Course objectives
1. Obtain a foundational understanding of social innovation; design-research methods and practices; the role of local economies; 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 international levels through a variety of guest lectures and case studies.
3. Design, prototype, and propose next steps for an innovative solution to a pressing societal issue.

About this course
In this combined lecture and lab course, students will gain a sense of the history, current state, and future of social innovation with an emphasis on design thinking, and the current role public policy and new economies have in shaping and defining conditions for change. This systems thinking approach, when applied to challenges at a societal scale, recognizes the relationship between local, regional national, and international concerns. And, the need to inform through verifiable research and evidence the role that crafters of public policy and design can have in promoting social change.

During the course students will (1) look at the role of design, proven practices and frameworks that identify “root cause” problems; (2) understand the roles, skills, and evaluation methods that are often used to leverage new or change existing policy; and (3) experiment with the ways that multidisciplinary teams 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 the 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 group exercises, directed working sessions, guest lectures by subject matter experts, readings, and case studies, students will be guided through an intensive, four-phased learning process:

Exploring the terrain: Design, policy and social innovation
Foundational lectures, hands-on workshops, and discussions, 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.

Making Sense of the Terrain: Understanding through Case Studies
Case studies will be presented by several guests in a variety of formats (in-person/video/on-line), 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.

Proposing ideas at the intersection of design, policy and innovative practice
This phase is about learning to develop effective participatory design methods that help you better understand the scope of your problem. It is also about getting out there and testing your ideas and assumptions with stakeholders.
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Iterating: The Impact lab
An intensified focus on project development, with instructor reviews and consultation, culminating in a presentation and celebration 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 tools, and confidence necessary to have a significant impact in your future career whatever it may be.

Take care of yourself and others
Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is here to help: call 412-268-2922 and visit their website at www.cmu.edu/counseling. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for help getting connected to the support that can help.

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

We are on Canvas
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.

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 several key dates related to project submissions:

Assignments and criteria for grading
Take home Workbook Assignments — 15% of overall course grade
Criteria For Grading Take Home Workbook Assignments — Grading criteria is as follows: Degree that workbook contents are clear, complete and compelling (30%), reflects rigorous research and effort (40%), and displays creativity and distinctiveness (30%).
Mid-semester review and project brief (should include team/individual Workbook Assignments — 25% of overall course grade
— Due Tuesday, October 17th and Thursday, October 19th by noon
— The Midterm Checkpoint is a review of your team’s process and progress to date. Faculty will provide feedback based on the project brief, presentation (e.g., What worked? What didn’t work? Barriers encountered? Unexpected happenings?), and other relevant materials that suggest progress on the project, and generally provide direction to your future efforts. All materials (including photos of physical artifacts) must be posted to Canvas before the start of class on the day of your team’s checkpoint.

Team project brief, at a minimum, should consider the following:
— What problem/challenge is your team focusing on?
— Who are some of the influential stakeholders and policy makers that have significant impact power? What actions have they taken or not taken thus far to exert their power?
— What have been the key turning points throughout history that resulted in the system that your team is currently evaluating and hoping to improve?
— Reflect on any key relationships/partnerships that have been impactful (positively or negatively) to date and why?
— How do you think that existing approaches in other contexts and/or regions (local, regional, national, international) will inform your efforts, if at all?
— What polices, regulations, or laws are currently in place to address the issue and what evidence do you have that they are inadequate/insufficient?
— How could policy development processes and market forces work individually or collectively to contribute to a better approach?
— What 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 actions could others take as a result of your work?
— What are the high level next steps/timeline for your project?

Criteria For Grading Midterm Checkpoint and Team Project Brief
Grading criteria is as follows: Submission is clear, complete and compelling (30%), reflects rigorous research (40%), and displays creativity and distinctiveness (30%).
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Presentation of final idea/prototypes (5% of overall course grade)
— Due Thursday, November 16th by noon
— Interim posters (5% of overall course grade)
— Due Tuesday, December 5th by noon
— Each team will create a presentation and support materials from workbook that reflect the current state of their work. Please be prepared to describe the content, design decisions, goals, and any other relevant aspects of the project. Teams can use this “dry run” and feedback to shape their work for the rest of the semester and final deliverables. Teams should be prepared to address the affordability, need for partners, speed of implementation, inclusivity, city capacity, and innovation for proposed solutions.
— Final review (30% of overall course grade)
— Due Tuesday, December 12th by noon
— 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 session currently scheduled for final exam week. All final deliverables (posters, images of prototypes and all other process materials) are posted to Canvas by 5 p.m. on Monday, December 11th.

