

University of Waterloo, Stratford Campus, Masters In Digital Experience Innovation

Winter 2019 MDEI 625: The Innovation Course

Mondays, 5:00 to 8:00 PM, rm 3129

Instructor Information

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Course Description

This is a reading, discussion, workshopping and seminar course designed to prepare MDEI students to contribute in professional settings where “innovation” is a key success factor.

The course is oriented by a perspective that given today’s rate of change, fluency with the key topics of the innovation discourse, an understanding of the typical barriers to innovation, and a basic tool-kit of skills to overcome these barriers will become a valuable, albeit highly conceptual, career asset for MDEI graduates.

- 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 need and achievement.
- The connections between innovation, marketing, strategy, creative problem-solving process, “insight” and customer experience will be explored through lecture and discussions.
- A practical tool-kit for creative problem-solving will be developed through a series of in-class lessons and workshop activities.
- We will spend some time on the enemies of innovation: constraints, behaviors, belief systems, and dynamics that prevent innovation from happening at the pace or level required.

- Particular attention will be devoted to the capacity to sniff out belief systems that stand as a mute barrier to innovation.
- The readings for the course will familiarize students with a group of theorists who have made notable observations relevant to the topic innovation.
- Since innovation, by its nature, tends to resist reduction to a finite set of facts or 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 weekly assigned reading load for the course will take the form of essays and chapters that, generally speaking, 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.
- Successful innovators win others to their point of view. The culminating assignment for DEI 625 is a day-long conference in which students present talks akin in duration to a TED-talk.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

The four learning objectives for the course are as follows:

1. To become more literate, through reading and discussion, 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.
4. To add to your skill-set an inventory of resources 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.
- C. Anticipate constraints and barriers to innovation
- D. Draw upon an inventory of heuristics and techniques to facilitate innovation

Readings

Instead of a textbook, the course schedule specifies a series of essays to be read as preparation for each class. These essays will be available through the LEARN 625 site. Consider the mastery of these readings in preparation for class as the minimum viable reading effort for this course.

The course schedule matches each week's class with a book title from the innovation literature. Reading from this list is, for the most part, optional, but students who wish to get the most from the course will delve into these titles as time allows.

Extended Reading List

There is an extended reading list for the course also included in the Syllabus. You may find this of some value as you undertake research to complete your assignments.

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

Your Mind Map of Innovation with a Critical Thinking Question	Due Jan 14	5%
This Is Innovative! Short Seminar	Schedule to be Assigned	15%
Commentary on Readings (2)	Wrap by March 18	30%
Seminar: This Need Innovation!	April 1	30%
Reflection on Your Mind Map Question	April 1	10%
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Individual Assessments Sub-Total		90%
Classroom/Workshop Participation		10%
<u>Total</u>		<u>100%</u>

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 just 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. (You can do that by uploading a document with the link or by 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 you care to share about yourself that might be helpful for your instructor in guiding the classroom conversation in your direction (for instance, undergrad major, industries you have worked in, countries you have lived in, notable hobbies & pursuits 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! Short 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. This part is important to your mark, so please don't ignore it. Make some retrospective notes containing your recollection of the seminar discussion, and upload those appended to your mini-seminar slide presentation to the LEARN drop box folder associated with this assignment.

Include your name (and if you wish your photo) in the presentation title page.

Your commentary should focus on what you learned from the discussion - both with respect to the topic, and with respect to your facilitation of the conversation.

Marking Rubric:

Marks will be assigned based on (a) the quality of your preparation and (b) the quality of your presentation and facilitation, (c) the thoughtfulness of your follow-up notes.

Assessment 3a, 3b: 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.

An article 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 weekly 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 an in-depth commentary on, or reaction to just two (2) 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 1000-1200 words.

Please submit as Google Doc, or PDF, and again make sure your name is on the file.

Note: You are only required to submit two of these. This is intended to give you some control over your schedule. Since other assignments will pile up in the second half of the term, you may want to get started soon.

Marking Rubric:

Each of the two commentaries will be marked out of a possible 10 marks. Marks will be assigned based these qualities:

- Is it thought-provoking?
- Do you build upon the reading by making connections to other relevant theory ? (hint: think about drawing connections to readings from the extended reading list)
- Did you go beyond summary and demonstrate a critical appreciation for the ideas?
- Did you project your ideas with clarity and style?

Assessment 4

Seminar: This Need Innovation!

Overview:

Part of what separates innovators from the rest of the world is the ability to find their own problems: 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, it serves as 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. From the standpoint of skills development, this is an individual presentation, in which you will be assessed for your ability to construct an argument, support it with presentation media, and deliver it persuasively.

Instructions:

This is a short seminar of 17 minutes duration (same duration as a TED talk), intended for delivery to the other students. These will be delivered back to back in a conference day at the end of term. Students are expected to prepare a presentation (prezi, keynote, ppt) to support the seminar.

IMPORTANT: Because of time constraints during the seminar day, students are asked to upload their seminar presentations to the LEARN dropbox folder by 5:00 PM Friday March 29. Also - out of respect for your fellow classmates, if you do anticipate a conflict between work obligations and attendance for the full duration of this conference day, please make alternative arrangements so that everyone gets to present to a full room.

Marking Rubric:

The presentations will be evaluated on:

- the quality of the insight into the innovation gap,
- the connection of the discussion to theories and terms discovered over the term
- skills exhibited in making a persuasive and engaging presentation

Assessment 5

Reflection on your initial critical thinking question about innovation.

