CONSUMER BEHAVIOR:
FROM A "DESIGN THINKING" APPROACH

What is this course about?

Food, shelter, and clothing are integral parts of daily life. Decisions regarding these essential aspects of our lives are made often, and some, with little thought. If we do not grow our own food, for example, we must regularly choose what food to purchase, where to purchase it, and how to prepare it. Furthermore, decisions made less often, such as whether to rent or buy a home, are not only based on economic justifications but also emotional needs.

In this course, we explore what motivates consumer purchase decisions. For example, why does someone purchase a combo meal even though they do not want all the food included? Why does someone purchase a Toyota when she could otherwise afford a BMW? Why would a man purchase for his wife a Coach purse without the brand name on the outside of the bag? In this course, you have the opportunity to discover what motivates consumers for the explicit end of making business decisions.

For the context of this course, you are partnered with a local venture* to solve a business challenge. From the classroom exercises and practical experience, you will learn qualitative research methods to better understand deep human needs, and then use creative, innovative, "Design Thinking" techniques to design solutions to meet those needs.

"It is about them and for them. The closer the end-users' needs are analyzed and answered, the more successful the adoption or purchase of a solution. You iterate until you get it right from a customer perspective."

– Olivier Delarue, Lead, UNHCR Innovation

What is to be gained?

The mission of this course is to empower you with the "Design Thinking" research approach to unlock consumers' hidden motivations. Once you believe you have discovered some aspect of human motivations that is important to answering the challenge that you have been given, you will using brainstorming techniques and rapid prototyping to develop products, services, marketing campaigns, or processes.

Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose."

– Zora Neale Hurston

Who will I learn from?

For the purposes of this course, you will be working with a group of your *peers* on a business "challenge" proposed by a local *venture*. This venture could be a local start-up, non-profit, or large enterprise.

The role of the *instructor* is the coach. You have a good chunk of the playbook from your core classes and past experiences to apply to actual business problems in this course.

"The main tenet of design thinking is empathy for the people you're trying to design for. Leadership is exactly the same thing – building empathy for the people that you're entrusted to help."

– David Kelley, Founder of IDEO

To receive these benefits how much effort will I need to expend?

This course involves a significant amount of effort outside of the regularly scheduled class time. Expect to spend 12 – 14 hours preparing for class and your course project. How is this time spent? Here is a high-level overview of how your time may be spent during the week:

- Reading and Preparing for class: 3 hours
- Group Meetings: 3 hours
- Client Meeting: 1 hour
- Written Correspondence and Administrative Work: 1 hour
- Individual Project Work: 4 – 6 hours

"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

– Albert Einstein, Former refugee

How am I assessed in this course?

This is an experiential course with no exams. You will be evaluated on the following:

Project Contribution (40% of the course assessment): Most of your time in this course, will be spent applying what you know and have learned to a local business or new venture. You have the opportunity to partner with a local venture to solve a real design challenge. Actual projects tend to incorporate the messiness and murkiness of real life requiring creativity and judgment.

This course is assessed on a weekly *performance->feedback->revision->new performance* cycle. The process is as follows:

1. *Performance:* You have weekly deliverables due to your client.
2. *Feedback:* You meet weekly with your client to present your findings, receive useful feedback, and coordinate the following weeks' activities.
3. *Revision:* Based on the feedback, you use the collective judgment of your team to revise your work.
4. *New Performance:* Finally, you will incorporate feedback and course leanings to the next weekly deliverable.

At the end of the term, your team will be assigned an overall project grade which will be adjusted by your individual contribution to your team. Plan to spend a significant amount of time with your project team

outside of class in a quest to answer your particular "challenge." See your peers as a valuable source of feedback for your personal development. In addition to the feedback obtained from your peers, you will have numerous opportunities to self-reflect on the learning process that you are undergoing including your interaction with your peers.

Class Contribution (20%): For each class, we assume you have done all the readings, are prepared to discuss with your peers, and apply the materials during class learning activities. This is a participation designation for each person in the class on a 0 – 5 scale, where 0 is no contribution and 5 is excellent class contribution which led to a significant learning opportunity for others in the class. Typically, most daily contributions are in the 1-2 scale, but there are opportunities to contribute at higher levels. Deliverables and Client Communications (20%): Throughout the course, you are asked to submit specific materials directly related to solving your real world business case. Although, you may receive feedback with ways to improve your work, you will receive full credit for the assignment if you submit work that meets the set requirements. This is to keep you on track with your course project, to ensure that you are internalizing (deep learning) the course objectives, and to have the opportunity to receive valuable feedback before submitting your final project results at the end of the term. The results of your deliverables are always to be communicated to your client during weekly meetings with him/her. This is to ensure that you all are on the same page and expectations are clear. Weekly follow-up emails directly after your client meetings ensure that you and the client have heard each other clearly and there is a clear plan for how to move forward with the project. These weekly emails are to be sent within 24 hours of meeting with your client and your instructor needs to be cc'd on this communication. If she is not be cc'd, she will assume that you have not met with the client and are not making joint progress on the project.

Peer Evaluations (10%): Each week you will have the opportunity to evaluate other teams' weekly project submission. Often when we are evaluating others, we grow and discover ways to improve our own project submissions. Obviously, the other team values the timely and thoughtful feedback as they continue to progress on their team project.

Client Evaluation (10%): Through your interactions with your business partner, your client will have the opportunity to evaluate the value that your group has brought to his or her business or new venture at the end of the course.

Attendance: Most of your success in this class will come from just showing up. Thus attendance is important for your success and the success of your project team. As such, attendance is heavily weighted. Your course grade may be adjusted accordingly for attendance. Please see the "User Manual" for details on this policy.

What course materials will we use?

We will be using Designing for Growth: A Design Thinking Tool Kit for Managers and the accompanying field book. Additional case studies, readings, and videos may be assigned through CANVAS, Penn Reserves, or Study.net.

"Human-centered design is a philosophy, not a precise set of methods, but one that assumes that innovation should start by getting close to users and observing their activities."

– Donald A. Norman, Co – founder of Nielsen Norman Group