



University
of Basel

Center for
Innovative Finance



Smart Contracts and Decentralized Finance

Intro: Welcome to the Course

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Release Ver.: (Local Release)
Version Hash: (None)
Version Date: (None)

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Content Overview

1. **Introduction and Blockchain Fundamentals**

Recap of basic blockchain building blocks.

2. **Ethereum Basics**

The specifics of Ethereum as a Smart Contract platform.

3. **Smart Contract Programming**

Hands-on introduction to the basics of Smart Contract programming with emphasis on exercises.

4. **DeFi Overview**

A short introduction to Decentralized Finance.

5. **DeFi Asset Layer**

Tokenization from an economics and technological point of view.

6. **DeFi Protocol Layer**

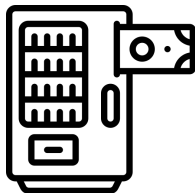
Overview of the DeFi ecosystem, key components and major protocol types.

7. **Discussion and Outlook**

Discussion, outlook and some advanced topics.

Why Smart Contracts?

Vending Machines can be seen as predecessors of Smart Contracts [3, 4]. Agreements are automated and breach of contract is costly



Simple Vending Machine (Pseudo Code)

```
if(coin >= price) {  
    dispenseBeverage();  
    returnChange(coin - price);  
} else {  
    print("insufficient funds");  
}
```

But:

- Trust based! Closed source → Contract is not observable.
- Execution environment, i.e., hardware under control of seller.

⇒ **Smart Contracts on public Blockchains address this.**

Popular Smart Contract Blockchains

Blockchains based on the Ethereum Virtual Machine (EVM):



Ethereum



BSC



Polygon



Tron



ETC

Non-EVM-based Blockchains:



Cardano



Solana



Polkadot



Avalanche



Algorand

This is a non-exhaustive list that will likely age poorly.

Why Ethereum / EVM?

All EVM-based blockchains share the same smart contract development languages.

Ethereum is currently the dominant platform:

- Market Cap
- Economic Activity
- Developer Activity
- Community

Understanding Ethereum will help you to understand any protocol.

Electric Capital Developer Report 2020

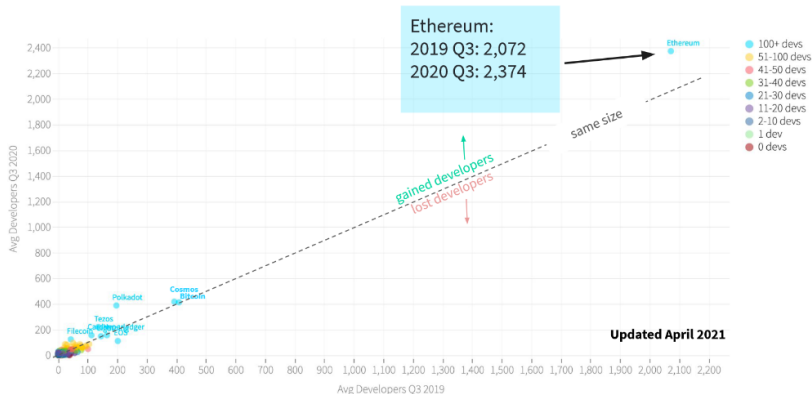


Figure: [Electric Capital Developer Report 2020, p. 46](#) [1]

Why Decentralized Finance (DeFi)?

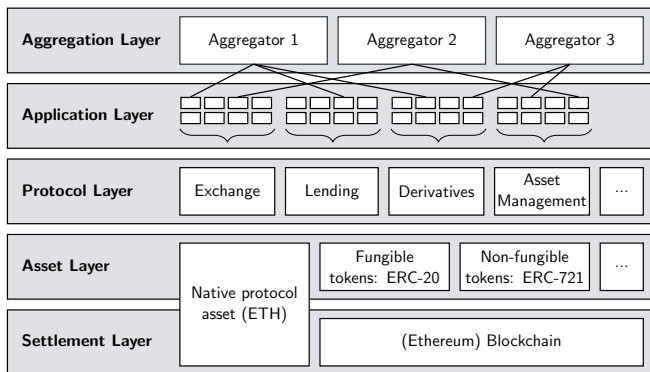
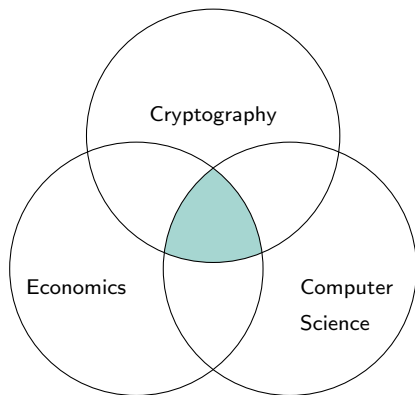


Figure: The DeFi Stack [2]

- Most mature and diverse smart contract-based ecosystem.
- Relevancy of applications from an economics perspective.

Interdisciplinary Approach



Public Blockchains can only be fully understood when studied from various perspectives. This is why this course takes an **interdisciplinary** approach.

Programming and Computer Science Exposure

Programming Language



solidity

Tools



Atom



Remix



Github



Ganache



Truffle



Metamask

Integrated Develop-
ment Environments

Version
Control

Blockchain
Management

Testing

Some Lecture Conventions

Basic Contract Structure (Solidity)

```
Pragma solidity ^0.8.7;  
contract HelloWorld {  
  /* Instructions */  
}
```

Key Takeaway

Transactions can be used to transfer value, interact with an existing smart contract and to deploy new smart contracts.

Exercise 1

Get Ropsten Ether from the faucet and deploy your first smart contract on Ropsten Testnet.

Sample Code Box

Contains code snippets in Solidity or pseudo code.

Key Take-Away

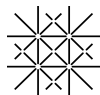
Highlights important concepts and definitions.

Exercises

Things for you to try out.

Part of Multi-Course Series

Blockchain courses have been part of the University of Basel's curriculum since 2017.



**University
of Basel**

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- This is a University graduate-/master-level course
- It is part of a series of courses
- Second course to switch to open lecture format

Three Options to Take This Course

The goal of our open lectures is to make teaching resources freely available. There are **three options** for taking this course:

	Videos	Platform	Quizzes	Group Project	ECTS
YouTube	✓				
Cryptolectures.io	✓	✓	✓		
University of Basel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

[🔗 YouTube Channel](#)

[🔗 Cryptolectures.io](#)

[🔗 University of Basel - General Information](#)

Meet the Open Crypto Lectures Team

Professor

Fabian Schär



PhD Candidates

Tobias Bitterli



Mitchell Goldberg



Matthias Nadler



Katrin Schuler



Student Assistants

Pirmin Özdemir



Jonas Ruchti



Dario Thürkauf



Information for University of Basel Students

Group Project (40% of final grade)

- Smart Contract programming project.
- Groups of 2-4 students.
- Date: see course directory or welcome email.

Exam (60% of final grade)

- 90 Minutes
- Closed book
- T/F, MC, Numbers and Text/Figure Boxes
- You may use a non-programmable calculator (↗ Rules)

References and Recommended Reading

- [1] Electric Capital, *Developer report*, 2020.
- [2] Fabian Schär, *Decentralized finance: On blockchain- and smart contract-based financial markets*, Review of the Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis **103** (2021), no. 2, 153–74, Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20955/r.103.153-74>.
- [3] Nick Szabo, *Smart contracts*, 1994.
- [4] _____, *The idea of smart contracts*, 1997.