Course objectives

1. Obtain a foundational understanding of social innovation; design-research methods, practices and perspectives; the role of markets; and the formation of real world, evidence-based public policy.

2. Gain perspectives on affecting large-scale social impact at the local, regional, national, and global levels through a variety of practitioner guest lectures.

3. More deeply consider the opportunities to design and implement innovative solutions that address some of the world's most pressing social problems.

About this course

In this combined lecture and lab course, students will gain a sense of the history and future of social innovation with an emphasis on design-centric applications, and the current and future role public policy, markets, and design have in shaping and defining conditions for change. This “systems thinking” approach, when applied to challenges at a societal scale, recognizes the relationship between global and local concerns, the need to inform through verifiable data and evidence, and the role that crafters of public policy and design can have in promoting social innovation.

During the course students will (1) look at the role of design and proven practices, frameworks, and methodologies that identify “root cause” problems; (2) understand the roles, skills, techniques, and evaluation methods that serve crafters of public policy, and; (3) experiment with the ways that designers and policy makers in a variety of contexts can advance social innovation. In the second half of the course, students will build on earlier work and intensify their use of design methodologies to conceptualize a solution to a specific Pittsburgh-based problem with implications on policy creation and/or change, through completion of a project.

While some participants may aspire to directly implement practical solutions to social problems in the “real world”, the course content is applicable to a wide variety of contexts in the public, private, and social sectors. Through a variety of lectures, group exercises,
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directed working sessions, guest appearances by subject matter experts, readings, and case studies, students will be guided through an intensive, three-phased learning process:

**PHASE 1: THE TERRAIN: DESIGN, POLICY AND MARKETS**
Foundational lectures, discussions, and guest presentations, combined with a review and consolidation of precedent cases and work supporting the definition and scope of opportunities. During this phase, you will also begin work on developing ideas for your own (team) project.

**PHASE 2: BLURRING BOUNDARIES: CASE STUDIES AND IDEATION AT THE INTERSECTION OF DESIGN, POLICY AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICE**
Case studies will be presented by several guests, in parallel with discussions and work sessions devoted to the development of your team project, with scheduled reviews and consultations. An interim presentation will be delivered at the end of this phase to provide an opportunity for more detailed feedback on your project.

**PHASE 3: IMPACT LAB**
An intensified focus on project development, with instructor reviews and consultation, culminating in a presentation and exhibition at a final showcase of student work at the end of the semester. The goal is for all students to produce thought-provoking, practical outcomes resulting from both individual and collective contributions. There will be ample opportunity for students to distinguish themselves through participation, reflections on assigned readings and experiences, and the completion of various assignments contributing to a final team-based project.

**Our collective challenge for the semester**
Given the diversity of the class and experimental nature of the course itself, we expect students to be at different stages of “understanding” at the start of the semester. Some will have already taken one or more classes related to social innovation or have experience in the field. Others will be well versed in the intricacies and challenges of design. There may be some with practical policy development and implementation experience.

A few may be largely new to many or all of the concepts covered in the course. As a result, we will all need to be patient and supportive of each other regardless of where individuals might be along any of these dimensions. Consider this class to be a “safe haven”, a place where experimentation, and thinking outside of conventional boundaries happens. We have purposefully designed the class so you can learn more about yourself and ways of working and learn from others outside of your discipline. In short, we hope that this course will arm you with the ideas, tools, and confidence necessary to have a significant impact in your future career whatever it may be.

**Required readings**
The readings for this course will be distributed weekly and/or made available via links referenced in this syllabus. They are a compilation of some of the most influential learning artifacts of the faculty and guest lecturers. Please afford yourself enough time during the week to read, question and reflect on the provided materials.

**Design & Policy is on Blackboard**
You should not rely solely on this source for course information; however, please check it for regular handouts, readings and assignments, particularly if you have missed a class for any reason.

