, insights from the mentoring relationship, and key takeaways from the class discussions.

### **Final Paper**

Each student in the course must submit a final paper due by 9:00 pm on Monday, March 22. The purpose of the paper is to reflect on your findings from the interview with your mentor and any insights you gained from the mentoring relationship. You should also incorporate key lessons you learned from the class presentations. Papers may examine one or two topics deeply, or examine more topics in less detail. The paper should be three to five pages (Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced). Quality over quantity is more important. We expect your write-up to follow the style of a high-quality and thoughtful paper, including proper use of citations. Your final paper will account for 50% of your grade in the course.

### **Weekly Schedule**

#### **February 4: Why diversity matters in the world of technology & innovation**

Readings:

- Chapter 1 in *Geek Girl Rising*
- [“Diversity wins: How inclusion matters” \(2020 McKinsey report\)](#)

Speakers:

- Bari Williams: Head of Legal, Human Interest; Former Senior Counsel, Facebook
- Jossie Haines: Platform Engineering Director, Tile; Diversity Advocate

#### **February 11: Success strategies of female founders**

Reading:

- Chapter 2 in *Geek Girl Rising*

Speakers:

- Dawoon Kang: Co-founder and CEO, Coffee Meets Bagel

#### **February 18: The path to leadership**

Readings:

- [“Women in the Workplace” \(2020 McKinsey report\)](#)

Speakers:

- Kelly Steckelberg: CFO, Zoom

#### **February 25: Young alumni in tech panel**

Readings:

- Chapter 4 and 6 in *Geek Girl Rising*

Speakers:

- Christine Quan: Data scientist & engineer, Sisense (BS, MS Stanford 2014)
- Emma Catlin: Software engineer, Pinterest (Brown 2018)
- Kira Gobes: Technical program manager, Amazon Web Services (Lehigh 2017)

### **March 4: Inspiring the next generation**

Reading:

- Chapter 7 in *Geek Girl Rising*

Speaker:

- Ruthe Farmer: Chief Evangelist, CSforAll; Former Director, NCWIT (The National Center for Women & Information Technology)

### **March 11: The next “big thing” in tech**

Reading:

- [“Top Business and Technology Trends in 2021” \(Inc. Magazine\)](#)

Speaker:

- Sara Luchian: Director of Passenger Experience, Virgin Hyperloop

### **March 18: How to be an ally**

Reading:

- [“Twenty Things You Can Do as an Ally Right Now,” Melinda Epler \(Medium, June 6, 2020\)](#)

Speakers:

- Jeremy Sussman: Senior Product Manager, Google
- Melinda Epler: Founder and CEO, Change Catalyst
- Tom Gillis: Senior VP and General Manager, VMWare

### **Collaboration**

Unless explicitly stated otherwise, all of your work in this course is to be an individual effort. You are encouraged to discuss assignments with one another, your friends, and with the instructors. Indeed, this may be the most effective method of learning. However, all work submitted in your name must be your own. You may not copy in whole or in part from another student or from a website. Violations will be considered as cases of academic dishonesty and referred to the University Committee on Discipline. If you are found guilty, you may be given the failing grade WF in the course. If any aspect of this policy is not clear to you, do not make assumptions; consult with the instructors.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodations, please contact both your instructors and the Office of Academic Support Services, Williams Hall, Suite 301 (610-758-4152) as early as possible in the semester. You must have documentation from the Academic Support Services office before accommodations can be granted.

### **Principles of Our Equitable Community**

Lehigh University endorses The Principles of Our Equitable Community. We expect each member of this class to acknowledge and practice these Principles. Respect for each other and for differing viewpoints is a vital component of the learning environment inside and outside the classroom.