Innovation In Society
Summer 2020
Prof. Ana Kilani
Meeting Hours: TBC

Course Description

How does innovation affect us as a society, as a culture, as an environment? Media often seems to promote innovation as inherently good, but is it really? Innovation is both mystified and glorified - but at the core, what is it?

Beginning with an overview of the most impactful innovations from the past decade, and concluding with a hands-on innovation incubator, Innovation in Society touches on the many facets of innovation and looks at the role and responsibility of the innovation/innovator toward society. Looking at the history of a variety of products or services over time, we'll trace back the lineage of innovations to their root invention and identify the different methods used for solving the same problem over time. We will go through the process of innovation - how do innovators innovate anyway? We will inspect methods used for ideating innovation, and touch on how timing plays a large role in identifying promising applications for an innovation. We will explore innovation in five sectors: tech, finance, food, health, and social impact, by reading and analyzing case studies, making an interest in discussion and seminar participation a must for this course.

The class will conclude with an innovation incubator where participants are tasked with working (individually or in a team) to come up with a project in one of the five sectors of innovation: tech, health, food, finance, or social impact. Students will be asked to develop a prototype and pitch deck, and be able to showcase and understanding of both short and long-term, bad and good, impacts of their innovation on society.

Objectives

The overarching goals of this course are for students to:

1. Be comfortable conversing about the landscape of innovation over the past decade and able to think critically about its impact on society and the role of the innovator.

2. Develop an understanding of different methods for innovating and practice using them as tools throughout the session (and after!).

3. Become familiar with identifying innovations in daily life and in society at large, as well as able to see or predict their potential impacts. (Even better if students are able to innovate upon the innovations they encounter!)

4. Gaining experience in the development of an innovation while collaborating in a fast paced, self-directed setting where problem solving and communication are a key tool for success.

5. Estimating short/long term impact of an innovation by identifying key measurements and metrics of impact.

6. Develop a personal opinion on innovation, its impact on society, and awareness of its possibility to be applied in all aspects of life.

Assignments

Readings

Books
The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail
by Clayton Christensen

Ten Types of Innovation: The Discipline of Building Breakthroughs
by Larry Keeley, Ryan Pikkel, Helen Walters, Brian Quinn

24 Steps of Disciplined Entrepreneurship
by Bill Aulet

Innovation and Entrepreneurship
by Peter Drucker

Zero to One
by Blake Masters and Peter Thiel

Example Articles
"Good and Bad Innovation"
Geoff Mulgan

"Uber in the Economy"
EDR Group

"Suicide Gets Taxi Drivers Talking"
New York Times

"Technology and the Future of Work"
McKinsey & Co
** Some readings may change. Additional articles and case studies will be added, final reading list will be posted on Canvas nearer to course dates*

Response papers and discussion questions
Class discussion will be a large part of participation, taking place daily. Response papers will be assigned weekly on the current topic of exploration.

Weekly Quiz
Pop-quizzes will happen once per week.

Podcast & Media
TBD / **Final reading list will be posted on Canvas*

Final Test
The final test will cover sections from the material we cover. A study guide will be provided prior to the exam. The exam will have multiple choice, short & long answer questions.

Individual Project
Students are expected to complete a 1 day challenge project asking them to innovate, estimate impact, and present an innovative idea in 24 hours.

Group Project
Students will be grouped together to form a hands-on incubator experience. Students will be tasked with innovating, building-out a pitch deck with specific requirements, developing a minimum viable product, and creating a basic framework through which they will estimate and a set metric for measuring potential impact. Groups, or individuals, will keep a growing document of their work, presenting it, along with all other assigned materials, on the final day.

Grading
Class participation: 25%
Individual Project: 15%
Innovation Incubator: 20%
Final Test: 20%
Writing / Media Assignments: 10%
Pop Quizzes: 10%

Accommodations
Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform me early in the term if you have a disability or other conditions that might require accommodations or modification of any of these course procedures. You may speak with me after class or during office hours.

For more information, please contact Student and Employee Accessibility Services at 401-863-9588 or SEAS@brown.edu. Students in need of short-term academic advice or support can contact one of the deans in the Dean of the College office.

Credit Hours
TBA