**Course requirements, grading and performance**
We place a great deal of importance on student-to-student, student-to-faculty, and student-to-guest presenter interaction during this course, and everyone’s contributions are vital to the success of the class. Please feel free asking questions, conducting
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out-of-class discussions, and helping each other when possible. Collaborating will likely generate more interesting and impactful ideas, and will model the work environments of some of the world’s most innovative organizations.

The mean grade in the class will likely be around 3.5, a standard for elective courses, although we are more than willing to depart from those guidelines based on extraordinary (or very ordinary) performance from the class. Grades in the "A" range will be reserved for students who perform exceptionally well in all aspects of the course.

**Assignments and criteria for grading**

**BLOG SUBMISSIONS (30% OF OVERALL COURSE GRADE)**
One of the most valuable skills for anyone trying to affect systematic social change is the ability to periodically share information you have found, and critically reflect on what you have learned. To foster these skills, students will be required to post submissions to the course blog site (http://policyanddesign4good.wordpress.com) at specific times throughout the semester. While we encourage additional contributions (and responses) to the blog at any time, there are three key dates when all students are required to make specific entries:

→ **BLOG ENTRY 1: PROJECT BRIEF PROCESS (5% — DUE SEPTEMBER 25)**
Your team has just finished its initial project brief. Take some time to reflect on the process that was used to understand, analyze, and evaluate Peduto’s 100 Days; 100 Policies to Change Pittsburgh as potential areas of further investigation. Highlight any readings, lectures, discussions, or any other aspects of the course so far that shaped or influenced your thinking. What do you know and/or how is your thought process different now than a month ago when you started the course? What were the key turning points throughout history that resulted in the system that your team is currently evaluating and hoping to improve? Who were some of the influential decision/policy makers (e.g., innovators, scientists, designers, business people, politicians, advocates) that had a significant impact and why did they take the actions that they did at the time? Were there cultural, religious, economic, political, or other relevant norms in the past that provided a “contextual contribution” to current issues?

→ **BLOG ENTRY 2: CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE (10% — DUE OCTOBER 16)**
By now, you’ve gotten exposed to a variety of tools, techniques, and approaches to better understand how to tackle tough problems and have heard from a number of practitioners who are doing just that. Now reflect on any key insights, breakthroughs, or learning that might help you create more positive change impacting society in the future. How can design methods, policy development processes, and market forces work, individually or collectively, to address challenges at the local/regional, or national level? Where can/do these approaches fall short? Are there any articles, links, or other artifacts, not already introduced in the course that can help to build on key concepts or fill in gaps?

→ **BLOG ENTRY 3: CONTEXT FOR SYSTEM FAILURE (15% — DUE NOVEMBER 18)**
Many societal problems that we acknowledge today are the result of a series of circumstances, events, and decisions (often made with the best of intentions) made in the past. What conditions exist now that could positively or negatively affect how your team’s issue evolves in the future? Complete Social Impact Matrix to help tell this story.

**Criteria For Grading Individual Blog Submissions**
Submission is clear, complete, and compelling (30%), is connected to course concepts and readings (20%), displays a high level of personal reflection and analysis (40%), and is creative and distinctive (10%)
Impact Lab (50% of overall course grade)

You will complete a phased Impact Project in teams, based on a topic of your choosing, in consultation with the instructors and with feedback from the class. Details for each phase of the project will be completed as a separate assignment. There are four key dates related to project submissions:

Assignment 1: Project Brief (5%—due September 25)

Teams are required to post a Project Brief that includes the following elements:

- What problems/challenges are you addressing and/or what activities do you want to have better supported?
- What do you hope to learn and hope others will do as a result of your work?
- What approaches (economic, political, cultural) are currently in place to address the issue and what evidence do you have that they are inadequate/insufficient?
- How do you think that existing approaches will inform your efforts, if at all?
- What design, policy, or market principles/assumptions/guidelines/constraints are you using as a basis for future work?
- How will you know that your efforts are having the intended impact?
- What are the next steps/timeline for your project?

Project briefs and social impact matrix (rough) must be posted to the course blog site before the start of class.