Overview: This short reflective essay (800-1200 words) is intended to help you consolidate, organize and display the knowledge and perspective you have gained over the course of the term.

This assignment is due at the end of term, before exams begin. It should be seen as an opportunity to bring a new synthesis of your understanding of innovation to your original question.

You are encouraged to go back to your original mind-map as a starting point for this assignment, and offer a critical reflection on the categories, connections, and assumptions that went into that map. Is the original question still relevant or would you substitute it with another? If the question stands, would your way of answering it change in light of your learnings over the term? If so how?

Marking Rubric:

Assignments that reflect a growth in perspective and make connections between discussions, readings, and personal discoveries achieved over the term will be favoured over those that do not.

Lecture and Required Reading Schedule

Required readings will be posted in the Content section of the 625 LEARN site as PDFs. These are typically only the length of an HBR article and students are urged to read before class to provide a shared context for discussion.

Week	Date	Topic Explored	Readings
1	Jan 7	Introductions, Course Overview	
2	Jan 14	Innovation - needed & harder than it looks	Min Basadur, Leading others to think innovatively together
3	Jan 21	Sense-making: Overlooked At Peril	David Snowden, A leader's framework
4	Jan 28	Defining innovation problems	Drucker: The Theory of the Business
5	Feb 11	Who are we innovating for?	Clay Christensen: Marketing Malpractice

6	Feb 18	FAMILY DAY/READING WEEK	
7	Feb 25	Innovation Barriers and Biases	Martin: Reliability and Validity
8	March 4	Innovation and Creativity	De Bono, Serious Creativity
9	March 11	Innovation and the Business Model	Chakravorti, New Rules for Bringing Innovations To Market
10	March 18	Gaining Acceptance for Innovation	James March, The Technology of Foolishness
11	March 25	Marketing Innovation	Play Bigger, Chapter 2: Category is the new Strategy
12	April 1	Mini Conference FINAL PRESENTATIONS	

In-Class Workshops

A new feature of MDEI 625 for 2019 will be an in-class workshop component that will involve a persistent case and a persistent set of teams advancing through an innovation challenge in stages. The “Practice” column below provides an overview of the ground we’ll cover here.

Date	Lecture	Practice
Jan 7	Introductions, Course Overview	Instructions on CSP Profiles
Jan 14	Innovation - needed & harder than it looks	In-Class Groups Assigned
Jan 21	Sense-making: Overlooked At Peril	Problem Finding
Jan 28	Defining innovation problems	Challenge Mapping
Feb 11	Who are we innovating for?	Mental Models of the Customer
Feb 18	FAMILY DAY/READING WEEK	
Feb 25	Innovation Barriers and Biases	Jobs to Be Done
March 4	Innovation and Creativity	Possibility-Oriented Thinking
March 11	Innovation and the Business Model	Telescoping

March 18	Gaining Acceptance for Innovation	Value Proposition design
March 25	Marketing Innovation	Brand Storytelling

Enrichment Reading

Students who want to take their DEI 625 experience to another level can do so by reading more deeply around the curriculum. The Enrichment Reading column below matches book titles to the sequence we'll cover in lecture and workshop content.

Date	Lecture	Recommended Enrichment Reading
Jan 7	Introductions, Course Overview	
Jan 14	Innovation - needed & harder than it looks	Where Good Ideas Come From
Jan 21	Sense-making: Overlooked At Peril	A More Beautiful Question
Jan 28	Defining innovation problems	The Logic of Failure
Feb 11	Who are we innovating for?	Marketing Metaphoria
Feb 18	FAMILY DAY/READING WEEK	Thinking Fast and Slow
Feb 25	Innovation Barriers and Biases	A Primer on Decision-making
March 4	Innovation and Creativity	Creativity, Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention
March 11	Innovation and the Business Model	Play Bigger
March 18	Gaining Acceptance for Innovation	Business Model Generation
March 25	Marketing Innovation	The Hero and The Outlaw
April 1	Mini Conference FINAL PRESENTATIONS	

Extended Reading List

The extended reading list below, is offered to students as a resource to draw upon in completing the assignments, and also for developing literacy on the topic of innovation.

All of these are well-regarded additions to a library of literature on innovation

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

THE 46 RULES OF GENIUS An Innovator's Guide to Creativity
Marty Neumeier, 2014.

Best Practices are Stupid. 40 Ways to Out Innovate the Competition
Stephen Shapiro, 2011

Escape Velocity. Geoffrey Moore, 2011

A More Beautiful Question, The Power of Enquiry to Spark Breakthrough Ideas
Warren Berger, 2014

Platform Revolution: How Networked Markets Are Transforming the Economy--and How to
Make Them Work for You.,Choudary, Sangeet Paul; Van Alstyne, Marshall W.; Parker, Geoffrey
G., W. W. Norton & Company

Play Bigger: How Pirates, Dreamers, and Innovators Create and Dominate Markets,
Ramadan, Al; Peterson, Dave; Lochhead, Christopher; Maney, Kevin. HarperCollins.

The Four Lenses of Innovation: A Power Tool for Creative Thinking
Gibson, Rowan. Wiley.

Policies Etc.

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 opportunity. Please don't 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>). 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>). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#) (<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>).

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.