

University of Waterloo, Stratford Campus
Masters In Digital Experience Innovation
MDEI 625
The Innovation Course
Fall 2014
Monday, 5:00 to 8:00 PM, rm 3129

Instructor Information

Instructor: Glen Drummond
Office: 1441 King St. St. Jacobs, ON
Office Hours: by appointment
Email: gdrummond@quarry.com
<http://ca.linkedin.com/in/glendrummond>

Course Description

This is a reading, discussion and seminar course designed to prepare MDEI students to contribute in professional settings where “innovation” is a key success factor in achieving organizational goals. The course readings, in-class discussions, activities and assignments will approach the subject of innovation from several perspectives – the relationship of innovation to creativity as form of thinking, innovation as a group practice, innovation as an organizational achievement. The connections between innovation, strategy, creativity, “insight” and customer experience will be explored. Some practical techniques – building-blocks for innovation – will be developed. We will also spend some time on the constraints and behaviors that tend to make innovation more the exception than the rule.

The readings for the course will familiarize students with a group of theorists who have made notable observations about innovation. Since innovation, by its nature, tends to resist reduction to a finite set of facts or even a tidy rules-based theory, the assessment of student performance will be based not on exams but on individual assignments that afford a degree of focused and self-directed learning. The in-class experience will also involve student-led curatorial discussions – hailing examples of innovation – and developing together language to describe kinds and qualities of innovation.

Rather than relying on a “text-book,” the assigned reading load for the course (which will be substantial) will draw on essays and chapters from books that have been written for that portion of the business audience that is interested in design, innovation, creativity and customer experience strategy.

The course requires no group-work assignments outside of the classroom, but will involve occasional group activities in the classroom centered around the application of heuristics employed in innovation practice.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

The four learning objectives for the course are as follows:

1. To become literate with the concept of innovation as it has been discussed by influential theorists on

the topic – especially with respect to the fields of marketing, business strategy, customer experience design and digital media.

2. To build a mental model of the connections between innovation, creativity, customer insight, strategy and customer experience, that are relevant in contemporary business and institutional practice.
3. To recognize constraints and barriers to innovation in order to respond to them.
4. To develop an inventory of heuristics and techniques that provide a practical response to innovation constraints and barriers.

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Draw upon a vocabulary of innovation theories
 - in professional and academic discussions (including in-class seminars)
 - in work solving problems related to marketing, business strategy, customer experience design and digital media.
- B. Conceptualize the relationship between innovation, creativity, customer insight, strategy and customer experience, that are relevant in contemporary business and institutional practice.
 - In mapping dependency relationships in the design of innovative work
- C. Anticipate constraints and barriers to innovation
 - At both an individual and collective/corporate level
- D. Draw upon an inventory of heuristics and techniques to facilitate innovation
 - Making selections appropriate to a particular innovation context

Readings

There is no single textbook. Reading assignments will be shared on a weekly basis.

Readings will be excerpted from volumes including the following. All of these are well-regarded additions to a library of literature on innovation. For students who wish to sample before they buy or economize on book buying, the assigned readings from most of these volumes will be made available electronically through the COURSE RESERVES feature of the University of Waterloo Library. This can be accessed from a link on the DEI 625 LEARN site. (There may be a lag of 2-3 weeks from the beginning of classes until these are available).

Jumping the Curve: Innovation and Strategic Choice in an Age of Transition,

Nicholas Imparato and Oren Harari. 1994

Tilt: Shifting Your Strategy from Products to Customers .

Niraj Dawar. 2013

The Medici Effect: What You Can Learn from Elephants and Epidemics

Johansson, Frans. 2006

Serious Play: How the World's Best Companies Simulate to Innovate

Michael Schrage. 1999

Seizing the White Space: Business Model Innovation for Growth and Renewal

Mark W. Johnson. 2010

Blue Ocean Strategy: How To Create Uncontested Market Space And Make The Competition Irrelevant

W. Chan Kim;Renee Mauborgne. 2005

The Power of Pull: How Small Moves, Smartly Made, Can Set Big Things in Motion Brown,

