

Introduction to Design for Social Innovation (51-782 and 51-382)

Spring 2024

Professor L. Arthi Krishnaswami

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Morning Section: MW 10:00-11:20am

Afternoon Section: MW 12:00-1:20pm

Office hours by appointment MW 1:30-3:00

Course Overview

Design for social innovation is a seminar that traces the history and application of design methods to solving social problems. The course will weave together themes from readings in design, public policy, business, technology, social science, public service, international relations and current events. The course will review examples of successful and failed social innovations from local, regional, national and international contexts. Students will learn the role of governments, technology, funding, infrastructure, mindset, emotion, and cultural factors in addressing problems in the social sector. The course will include a real-world problem-solving component where students (in teams or individually) will design an artifact or intervention, propose a project, or conduct a short design research study that addresses a real-world problem that impacts a community.

This course aims to provide an introduction to the field of Design for Social Innovation through a historical overview of theory, methods, and exploration of case studies. The course is grounded in practice and theory, and aims to provide students with the capacity to critically understand and frame social sector issues into design projects. Students will thoroughly discuss issues related to health, education, energy policy, income inequality, food systems, environmental crises and crime, and the role a designer might play in addressing these challenges.

This course will provide an outline of design methods related to social innovation—engaging with communities, problem framing, facilitating co-design workshops, ideation and concept generation, prototyping, implementation, and evaluation.

Learning Objectives

Understanding + Theory

By the end of this seminar/practice-based course, students who engage with the course content and fully participate in all activities will be able to:

- Identify the historical role design has played in addressing social and environmental issues
- Examine how design itself has played an important role in creating and perpetuating these issues.
- Acquire a systems thinking perspective to design for social innovation.
- Recognize that designers have a set of tools and skills that can be used to produce positive social change.
- Define what positive social change means for students in the context of situations they encounter.
- Review case studies of examples of different types of social innovation-- government, private sector, non-profit, other paradigms
- Understand the cycle of inquiry as it relates to social innovation--design/policy process
- Understand the implications of government factors
 - Laws, regulations, policy considerations
 - Domestic v. international

Skills + Expertise

- Develop a design practice that is appropriate for working within an interdisciplinary group of people.
- Trade-offs and tensions: public v. private-sector innovation, opportunities v. challenges
- Stakeholder engagement: learn methods for engaging with audiences to build consensus, understand context and end users
- Learn the steps to building a social enterprise
- Be able to build a coherent plan for designing a social innovation intervention/ artifact
- Steps in the process: problem definition; user/content/context; concepts/interventions; build; test; adapt
- Funding to support social innovation: end-game and funding options; innovation versus sustainability; concept ideation v. scalability
- Design an artifact, service, place-based wayfinding device, visualization or other (physical intervention) with a community

Criticism + Reflection

- Recognize their own position when working with communities that have been historically marginalized and underserved.
- Produce critical written reflections about the changing role of design practice.

Professional Outcomes

This course seeks to introduce the student to a field of design practice that draws from the tools and skills of designers to address social and environmental issues and build positive social change. Students will be presented with social innovation as an emerging (and growing) professional pathway different from traditional pathways in design. This course aims to present a sketch of the current landscape of design within social innovation. This course will put theory into practice through a Community-based project.

Class Structure

This course is a seminar and the structure of the class will be a combination of lectures, discussions, engaging with invited speakers, in-class activities, and a community-based project. Teams of students will work on a design project--specific types of artifacts will be discussed during the course--with a local Community or critical social problem. Students are encouraged to be flexible and willing to adjust to changes in the class structure to make accommodations for healthy disruptions that will be notified in advance, such as guest lecturers and talks, workshops or events on and off-campus related to the field of social innovation.

Attendance

Attendance is required. Students are considered late after 10 minutes (10:10/12:10), and absent after 30 minutes (10:30/12:30). While we understand that emergencies do happen, we encourage students to attend every class session. If you have to miss class please reach out to us prior to class and inform us of what's happening, otherwise we won't be able to help in case of an emergency, and your absence will be marked as unexcused. If for whatever reason you are having a hard time or struggling with this or any other class please reach out to us and we'll try to get you the help you need. Each unexcused absence will result in missed participation, we encourage students to be active in our discussions and a significant portion of your grade will account for participation and attendance, so please be punctual and ready to participate. No makeup classes are allowed. Four or more absences will result in an incomplete grade.