Assignment 2 — Midterm Checkpoint (10%—October 21 or 23)

The Midterm Checkpoint is a review of your team’s process and progress to date. Faculty will provide feedback based on the project brief, status presentation (e.g., What worked? What didn’t work? Any barriers? Unexpected happenings?), and tangible materials (e.g., design sketches, infographics, process diagrams, presentations; TBD based on project topic and objectives), suggest ways to progress on the project, and generally provide direction on your future efforts. A brief synopsis of team status and relevant interim materials must be posted to the course blog site before the start of class on the day your team’s checkpoint.

Assignment 3 — Interim Posters (5%—November 25)

Each team will create a series posters that reflect the current status of their work and will be prepared to describe the content, design decisions, and any other relevant aspect of their efforts to date. Teams can use this “dry run” and collective feedback to shape their work for the rest of the semester and final deliverables. Format TBA.

Assignment 4 — Final Review (30%—December 9)

Time to convince key stakeholders (e.g., policy makers, community leaders, funders and investors, the media, corporate bigwigs) that a change to a complex system affecting social well being is required now, and your unique insights into the problem put your team in a position to propose a solution. Teams will present their impact projects at a public poster session currently scheduled for December 9th and submit all final deliverables (posters posted to blog site and all other process materials to Blackboard) by noon on Thursday, December 11th.

Criteria For Grading Impact Lab Assignments

Submission is clear, complete and compelling (25%), connected to course concepts and readings (15%), reflects rigorous research (40%), is creative and distinctive (20%)

Class participation and personal professionalism (20% of overall course grade)

One of the challenges of being a “change agent” is that defenders of the status quo (and occasionally even your own supporters) will be critical of your efforts.

Your attitude — attendance, meeting deadlines, contributions to class discussions, dealing constructively with criticism, exhibiting a full sense of commitment to this class and your work—will be a key element in your evaluation.

Participation does not entail simply answering when spoken to. Informed discussions are critical to the learning process and will make this class much more interesting and
fun for all of us. Each student is expected to volunteer substantive comments freely. Quality (versus quantity) is important. Your score will be determined by an assessment of your contributions. The “system” that we’ll use is, at the beginning of the course, everyone starts with a score of “100”. After each class, based on your participation and involvement, we’ll update your score upwards or downwards by an appropriate amount based on the following criteria:

1. Absent from class = –10; after missing three classes (unexcused), your grade drops by a letter grade for each additional class missed
2. In attendance, but makes no contribution = +5
3. In attendance and participates in the class discussion = +7
4. In attendance and makes substantial contributions to the class discussion = +10

Participation does not have to be limited to class sessions only. If, for example, you make addition blog submissions, we’ll count this as part of the participation grade as well. We will make every attempt to involve every student in this process, but it is possible that we may consistently overlook a potential contributor. Please bring this to our attention. This process may be considered somewhat subjective but, through our collective efforts, we can ensure that it is fair. Some criteria for effective class participation are:

1. Is there a willingness to participate and is the participant also a good listener?
2. Are the points made relevant to the discussion and linked to the comments of others? Are comments well thought out or just “thrown out”?
3. Do the comments show evidence of rigorous analysis?
4. Is there a willingness to test new ideas, or are all comments “safe”?
5. Do the comments clarify, highlight, and synthesize important aspects of earlier comments and lead to a clearer statement of the concepts being covered or to new knowledge/insights?
6. Do the comments identify overlooked points and points that turn out to be influential in further discussion?

Cell phones should be turned off. If there is a situation where you need to be able to receive a call during class, you should use the “silent” mode on your phone and quietly leave the room when a call comes in. Laptop computers are permitted to be open during class but note that it’s relatively easy to identify when students are using devices for non-class-related activities. We reserve the right to ask that laptops be closed at any time and to call on any student using a laptop in class.

We greatly appreciate students arriving on time for class. Please let us know beforehand if you must leave class early. Be respectful of others and generally treat your conduct in this class the same way you would in any other professional situation.