John Seely; Davison, Lang; Hagel III, John. 2010

The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail

Clayton M. Christensen. 2013

The Myths of Innovation

Scott Berkun 2010

Ten Types of Innovation

Larry Keeley. 2013

Readings Available on LEARN

Articles and links will be shared on an ongoing basis on Learn under a content section called Articles and Links. Some of these will be required to complete assigned work, others will be optional. Students are encouraged to forward to the instructor content and links that they deem to be a worthy addition to this set.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Course requirements and assessments are briefly summarized below. Students can anticipate some further description and discussion in the classroom to fill in more details on these assignments. Note that the first of these assignments is due on the second week of class. In every case, students should anticipate that they may be asked to speak with the rest of the class about work they turn in – and in

general they should regard that as a positive indication that their work submitted was regarded as an exemplary contribution to the classroom discussion and learning.

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
Mind Map of Innovation with Critical Question	Due Sept. 15	5%
This Is Innovative! Mini-Seminar	Schedule to be Assigned	15%
Deep Dives – Commentary on Readings (4)	Ends on week 10	40%
TEDEI Talk: This Need Innovation!	Begins November	30%
Mind Map Phase 2: With commentary on critical question	Due December 1	10%
<hr/>		
Total		100%

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Assessment 1

Mind Map, Phase 1

Overview:

“Innovation” is an abstraction. We typically understand abstractions in terms of other things (some of these metaphors or other abstractions perhaps). The purpose of this assignment is for you to set out for yourself an initial baseline of assumptions, associations, causal relationships and most of all, the questions about innovation that you will bring to our discussions together.

Instructions:

1. Using Prezi (www.prezi.com) create a mind-map in which you relate your present understanding of “innovation.”
2. Include at least one critical thinking question about this topic.

A critical thinking question is one with the following characteristics:

- (a) there is no clear and irrefutable answer
- (b) the answer has meaningful consequences
- (c) you care about the answer – either because of intellectual curiosity or some desired outcome

3. Make your prezi public, and publish the link in the LEARN dropbox for Mind Map Phase 1. Please do that by creating a MS WORD document and pasting the link to your Prezi in that document.

4. Please include in your mind-map a photo of yourself, your name, and any background about yourself that might be helpful for your instructor in guiding the classroom conversation in your direction (for instance, industries you have worked in, countries of origin, hobbies & interests etc.)

Marking Rubric:

Marks will be assigned based on evidence of engagement with the challenge and the value of the question to advance discussion in the classroom.

Assessment 2

This is Innovative! Mini-Seminar

Overview:

Innovations are not always recognized in their time. The capacity to identify innovation, and the capacity to convince others of the innovative quality of something you observe are skills we wish to cultivate together in this class. The purpose of this assignment is for you to practice this, and in doing so, practice your ability to facilitate conversation about innovation.

Instructions:

1. Identify something you believe is an example (either widely heralded, or utterly unsung) of innovation. Your source material here is unrestricted – it might be a website, a political policy, a software as service business, a new product, a medical procedure, a livestock breed....
2. Build a brief (5 minute) presentation in which you explain why you think your example bears mention, and on what basis it stands out from less innovative practice.
3. Conclude your seminar (and your presentation with a single question for class discussion - a question that is related to the topic you have introduced that conforms to the qualities of a critical thinking question:

Once again, a critical thinking question is one with the following characteristics:

- (a) there is no clear and irrefutable answer
 - (b) the answer has meaningful consequences
 - (c) you care about the answer – (either because of intellectual curiosity or some desired outcome)
4. Capture a few notes from the seminar discussion, and upload those appended to your mini-seminar slide presentation to the drop box folder associated with this assignment. Include your name (and if you wish your photo) in the presentation title page.

Marking Rubric:

Marks will be assigned based on (a) the insight of your selection, (b) the quality of your presentation and (c) the quality of your question and discussion facilitation.

Assessment 3

Deep Dives: Commentaries on Readings

Overview:

We are blessed with an abundance of writing on the topic of innovation. Not all contributions of course are of equal value. And even some of the most widely cited ideas on innovation can come under withering attack from other theorists from time to time. See for instance, Jill Lepore on Christensen: (<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/06/23/the-disruption-machine>)

An article or book chapter will be assigned at the end of each of the first ten classes to be read as preparation for the following class. All students are expected to read this material in order that we can

have a coherent class conversation around the reading material.

