

Draft syllabus

## **SISE 6100: A Transdisciplinary Social Innovation Toolkit for Graduate Students**

GCHB 6XXXX

**Thursdays, 5:30-8:00 PM, Spring 2018**

**3 credits**

**Location:** Taylor Center Design Thinking Studio, Howard Tilton Mem. Library (uptown campus) 4<sup>th</sup> floor

**Instructor:** Laura Murphy, PhD, GCHB & Taylor Center; [lmurphy2@tulane.edu](mailto:lmurphy2@tulane.edu)

**Office hours:** TBD

### **1) Course Description**

The course offers graduate students a rich theoretical foundation and curated set of practical skills that comprise a “social innovation toolkit”: systems thinking, human-centered design (HCD), entrepreneurial thought, and systems leadership. This “social innovation toolkit” complements disciplinary graduate training in any professional programs aiming for practice (MPH, MSW, MBA, March, JD, MD) as well as more scholarly degree programs (e.g., MA, PhD) aiming for academic careers.

Social innovation as a practice is about finding a “novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals” (Phills, Deiglmeier and Miller, 2008).

The task of identifying social innovations for persistent environment, health, and development problems that we face is immense; such as reaching “last mile” rural locations here and around the world with healthier food, access to finance, reliable communications, and health services and goods. There are increasingly complex health and well-being challenges brought by our changing global climate and its wide-ranging impacts in the short term (heat waves, more extreme storm events) and longer term (rising sea levels, loss of habitat).

Addressing these types of challenges call for “T-shaped” people who possess both deep technical knowledge of a subject area (the vertical), and a broad base of practical knowledge about the world and how to collaborate effectively and creatively with others with different backgrounds and training (horizontal bar).

This new course fills this need by reaching graduate students with a professional, practical, intellectual toolkit of mindsets (ways of thinking about the world) and tangible, practical skills that draw from the established fields of social entrepreneurship and social innovation.

The core and heart of the course is **design thinking** as a specific approach to problem-solving. HCD offers a creative, collaborative, and human-focused, “user-centered” approach to discovering new solutions that work to make lives better. The ultimate end-users in this case are poor, marginalized, vulnerable people—our beneficiaries. (There are other “users” among the many stakeholders in international aid, community-based development practice, food security, health services delivery, as well as in higher education and academic scholarship.)

The course integrates training in design-thinking (via the Fast 48) with a framework to consider: What are problems worth solving? How can we better understand problems and reframe them to address real issues? Students gain a deep appreciation for and tacit knowledge of how to apply and improve upon the process of design-thinking, or human-centered design (HCD).

One way is by cultivating adaptive, flexible, constructive **systems leaders**, recognizing that societal challenges we face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century call for newer forms of leadership than the conventional “hero-out-front” leadership styles. Systems leaders are grounded in deep listening, surfacing problems with and for beneficiaries, and asset-(strengths) based thinking, management, and team-building. Systems leaders can embrace complexity, interconnectedness, feedback and incertitude, and adopt an ecosystem way of thinking and metaphors, rather than machine or linear metaphors.

Finally, students will be exposed at a basic level to a range of 21<sup>st</sup> century (iterative, technology and crowd-sourced) **business thinking and strategy**. They will learn about a few common entrepreneurial tools (like Lean Launch Pad and business model canvas) and communication modes (pitch competitions). Students will learn to identify opportunities in the private and public domains so as to build feasible operations/ business strategies that work in a globally connected world and that can (at least in part) pay for themselves via partnerships and revenue streams.

## 2) Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be equipped with practical skills and theoretical knowledge to function as T-shaped individuals to help solve problems (in professional global health and development settings in particular). Specifically, students will be able to:

- Apply human-centered design processes and methods to address specific design challenges
- Articulate a complexity-based worldview or “ecosystems thinking” and explain implications for action in their disciplinary domain (public health, art, communications, social work, business), acknowledging the larger social-political-economic-technical-environmental systems that reinforce social inequalities and environmental problems
- Visualize these relationships via system mapping and identify relevant and potential points of intervention and their logic, via a theory of change
- Embody and demonstrate systems leadership as a generative way to recruit and lead teams for design-led problem-solving
- Build appropriate, diverse teams (including from our target communities) and work together more effectively and quickly, via time-management and parallel work.
- Understand the value of bringing creative business strategy tools to think about revenues and costs while aiming for social impact (in their sector)
- Communicate ideas effectively and quickly using verbal, visual, and in written modes as appropriate for the purpose and audiences.