Readings

Readings will be drawn from a broad range of sources. Students are required to complete the assigned readings before class and be ready to discuss the content. Each week, we will upload the required reading to Box and students will be made aware by email from the TA. The readings will introduce each week's theme. We will provide additional resources to students who want to delve deeper into the themes.

Core reading assignments will come from the following:

Books, chapters and articles

[Required]

Papanek, Victor. *Design for the Real World*.

Dorst, K. (2015) *Frame Innovation: Create new thinking by design*. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

Manzini, E. (2015) *Design, When Everyone Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation*. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

Goldsmith, Stephen. *The Power of Social Innovation: How Civic Entrepreneurs Ignite Community Networks for Good*.

Nitze, Marina and Nick Sinai. *Hack Your Bureaucracy (2022)*

Gugelev, Alice and Andrew Stern. *What's Your Endgame (2015)* Stanford Social Innovation Review

Meadows, Donella. *Intervention Points*

Hanington, Bruce. *Universal Methods of Design*.

Center for Urban Pedagogy [link](#): Housing, Health, Education, Energy, City government, immigration
LEAP Dialogues [link](#)

Additional readings provided during the semester.

[Supplemental]

J. Craig Thorpe *Railroads, Art and American Life*. On Trains

Amatullo, Mariana, et al. *Design for Social Innovation: Case Studies from Around the World*

Cels, S., J. de Jong and Frans Nauta (2012). *Agents of Change. Strategies and Tactics of Social Innovation*.

Brookings Institution Press.

Class Schedule | First half

W 01/17

[lecture] Introduction to [DSI](#) and syllabus; *A Designer's Purpose Manifesto*

M 01/22

[lecture] DSI History and development: Europe versus the US: CSCW, HCI, Service Design

[reading] First Things First (v1 and v2); Dick and Rick

[assignment] Personal Manifesto (DUE 2/12)

W 01/24

[lecture] Establishing a voice and perspective

[reading] Design for the Real World (preface 1st and 2nd eds) by Victor Papanek

[reflection] A Designer's Purpose and ideas for personal manifesto (due 01/29)

M 01/29

[lecture] Who is a Social Innovator? Experts v. non-experts

[reading] Design When Everyone Designs (Ch 1 & 2) by Ezio Manzini

[reflection DUE] A Designer's Purpose

W 02/01

[lecture] Who is a Social Innovator? Experts v. non-experts

M 02/05

[lecture] What are Social Innovations? Public-sector problem solving

[reading] Power of Social Innovation (Ch 1 & 2)

W 02/07

[CRIT] Manifesto (printed presentation format for crit)

M 02/12

[lecture] An interdisciplinary approach to Social Innovation: Bringing together the public and private sector to innovate for the benefit of humans, animals, and the planet

[reading] LAK paper

[assignment DUE] Manifesto DUE (printed and digital)

W 02/14

[lecture] Defining the problem: framing, challenges and impact on solutions

[reading] Frame Innovation (ch. 4), Winterhouse symposium slides

[Reflection] Problem framing (due 2/19)

M 02/19

[lecture] Endgames/timelines and types of capital

[reading] What's Your Endgame?; Power of Social Innovation (ch4)

[reflection #3] Endgame (DUE 3/1)

W 02/21

[lecture] Methods for exploring problem spaces in the social innovation sector

[reading] Positive Sum Design; PSD: Methods and Strategies, Hanington: Stakeholder and Territory Mapping

[assignment] Stakeholder mapping

M 02/26

[workshop] Defining the problem

W 02/28

[CRIT] Stakeholder mapping

M 03/04 Spring Break

W 03/06 Spring Break

Class Schedule | Second half

M 03/11

[lecture] Problem frames and project overview

[reading] Hack Your Bureaucracy, Talk to Real People, Write A One-pager

W 03/13

[workshop] Problem framing: In-class problem framing workshop

[assignment] Draft one-pager and visual overview (Due in-class 3/18)

