

MINOR

INNOVATION & DESIGN THINKING

Design Thinking

SPEAKERS:



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TEACHING OBJECTIVES:

Design Thinking is a human-centred approach to innovation, strongly developed and popularised by Stanford d.school and IDEO. At the heart of the process is the notion that in order to innovate, it is necessary to connect with people, understand the real needs of the user and explore the whole context of the project with a constant attitude towards research, undertaking a non-linear journey characterised by uncertainty and the freedom to make mistakes and create new ideas.

The best way to internalise the process and its instruments - and to get used to dealing with the ambiguity and uncertainty that characterise it - is to experience it, to face and solve the challenges, the real challenges of innovation.

The participant:

- discover Design Thinking through an introductory overview of the methodology in the context of product, service and/or organisational process innovation through a co-design approach.
- test the methodology and tools on a real challenge.
- design one or more innovative solutions in response to the defined challenge.

PREREQUISITES:

This course does not require any prerequisites except a very good English proficiency.

COURSE SUMMARY:

During the workshop, **we will altern short presentations, case study discussions and practical teamwork; activities will be carried out in teams of 4-5 people**, according to an identified challenge. In detail, the workshop will be divided into several phases:

- introduction to the methodology of Design Thinking and co-design;
- presentation of the process and the main tools;
- presentation of the challenge to the teams;
- coaching and mentoring of the work teams' activities (needs research, design, prototyping, testing, iteration).

PLAN / SUMMARY:

The course is delivered in a workshop format and consists of two intensive four-hour sessions, scheduled at least one week, and preferably two weeks, apart.

Each session combines and alternates theoretical input with hands-on activities. During the theoretical phases, the instructor introduces and discusses the main concepts and topics of the course using slides and other supporting materials. These phases are regularly followed by individual and group activities, allowing participants to immediately apply, test, and discuss the concepts and tools introduced.

A variety of teaching materials and formats are used throughout the workshop, including PowerPoint presentations, printed materials, videos, and practical exercises. The course follows an interactive and learning-by-doing approach, with participants actively encouraged to contribute, exchange ideas, work collaboratively, and engage throughout the sessions.

The time between the two sessions also provides participants with an opportunity to further develop and refine the work initiated during the first workshop session.

ASSESSMENT & GRADING:

Students will be assessed through two activities, one group-based and one individual. Each activity will be graded on a 0–10 scale, and the two scores will be added together to determine the final grade (maximum: 20 points).

1. **Group research activity** – 10 points

Students will work in groups on a research activity developed primarily during the two course sessions. Each group will select and analyse a real-world case, applying the concepts, methods, and tools introduced during the course.

The group will produce a concise 4-slide PowerPoint presentation summarising the research question, approach, analysis, and main findings. This presentation will constitute the main basis for the assessment of the group activity.

The work will be independently evaluated by a panel of three experts, each assigning a score from 0 to 10. The final group score will correspond to the average of the three evaluations.

2. **Individual assessment** – 10 points

Individual learning will be assessed through a 10-question multiple-choice quiz (MCQ) covering the main topics addressed during the course. Each question will offer four possible answers, with one

correct answer only. Each correct answer will be worth one point, and no penalty will be applied for incorrect answers.

The final course grade will therefore be calculated as:
Group activity (0–10) + Individual MCQ (0–10) = Final grade (0–20).

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Main references

- Brown, T. (2009). *Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation*. HarperBusiness.
- Kelley, T. & Kelley, D. (2013). *Creative Confidence: Unleashing the Creative Potential Within Us All*. Crown Business.
- Liedtka, J. & Ogilvie, T. (2011). *Designing for Growth: A Design Thinking Toolkit for Managers*. Columbia Business School Publishing.

Selected articles and practical resources

- Brown, T. (2008). "Design Thinking." *Harvard Business Review*, 86(6), 84–92.
- Liedtka, J. (2018). "Why Design Thinking Works." *Harvard Business Review*, 96(5), 72–79.
- Stanford d.school. *Design Thinking Bootleg*. Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford University.
- IDEO.org. *The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design*. IDEO