No student may record or tape any classroom activity without our express written consent. If a student believes that he/she is disabled and needs to record or tape classroom activities, he/she should contact the Office of Disability Resources to request an appropriate accommodation. Thanks in advance for your efforts to create a class environment that works for everyone.

**Cheating and plagiarism**

No grade is worth sacrificing your personal integrity. Students bear responsibility for being familiar with generally accepted practices governing bibliographic research and citations of resource materials (including web resources) in all written and presented assignments. Cases of cheating, plagiarism, and unauthorized collaboration will be handled in accordance with the University's policy on academic integrity.

- CMU Policy on Academic Integrity at: http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/academic-integrity.htm
- Professor(s) and/or Program Director(s)
- Intercultural Communications Center (Warner Hall 418)
Course Schedule
First, a caveat: We continue to make significant refinements to this course and it intends to accommodate a wide variety of student interests and the enormous evolutionary leaps taking place in the field. As a result, there are bound to be some “bumps” along the “journey of discovery” that we’re taking together. Suggestions and constructive criticism of what works and what doesn’t, and generally how to make this course great is very much appreciated.

In addition, we’re always finding new things that apply to the course and we’ll likely try to inject other materials as we come across them during the semester. It is possible that, as we “get into” the material, we’ll want to make some modifications to the course schedule due to timing and/or content issues. Our commitment is to give you enough advanced notice on modifications to sufficiently prepare.

week 1

AUGUST 26
Introduction: Overview of model/structure for the class and process.

AUGUST 28
Markets: Trends, forecasts, and market predictors.

WEEKLY READINGS
Report: The Next 4 Billion: Market Size and Business Strategy at the Base of the Pyramid (Hammond et al., International Finance Corporation and World Resources Institute, 2007)—read pgs. 2-11; www.wri.org/publication/the-next-4-billion
Challenge: 100 Days; 100 Policies to Change Pittsburgh; http://www.billpeduto.com/policy-papers/
Report: Peduto Administration First 100 Days; http://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/mayorpeduto/PedutoAdministration100DaysReport.pdf

week 2

SEPTEMBER 02
Design: Introduction/brief history and trends in design.
Guest Bruce Hanington, School of Design

SEPTEMBER 04
Policy: Introduction/brief history of the changing nature of policy and its effect on public good. Discuss Mayor Peduto's Report, 100 Days; 100 Policies to Change Pittsburgh

WEEKLY READINGS
How Governmental Policy Is Made (Best Practice Briefs, Michigan State University, November 2005); http://outreach.msu.edu/bpbriefs/issues/brief34.pdf
What is Design: Charles and Ray Eames
The Problem of Design Problems: Kees Dorst

TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT
Head, Heart, Hustle Game (Inspired by Echoing Green: http://www.echoinggreen.org)
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week 3

SEPTEMBER 09
Unpack Head, Heart, Hustle assignment, Introduce Impact Lab

SEPTEMBER 11 (kristin is away)
Team workday: Team building activity (Social Impact Matrix). Day focused on group interests, social impact matrix/ideation, and developing outline for project brief (Due Sept. 25)

WEEKLY READINGS

Article: Social Innovation: Ten Cases From Benjamin Franklin, Michael Mumford, University of Oklahoma.

Article: Design Thinking Is A Failed Experiment. So What’s Next? Bruce Nussbaum
www.fastcodesign.com/1663558/design-thinking-is-a-failed-experiment-so-whats-next

Article: How Serious Play Leads To Breakthrough Innovation. Bruce Nussbaum
www.fastcodesign.com/1671971/how-serious-play-leads-to-breakthrough-innovation

week 4

SEPTEMBER 16
Social Innovation: Barriers, challenges and failures.