Criteria For Grading Impact Lab Assignment (Prototypes, Posters, and Final Review)
Grading criteria is as follows: Team 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:
— Absent from class = –10; after missing three classes (unexcused), your grade drops by a letter grade for each additional class missed
— In attendance, but makes no contribution = +5
— In attendance and participates in the class discussion = +7
— In attendance and makes substantial contributions to the class discussion = +10

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:
— Is there a willingness to participate and is the participant also a good listener?
— Are the points made relevant to the discussion and linked to the comments of others?
— Are comments well thought out or just “thrown out”?
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— Do the comments show evidence of rigorous analysis?
— Is there a willingness to test new ideas, or are all comments “safe”?
— 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?
— 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.
EXPLORING THE TERRAIN: DESIGN, POLICY AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

Week 1
Tuesday, August 29
— Short intro to class, small group break-out around topics, reflection.
TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT #0: Ice breaker: Head/Heart/Hustle, Inspired by Echoing Green
  · Assignment #0: Due August 31

Thursday, August 31
— Hang-up and talk about ice breakers: Head/Heart/Hustle, workday: revisit/review
  high-level topic cards, decide on: team/opportunity/problem space.
TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT #1: Frame Your Design challenge.
Resource: IDEO: Fieldguide to Human Centered Design (pages 31, 32, 33)
TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT#1.5: AEIOU Worksheets
Resource: PDF ON CANVAS: Mark Baskinger & Bruce Hanington, School of Design
  · Assignment #1: Due September 5
  · Assignment #1.5: Due September 7

READINGS:
— Design Driven Approaches: Time, Patience and Disciple by Robert Fabricant and Manuel Toscano (See PDF on Canvas)

Week 2
Tuesday, September 05
— Lecture: Framing Design Thinking, review design challenges (each team read aloud)
TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT #2: Reframe Your Design challenge.
Resource: IDEO: Fieldguide to Human Centered Design (pages 31, 32, 33)
  · Assignment: #1.5 & #2: Due September 7

READINGS:
— LEAP Dialogues: What: Method Essays, by Danny Alexander, Sarah Brooks, Landon Brown, Diagram Partners, Jon Klko, Liz Ogbu (See PDF on Canvas)
— Design and Innovation in the Public Sector: Matters of Design in Policy-Making and Policy by Sabine Junginger, The School of Design Kolding, Kolding, Denmark (See PDF on Canvas)

Thursday, September 07
— Day 1: Design Circus
TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT #3: Create A Project Plan
Resource: IDEO: Fieldguide to Human Centered Design (page 34)
  · Assignment: Due September 14

Week 3
Tuesday, September 12
— Day 2: Design Circus
TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT #4: Find Out Something Unexpected (solo assignment)
Resource: The Social Design Menu Methods, Lucy Kimbell and Joe Julier, pages 21, 22)

Thursday, September 14
— Group discussion and review of Project Plan and Find Out Something Unexpected.
TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT #5: Guided Tour or Draw It!
Resource: IDEO: Fieldguide to Human Centered Design (pages 64, 65)
TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT #6: Create a Stakeholder Map
Resource: Universal Methods of Design, Bruce Hanington
TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT #7: Craft Problem Definition
Resource: The Social Design Menu Methods, Lucy Kimbell and Joe Julier, pages 29, 30)
  · Assignment #5, #6, #7 are due September 19
READINGS:
— Social Innovation What it is, Why it matters, How can it be accelerated. Geoff Muligan with Simon Tucker, Rushanara Ali and Ben Sanders

MAKING SENSE OF THE TERRAIN: UNDERSTANDING THROUGH CASE STUDIES

Week 4
Tuesday, September 19
— Team workday: Download Your Learnings and Sharing Inspiring Stories (worksheets provided)

TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT #8: Top Five!
Resource: IDEO: Fieldguide to Human Centered Design (page 79)