Instructions

In addition to reading these articles and chapters, you will be expected to write a commentary on, or reaction to just FOUR of the articles submitted over the course of the term.

Think of these commentaries as a long-form blog-post - or a thoughtful article review. Length should be in the range of 500-1000 words.

Please submit as MS Word document or PDF, and again make sure your name is on the file.

Note: You are only required to submit four of these. This is intended to give you some control over your schedule. If you anticipate your work piling up in the second half of the term, you might want to get started before too long.

Marking Rubric:

Marks will be assigned based on the thoughtfulness of your commentary - is it thought-provoking? Do you build upon the reading by connecting it to your own observations? Can you situate the ideas in the writing to other ideas that you find relevant? Can you critique the ideas either on the basis of logical examination or with reference to a competing set of ideas that you feel have greater merit? And finally, can you project your own ideas with clarity, verve and style?

Assessment 4

Seminar: This Need Innovation!

Overview:

Part of what separates innovators from the rest of the world is the ability to see past the naturalized and especially the arbitrary nature of things and discern how things could be better. This assignment is aimed at cultivating that aptitude. Because this assignment comes later in the term, this does take the form of a culminating assignment in which students are expected to bring their expanded vocabulary of ideas on innovation into play in diagnosis, and to the extent they wish – prescription for how something they observe is ripe for innovation.

Instructions:

This is a short seminar of approximately 15-17 minutes, intended for delivery to the other students. These will be delivered back to back in a fairly tightly scheduled bunch near the end of term. Students are expected to prepare a presentation (prezi, keynote, ppt) to support the seminar.

Because of time constraints during these classes, students are asked to upload their seminar presentations to the drop-box folder so that all content is already available in the LEARN dropbox one day prior to the presentation.

Marking Rubric:

The quality of the insight into the innovation gap, the quality of the presentation of the ideas, and the connection of the discussion to theories and terms discovered over the term will be the three key factors in assessment.

Assessment 5

Mind Map Phase 2

Overview: This activity is intended to help you consolidate, organize and display the knowledge and perspective you have gained over the course of the term.

Instructions: Refer to if you wish, but do not re-use the original mind map you created. Use Prezi once again, follow the same instructions as before around creating a mind map, pasting the URL in a document and uploading the document to the dropbox provided. This assignment is due at the end of term, before exams begin. It should be seen as a culminating assignment that represents the new synthesis of your understanding of innovation.

Marking Rubric:

One important aspect of this mind-map is to return to the question identified in your first version – and this time –provide some commentary on what you have learned about the answer to that question (or how that question could have been improved.)

This assignment also gives you an opportunity to call the instructor’s attention to discussions where you brought insight or leadership to the class discussion – and so the marks for this assignment are in part a proxy for classroom participation.

Late Work

You are a graduate student. The instructor’s expectation is that you got this far by managing your time effectively.

Information on Plagiarism Detection

It will be very hard to spoof any of the assignments for this course.

Electronic Device Policy

Sitting in a classroom with other graduate students, united by common interests is a rare privilege. Please don’t fritter that away, or dishonour your fellow students by distracting yourself with social media or other such things in class. In general, I’ll expect you to turn wifi off, unless there is a reason to fire it up to support the discussion.

Attendance Policy

Much of the best part of the learning of this class will be experience driven, and impossible to gather by looking at class notes. If you don't show up – you won't learn as much – and you won't contribute as much to the learning of your peers.

Institutional-required statements for undergraduate course outlines approved by Senate Undergraduate Council, April 14, 2009

Academic Integrity

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity Webpage \(https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/\)](https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/) and the [Arts Academic Integrity Office Webpage \(http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/current-undergraduates/academic-responsibility\)](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/current-undergraduates/academic-responsibility) for more information.

Grievance

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4 \(https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70\)](https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70). When in doubt please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing academic offenses and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71, Student Discipline \(http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm\)](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties \(http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm\)](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm).

Appeals

A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals \(http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm\)](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm).

Note for Students with Disabilities

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.