### Intended Audience for this course

This “Social Innovation Toolkit will serve graduate students from any professional or academic program who have a sincere interest in acquiring “changemaking” skillsets for identifying social innovations and solving wicked problems. Professional graduate students from fields of public health, social work, architecture, business, law, and medicine, will find it offers directly relevant, complementary, and employable skills recognized by employers around the world. The course is also appropriate for doctoral

students and scholars who are seeking an applied research and community-engaged/-based teaching and research career. The course will enable the student to integrate his/her academic, critical theory stance and project with solution-oriented practice. To this end, students in Tulane's CCC program, Latin American Studies, GCHB, and the Mellon Scholars will be interested and welcome.

To reiterate, envisioned career outcomes that will be better supported for these students by taking this class include:

- For Professional students acquire skills and experience to be better equipped for jobs as change-leaders within domestic and international agencies, foundations, non-profit organizations and businesses, working to lead institutional change and to improve services for people. These agencies include UNICEF, UNCHR, Gates, USAID, Deloitte, many large international NGOs, and private sector contractors, research institutes and implementing agencies. Domestically, the Office of Personnel Management and other government institutions (from cities to the VA hospital to USAID), plus many NGOs, and firms value a social innovation toolkit. Global design firms (i.e., IDEO, frog design, ThinkImpact, ReBoot) seek subject-matter experts with deep expertise in a subject matter area (e.g., community health), where familiarity with design thinking will give them an edge.
- For Students seeking an academic career as full-time faculty, researcher, and scholar will develop their own research agenda and a more coherent approach to community-engagement within their discipline--one that intentionally recognizes and embodies lessons and experiences from the social innovation literatures and changemaking fields. They will be better equipped for these professional and applied research positions with the above agencies who hire PhDs. They will be prepared to sign on to academic/faculty roles in changemaker campuses (like Tulane, Brown, Middlebury, UCSD, and others in the Ashoka U network) and from that position, to design and lead innovative, design-led community-engaged programs in higher education.

### **3) Course Format**

The course will run as a hybrid of academic seminar (around theories and critical thinking) plus hands-on practice to build skills (design- and systems- thinking workshops). Thus, it will be both (1) theoretical, ideas-rich seminar with readings, lectures, examples, and discussions around social innovation as a specific approach to societal problem-solving, and (2) engaged workshops to learn design methods, systems-thinking, etc.).

In class: we will discuss and critically review a selection of theoretical arguments (spanning epistemological, ontological and normative theories of social change) and "evidence-based" literature (i.e., actual project evaluations, developmental evaluation). The focus will be sharing real-life applications of the social innovation in/for global health and development and related fields. Outside class time students will read, write, view media, conduct fieldwork, and work together in teams (as appropriate).

Given diverse student schedules, the course will meet in the evenings, once a week, for about 3 hours per meeting.

Location: The course will meet in the Taylor Center DT studio space, with other locations used as needed. For example: The Fast 48 bootcamp will take place over a weekend (March 16-18) and includes fieldwork in Central City.

#### 4) Assignments and Assessments

Students will be assessed based on performance on (up to 7-8 total) short writing assignments, Fast 48 workshop participation, a final project, plus informed seminar and lecture attendance and discussion. There will be complementary self- and peer-assessments for class activities.

**Seminar Participation (15%):** Students will be expected to do all the reading and attend all classes including special lectures or guest speakers and to be informed and prepared for discussion.

**Short writing assignments: (30%)** Up to eight (8) short written assignments will include essays, book/article review, memo, photo essay. The student will aim to digest, understand, consolidate, and apply the material at hand. These will be used to assess students' knowledge according to the materials and discussions in class. See rubric (to follow) to guide students and clarify assessment.

**Design Workshop (30%):** All students will prepare for and participate actively in the March 16-18 2018 Fast 48 design-thinking for social impact workshop. The Fast 48 is an immersive, hands-on, intensive weekend "bootcamp" teaching human-centered design, problem-definition, team-work, rapid ethnographic and "design research" fieldwork, rapid prototyping and testing--while addressing real problems with a real community organization. It runs Friday 6-9 PM, all day Saturday, and Sunday 12-6 PM.

