Design Thinking: A creative approach to problem solving and creating impact

Instructors
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Overview
As the challenges and opportunities facing society grow more complex, an approach known as "design thinking" is playing a greater role in finding meaningful paths forward. Design thinking is an iterative problem-solving process of discovery, ideation, and experimentation. It employs design-based techniques to address all kinds of creative challenges, including those found within public service.

In "Design Thinking: A Creative Approach to Problem Solving and Creating Impact," we'll work with you to explore each step of the design thinking process. You'll develop skills as ethnographers, visual thinkers, strategists, and storytellers through a mix of seminar discussions and collaborative projects.

Over the course of the semester, you'll apply what you learn to the challenges in public service and social entrepreneurship that you care about, exploring innovative ways to create real impact.

Oh, and it'll be fun too.

Our work together will be highly collaborative, mirroring the way design teams work. We'll alternate lecture-style classes with team–based sessions, during which your teams will receive feedback from instructors, special guests, and, most important, your peers. You'll leave the course with the foundational skills necessary to approach creative problem-solving across many contexts.

Dates / Time / Location
Wednesdays, September 13–December 20, 2017
6:45–8:25 p.m.
Waverly Building — Room 569 (Washington Square)

Teams
The class will be broken up into interdisciplinary teams of 4–5 students. Teams will form during our first session, at which times you'll be asked to select a design challenge that you will define and work on with your team for the remainder of the semester.

Design Challenges
The design challenges will address complex issues within the public service sector here in New York City.

Examples of past design challenges include:
- How might we make NYC a great place for the elderly?
- How might we foster sustainable living in the communities of NYC?

We'll discuss this year's design challenges in more detail during the first class.

Final Presentation
The final presentation will be the key deliverable for this course. You'll learn different tools, processes, and ways of thinking that build toward this final, and a clear articulation of design thinking approaches will be expected in each presentation, regardless of differences in content and format. Final presentations should include:

- Articulation of the design challenge
- Actionable insights based on design research
- Key themes and opportunity areas identified from the insights
- Visualized concepts that address the opportunity areas
- A compelling, human-centered narrative that draws all of the work together

Grades
In addition to final presentations, you'll be graded on your insights presentation, participation in class, and collaboration, as asssessed by your teammates. Grading is based on NYU's universal criteria:

https://wagner.nyu.edu/files/admissions/GradingGuidelines.pdf

The breakdown is as follows:
    25% Class Participation and Attendance
    20% Insights Presentation
    40% Final Presentation
    15% Team Evaluations

Academic Integrity
Please review NYU's policy for academic integrity for students.

http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html

Another note: Design Thinking is a disciplince that asks you to gather inspiration from many sources—experts, users, companies, not to mention your peers in this class—and to build on it. It's imperative to acknowledge these sources of inspiration whenever you quote or "borrow" an idea. Finding inspiration and building on it is encouraged. Taking credit for other people's ideas isn't, so don't do it.

Office Hours
We will be available during the week—details when classes start.

Course Readings (Required)

Books
Change By Design by Tim Brown
This is Service Design Thinking: Basics, Tools, Cases by Marc Stickdorn

Articles & Videos
"Design Matters"| Richard J. Boland Jr. and Fred Collopy
"Informing Our Intuition"| Jane Fulton Suri

"Prototyping is the Shorthand of Design"| Tom Kelley
"How IDEO Designers Persuade Companies to Accept Change"| Ashlea Powell

"Creative Confidence: Cultivating the Mindset of Today's Innovators"| David Kelley (http://www.aifestival.org/session/creative-confidence-cultivating-mindset-todays-innovators)

In addition, each week, a set of short articles and/or videos relevant to each phase of the design process will be assigned.

Recommended Readings (Optional)
· Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard |
  Chip and Dan Heath
· Drive | Daniel Pink
· Nudge | Richard Thaler & Cass Sunstein
· The Lean Startup | Eric Ries

Materials
Having access to a computer, camera (your phone will do!), and printer will be essential. Bonus points if you have an audio recorder (or, again, use your phone). You will also need the items on the following page.

A journal or sketchbook
Recommended size: 5.5 x 8.5 inch

Post-it notes, bright/light-colored
3 x 3 inch and 3 x 5 inch (one 5-pack of each)

Sharpies (fine, black)
At least 2 per student

Post-it self-stick easel pad
One per team

Scotch (or masking) tape
One roll

	what we'll teach	what you'll do
Week 1 | Sept 6	* * NO CLASS * *	This is Service Design, pp. 28–117
Week 2 | Sept 13	Intros/Project Mgmt. Intro to IDEO/Team Challenges Design Thinking Overview Brainstorming/Meetings/Tools	Form teams Define design challenges Teamwork: wallet project
Week 3 | Sept 20	Design Research How/Where/What/Who Recruiting & Discussion Guide Empathy & Tactics Analogous Inspiration Capturing data: Photos/videos/notes	Empathy exercise Start research plan Set up Dropbox / Google Drive
Week 4 | Sept 27	Refine Research Plans Photos Videos Quotes	Cross-share (5 min) Define responsibilities Finalize Research Plan
Week 5 | Oct 4	Download & Synthesis What/how/why Insights Opportunity	Cross-share (5 min) Stories from the field
Week 6 | Oct 11	Opportunity Areas & Insights Observations to insights to opportunity areas	Define opportunity areas Begin crafting insights
Week 7 | Oct 18	Insights Presentation prep	Team Synthesis
Week 8 | Oct 25		Insights Presentation (5 min)
Week 9 | Nov 1	Brainstorm & HMWs	
Week 10 | Nov 8	Concepting	Concept Shareback (5 min) Team Time
Week 11 | Nov 15	1st Round of Prototyping	Start building prototyping & testing
Week 12 | Nov 22	* * NO CLASS * *	Test prototypes with friends & families
Week 13 | Nov 29	2nd Round of Prototyping	Revise concepts Iterate on prototypes
Week 14 | Dec 6		Final Presentation prep
Week 15 | Dec 13		Final Presentation rehearsal
Finals Week | Dec 20		Final Presentation