SEPTEMBER 18
Guest Sabina Junginger, Denmark (Skype) (pending)
Design and Innovation in the Public Sector: Matters of Design in Policy-Making and Policy Implementation

WEEKLY READINGS
Rediscovering Social Innovation (Phills, Deiglmeier, and Miller, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Fall 2008, pgs. 34-43); www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/rediscovering_social_innovation

Innovation is Not the Holy Grail (Seelos and Nair, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Fall 2012); http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/innovation_is_not_the_holy_grail


Center for Urban Pedagogy: http://welcometocup.org. Explore on your own (mission, stakeholders, projects)

TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT
Front-end research: Using the research and data about your subject matter create and distribute a survey, questionnaire, and/or interview stakeholders. Purpose: break down your own assumptions, perceptions and understanding of the problem.

week 5

SEPTEMBER 23
Guest Mitchell Sipus, PhD student School of Design
Social research is a social process
www.sutikasipus.com

SEPTEMBER 25
Fieldtrip to Create Lab (http://www.cmucreatelab.org); meet at the entrance to CMU’s Collaborative Innovation Center.

Blog Entry 1 Due September 23 before start of class

Impact Lab — Assignment 1 Due September 23 before start of class
WEEKLY READINGS (INCLUDING A VIDEO INTERVIEW)
Cultural Probes, Interactions, Bill Gaver, Tony Dunne and Elena Pacenti, 1999
Innovations in Social Policy and Design, Sarah Schulman and Chris Vanstone, Radical Redesign Team, The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI). (Note: this is a pre-recorded video lecture)

TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT
Each team should have questions for Laura and Mike regarding your problem.

week 6
SEPTEMBER 30
Guest Laura Meixell: Analytics and Strategy Manager for Mayor Bill Peduto

OCTOBER 02
Guest Mike Schiller, CEO, Green Building Alliance (https://www.go-gba.org)

TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT
Meet with team.

week 7
OCTOBER 07
Fitwits: A story about community action-based research and results

OCTOBER 09
“Boots on the ground” group brainstorming session: How, who, what, why

WEEKLY READINGS
Experiencing, Exploring and Experimenting In and With Co-Design Spaces, Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders and Bo Westerlund, 2011.
A Framework for Organizing the Tools and Techniques of Participatory Design, Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders, Eva Brandt, Thomas Binder, 2010

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:
http://www.makertools.com

TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT
Each team: 10 ideas for possible design methods

week 8
OCTOBER 14
Design Research Protocols and Making of Design Probes,
Guest: Bruce Hanington, School of Design

OCTOBER 16
The “Make” Shop: Learning to make low-fidelity, research probes

→ BLOG ENTRY 2 DUE BEFORE START OF CLASS

week 9
OCTOBER 21
First round of mid-semester team reviews

OCTOBER 23
First round of mid-semester team reviews

→ IMPACT LAB — ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE BEFORE START OF CLASS
(DEPENDING ON WHAT SESSION TEAM ASSIGNED TO)
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**Week 10**

**October 28**
Guest Jeremy Resnick, Executive Director/Founder, Propel Schools (www.propel.org)

**October 30**
Guest Evaine Sing, Operations and Program Director GTECH Strategies (www.gtechstrategies.org)

**Week 11**

**November 04**
Process feedback, putting policy at the center and working back. Unpacking what you discovered and collected. Analyzing your research findings. Guest Councilman Dan Gilman (pending)

**November 06**
Guest Patrick Dowd, Allies for Children, a children’s advocacy group for the Pittsburgh region (www.alliesforchildren.org) (pending)

**Week 12**

**November 11**
Revisit Social Impact matrix. What has changed and why?

**November 13**
Team Round Robin: Presenting your findings in a sharable form and next steps.

**Week 13**

**November 18**
In class work session

**November 20**
In class work session

Blog entry 3 due November 18 before start of class

**Week 14**

**November 25**
Review: Rough outline/design for final review due and presented to class.

**November 27** (Thanksgiving)

Impact lab — Assignment 3 due November 25 before start of class

**Week 15**

**December 02**
In class work session

**December 04**
In class work session

**Week 16**

**December 09**
Final review, Details TBA

Impact lab — Assignment 4: due by noon on December 11th
All final team projects must be posted on the blog before grade can be entered.
Overview fall 2014

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