**Final project (20%):** Students will integrate seminar and design workshop learning with their discipline/profession through a **final project** -- to take the form of a (proposal (for funds or research), an applied research project, and academic literature review or a design brief to kickstart design cycle, actual prototypes and testing, or a portfolio or other creative project. This could be an individual or small team project, as appropriate. Projects will be determined during the class; students do not need to have a specific problem/project in mind in advance.

**Self and peer assessment (5%):** Subjective (confidential and anonymous) assessment of student's ability to support learning of him/her self and others via preparation, informed participation, constructive engagement in the class. (rubric to follow)

#### Course Grading Scale:

	<b>A = 94-100</b>	<b>A- = 90-93</b>
<b>B+ = 87-89</b>	<b>B = 84 -86</b>	<b>B- = 80-83</b>
<b>C+ = 77-79</b>	<b>C = 74-76</b>	<b>C- = 70-73</b>
<b>D+ = 67-69</b>	<b>D = 64-66</b>	<b>D- = 60-63</b>

#### 5) Provisional Readings /Texts

A coursepack of required readings will follow. Specific books, chapters, articles, and media are listed under dates.

## 6) Additional policies and useful information

### ADA/Accessibility Statement

Any students with disabilities or other needs, who need special accommodations in this course, are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and should contact Goldman Center for Student Accessibility: <http://accessibility.tulane.edu> or 504.862.8433.

### Code of Academic Conduct

The Code of Academic Conduct applies to all undergraduate students, full-time and part-time, in Tulane University. Tulane University expects and requires behavior compatible with its high standards of scholarship. By accepting admission to the university, a student accepts its regulations (i.e., [Code of Academic Conduct](#) and [Code of Student Conduct](#)) and acknowledges the right of the university to take disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, for conduct judged unsatisfactory or disruptive.

### ONE WAVE information

Tulane University recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As such, Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence like sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing these types of behaviors, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available: you can learn more at [titleix.tulane.edu](http://titleix.tulane.edu). Any and all of your communications on these matters will be treated as either “Confidential” or “Private” as explained in the chart below. Please know that if you choose to confide in me I am mandated by the university to report to the Title IX Coordinator, as Tulane and I want to be sure you are connected with all the support the university can offer. You do not need to respond to outreach from the university if you do not want.

Confidential	Private
<i>Except in extreme circumstances, involving imminent danger to one's self or others, nothing will be shared without your explicit permission.</i>	<i>Conversations are kept as confidential as possible, but information is shared with key staff members so the University can offer resources and accommodations and take action if necessary for safety reasons</i>
Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)   (504) 314-2277 or The Line (24/7)   (504) 264-6074	Case Management & Victim Support Services   (504) 314-2160 or <a href="mailto:srss@tulane.edu">srss@tulane.edu</a>
Student Health Center   (504) 865-5255	Tulane University Police (TUPD)   Uptown (504) 865-5911. Downtown (504) 988-5531
Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education (SAPHE)   (504) 654-9543	Title IX Coordinator   (504) 865-5615 or <a href="mailto:msmith76@tulane.edu">msmith76@tulane.edu</a>

## 6) Course Calendar (schedule subject to changes)

### **Week 1, Thurs, January 18: Introduction to the class and participants**

Ways of solving social problems. The nature of our “wicked problems”. Why we need this class.

Terminology, Arc. Overview of class structure and format. Student introductions.

- Mulgan, Geoff. 2006, *The Process of Social Innovation*
- Ramalingam, Ben, *Aid on the Edge of Chaos*, complexity, aid, types of problems
- Readings: Dani Papi-Thornton, *Beyond Heropreneurship*, 4<sup>th</sup> wave social innovation and changemaking
- Activity, impromptu networking (personal and professional trajectory, motivation for taking class, social/environmental problem of interest)

### **Week 2, Jan 25: Design Thinking Introductory workshop #1**

- Background readings/viewings: The MRI Machine Redesign, TedTalk; David Kelley, *Creative Confidence* and Vechakul, et al 2016, HCD application for community health and empowerment in Oakland, CA
- 90-minute Activity-Workshop: Paired crash course in human-centered design & Reflection

Assignment 1: 2-3 page essay due approx. 1/30 on complex systems, wicked problems, problem-solving via design thinking vs. other disciplines: A review and reflection on readings and workshop.