M 03/18

[workshop] One-pager and visualization of problem: In-class peer review

W 03/20

[lecture] User Research: How to conduct field/remote/digital research

[assignment] Research Plan

M 03/25

[workshop] User research plans into action

W 03/27

[workshop/field work] User research plans into action

M 04/01

[lecture] Research findings and insights: designing concepts

[assignment] User research preliminary findings

W 04/03

[lecture] Responding to feedback: concept iterations, alternatives, variations, pilots

M 04/08

[working session] Research findings and insights

W 04/10

[lecture] Refining the concept/proposal/idea

M 04/15

[lecture] Presenting the concept, intervention, proposal

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W 04/17

[workshop] Studio time and feedback from Arthi

M 04/22

[workshop] Studio time and feedback from Arthi

W 04/24

[FINAL CRIT]

M 04/29

[DUE 5pmET] Final project and process book

Course Evaluation

- Attendance & class participation (10%)
- Manifesto (20%)
- Written reflections (20%)
- Problem framing: Written and diagram (15%)
- Final Paper or Project (35%)
 - Final presentation (10%)
 - Paper or Project deliverable (25%)

Participation

Show up, be prepared, engage your colleagues' perspectives with respect, and make this class what you want it to be. Your participation grade will be made up by attendance (5%) and in-class participation during discussion time (5%). If you will be absent, please inform Arthi or TA **prior** to class.

Written Reflections

Complete the readings in time for each class. You will be asked to write reflections about the readings and social innovation concepts and practices. You will be asked to respond to 4 questions or prompts related to the readings with a 200-300-word response (equivalent to one single-spaced page). Your reflections on the prompts will take the readings into consideration, and then apply them to broader issues. You may incorporate images, video, links, your own drawings or photos, and so on. Think of it as a sketchbook in words, a way of bookmarking your interests and ideas in writing. While AI tools may be used to support learning, they may not be used to author content.

Ground Rules

Students need to respect the time and efforts of their classmates. When student teams are presenting their work, it is expected that everyone will be fully focused on the class, phones will be off, unless being used for class login, and that all students will be giving their full attention to their classmates. We expect to foster meaningful discussions around present day social problems. We are aware that these issues are sometimes difficult to talk about and may bring up different points of view. Students must always be respectful of views that are different from their own, even if it's challenging. This class is an environment for conversations that support and embrace different perspectives.

Accommodations

If a student believes that she/he needs any accommodation or consideration due to any disability, the student should contact the Office of Disability Resources to request appropriate accommodation. We will do our best to provide an appropriate response to the student's needs.

Plagiarism

Carnegie Mellon University has strict policies against plagiarism. We expect you to follow these policies and only submit original work and properly cite your references. You should use the APA system for citations. Please make note of the University's Academic Policies: <http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/AcadRegs.html>

Self Care

If you need a safe, confidential environment to talk about any personal and academic concerns, please reach out to CMU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS), they are a support resource provided by CMU and help students deal with a range of struggles: <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>

Diversity & inclusion statement

We must treat every individual with respect. We are diverse in many ways, and this diversity is fundamental to building and maintaining an equitable and inclusive campus community. Diversity can refer to multiple ways that we identify ourselves, including but not limited to race, color, national origin, language, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, ancestry, belief, veteran status, or genetic information. Each of these diverse identities, along with many others not mentioned here, shape the perspectives our students, faculty, and staff bring to our campus. We, at CMU, will work to promote diversity, equity and inclusion not only because diversity fuels excellence and innovation, but because we want to pursue justice. We acknowledge our imperfections while we also fully commit to the work, inside and outside of our classrooms, of building and sustaining a campus community that increasingly embraces these core values.

Each of us is responsible for creating a safer, more inclusive environment.

Unfortunately, incidents of bias or discrimination do occur, whether intentional or unintentional. They contribute to creating an unwelcoming environment for individuals and groups at the university. Therefore, the university encourages anyone who experiences or observes unfair or hostile treatment on the basis of identity to speak out for justice and support, within the moment of the incident or after the incident has passed. Anyone can share these experiences using the following resources:

Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion csdi@andrew.cmu.edu, (412)268-2150

Report-It online anonymous reporting platform: reportit.net username: tartans password: plaid

All reports will be documented and deliberated to determine if there should be any following actions. Regardless of incident type, the university will use all shared experiences to transform our campus climate to be more equitable and just.