READINGS:
— The Art of Looking Sideways: Problems and Imagination, pages 146-166 by Allen Fletcher

Thursday, September 21
— Team workday: Find Themes, Share back with class

Week 5
Tuesday, September 26
— Lecture: The Power Shifts, Drivers, and Exponential Technologies Driving and Enabling Social Change

TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT #9: Social Impact Matrix or Drivers of Change
Resource: The Social Design Menu Methods, Lucy Kimbell and Joe Julier, pages 25, 26
Resource: www.socialpathways.com, Winterhouse 2017 (Template on Canvas)

READINGS:
— The Four Global Forces Breaking All the Trends (McKinsey Quarterly, April 2015); http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/strategy/the_four_global_forces_breaking_all_the_trends
— Powerpoint: Social Impact Matrix: Impacting the Vote (example of social impact matrix in action)

Thursday, September 28
— Lecture: What is “Policy” and How to Create the Conditions to Support More Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship

TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT #10: Under the Microscope: A Case Study

READINGS:
— How Governmental Policy Is Made (Best Practice Briefs, Michigan State University, November 2005); http://outreach.msu.edu/bpbriefs/issues/brief34.pdf http://pittsburghpa.gov/
— LEAP Dialogues: Measuring Progress: Designers in Government by Dana Chisnell and Cyd Harrell (PDF on Canvas)
— LEAP Dialogues: Impacting the Social by Stuart Candy and Candy Chang (PDF on Canvas)
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Week 6
Tuesday, October 03
— Guest lecture: Councilman Dan Gillman

Thursday, October 05
— Guest lecture: Stephanie Dangel

PROPOSING IDEAS AT THE INTERSECTION OF DESIGN, POLICY AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Week 7
Tuesday, October 10
— Each team present assignment #10 Under the Microscope: A Case Study
— Reflect on lessons learned doing this process. What are takeaways?

Thursday, October 12
— Workday: Prep for midterm review

Week 8
Tuesday, October 17
— Midterm reviews

Thursday, October 19
— Midterm reviews

TAKE HOME: Meet as a group, reflect, revise, build a plan for moving ahead.

READINGS:
— A Framework for Organizing the Tools and Techniques of Participatory Design. Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders, Eva Brandt and Thomas Binder
— Bootcamp Bootleg. Institute of Design at Standford.

Week 9
Tuesday, October 24
— Lecture: Participatory Design and Co-creation

TAKE HOME: Generate three ideas for relevant DIY participatory methods/tools
TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT: #11: How Might We
Resource: IDEO: Fieldguide to Human Centered Design (pages 85, 86, 87)

Thursday, October 26
— Workshop: Making and testing DIY methods in class.

TAKE HOME: Bring your methods/tools to stakeholders/participants. Get feedback.

Week 10
Tuesday, October 31
— Lecture: Brainstorming, Team break-out session: Revising methods/tools, brainstorming and bundling ideas

TAKE HOME: Narrow down to three of your best ideas.
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**Week 10**

**Thursday, November 02**
— Lecture: When Innovation Fails
— Class debrief. Where are we? Challenges? Unseen opportunities?

**TAKE HOME:** Bring your revised methods/tools to stakeholders/participants. Get feedback.

**Week 11**

**Tuesday, November 07**
— Team break-out session: Synthesize design methods/tools findings.

**Thursday, November 09**
— Team break-out session: Iterate on three top ideas, narrow down to one.

**TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT:** #12: Outcomes Matrix

*Resource: The Social Design Menu Methods, Lucy Kimbell and Joe Julier, pages 41, 42)*

**Week 12**

**Tuesday, November 14**
— Workday: Creating a storyboard.

**Thursday, November 16**
— All teams present final idea/prototypes. Round Robin style

**ITERATING: THE IMPACT LAB**

**Week 13**

**Tuesday, November 21**
— Workday

**Thursday, November 23 (Thanksgiving)**
— No classes

**Week 14**

**Tuesday, November 28**
— Workday

**Thursday, November 30**
— Individual team reviews of interim posters

**Week 15**

**Tuesday, December 05**
— Workday

**Thursday, December 07**
— Workday

**Week 16**

**Tuesday, December 12 (Final review)**