### **Week 3, Feb 1: Systems thinking and complexity approaches**

- Eric Berlow, TED talk on complex systems, food webs, ecosystem metaphors
- Activity: Make Toast, System thinking exercises: HOW TO MAKE TOAST systems, nodes, connections, multiple perspectives, assumptions
- Readings: Murphy, 2017, *Navigating complexity and tackling wicked problems via design thinking*; Danny Burns, *Systems thinking and participatory development*

### **Week 4, Feb 8: Systems leadership for social change**

- System leadership for Social Innovations: Senge, Hamilton, Kania, 2015 “Dawn of System Leadership”, SSIR
- Asset-based leadership: Share and discuss individual Strengthsquest diagnostic and discussion around asset-based thinking for leadership and team work
- Examples of social entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, changemaking
- Applications via Social Lab model: Hassan, Zaid, *Social Labs* handbook

Assignment #2: 2-page essay on social intrapreneurship and systems leadership, and how/where you might actually fit within a large organization to promote positive change.

### **Week 5, Feb 15: Social Entrepreneurial and Social Intrapreneurial Business Skills**

- Examples of business strategy, business models, budgets, revenue streams for social ventures. Business-thinking for the changemaker
- Materials: GDYF budgets, mission, organizational structure
- Field activity: Scout out and document by cellphone camera and notes, at least 3 different actual or potential business models + strategy (and revenue streams) in the Mardi Gras parades and affiliated activities.

Assignment #3: Construct a short photo essay of 2-3 photos and captions from the field activity over Mardi Gras season demonstrating business strategies.

**Week 6, Feb 22: Theory of Change, The Problem (identification, definition, analysis)**

Readings: Wicked problems, Theory of Change, Methods of Gap analysis. Apprentice with a problem (Papi-Thornton). Activity: Theory of change and logical framework and system map. Gap analysis for 1) individual problem and 2) team- or class-based problem.

**Week 7, March 1: Discussion and critique of leading examples of social innovation**

Cases: Grameen Bank and micro-finance, Carbon trading and emissions permits, Micro-solar lanterns in rural Africa. Organizations: GDYF NOLA, Propeller incubator, others TBD. Discussion around: Theory of change? Social Innovation? System-thinking? Leadership models? Business models? Scale? What is the problem?

**Week 8, March 15: Design Thinking for Social Impact**

Preparation for the Fast 48 bootcamp weekend, 3/16-18, a workshop to teach human-centered design for social impact mindsets and methods via field immersion, observation, empathy tools, trans-disciplinary problem-solving, team work and team synthesis, group brainstorming, solo ideation, parallel rapid prototyping, user feedback.

- Partner organization and design brief
- Ethics and community-based design research vs/and Research
- Handling field notes, documentation, photography: hints and practice

**3/16 - 3/18 The Fast 48 Weekend workshop**

ALL students participate ALL weekend: Friday PM, Saturday, Sunday afternoon

**Week 9, March 22: Debrief on Fast 48 weekend**

- Reflection on design thinking as: mindsets, methods, process, modes
- Relationship of HCD to social innovation, entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship
- Community-based fieldwork, action research, rapid methods vs/and "Research"
- Time management, iterations, team work, and parallel work
- Rapid Prototyping (vs pilot project), process, technique
- Reflection on actual solutions/ideas for partner and next steps

Assignment #4: Short essay, photo-essay, blog post or other product on the Fast 48 weekend from subjective, disciplinary point of view. What does design bring to my discipline?

**March 29: No class, spring break**

Prepare for projects; catch up on all readings

**Week 10, April 5: Project work, form teams, narrow problem area**

The "25/10" class activity for idea generation + open space technology to form into small teams with common themes and problem areas. Possible directions: the Fast 48 challenge follow-up. Design Practicum projects (for MPH students). Explore dissertation topics. Work on climate change action, etc.

Assignment 5: Proposal and outline of final project, topic, partner, context, problem

**Week 11, April 12: Open/Student-led activity and discussion**

Readings TBD

**Week 12, April 19:**                    **Open/Student-led activity and discussion**

Readings TBD

Assignment #6: Short observation paper on group projects, discussions (TBD)

**Week 13, April 26:**                    **Student presentations, round 1**

Readings TBD

**Week 14:**                                **Exam period student presentations, round 2**

Assignment #7: Reflection on final projects and the social innovation toolkit