PHIL 722 A/B: Design Thinking, Innovation and Collaboration in Philosophical Research (and Beyond)

Professor Sandra Lapointe

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Schedule

Tuesday 12:30-4:30pm, every second Tuesday from September 12th until April 9th

Office hours: Tuesdays 11am-12pm, in University Hall 310A (Appointment required)

Description

The aim of this project-based and experiential graduate course is to provide students with the conceptual toolkits and knowledge they need to increase the impact of their current and future research in academic contexts and beyond, and thus enhance their employability both in academia and in the "real world". Students will:

- Acquire valuable knowledge and conceptual tools for **strategic leadership, communications, collaborations, conflict resolution and EDI**
- Learn to work in teams, and acquire tools for **effective collaborative and interdisciplinary research**
- Acquire the basic tools of **consulting**, i.e. of applying their research skills to provide solutions and evidence for real world decision-making
- Learn to **articulate and communicate the value of foundational skills** such as e.g., critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving they are developing as part of their graduate training and beyond
- Learn to think about **institutional complexity and systems** to create change
- gain a better understanding of the role of social and human research in "**social innovation",** and what that means
- Learn how to **apply design processes** in research contexts and beyond

Expectations and Assessment

This course is designed to bolster graduate training by introducing new tools and methods that increase the impact of academic research. But the course is also designed to create a learning environment that is psychologically safe, inclusive and collaborative.

You are not expected to be familiar with the topics or terms like 'project charter' and 'theory of change': you will learn to use and appreciate the value of these conceptual tools and other new approaches as we progress.

Readings

You will be expected to engage with readings, in advance of the class meetings. You should set aside 1-2 hours per week for these readings. These readings will bear on the use of the tools, and provide context. The seminar is an opportunity to hone skills that are best learned through doing, in collaborative settings.

Group Work

The reason why expectations as regards readings are comparatively lower than in other graduate course is that our objective is to build skills that require interactions with others. Class meetings will revolve around both learning and applying knowledge. You will be introduced to new concepts, approaches and methods and expected to apply them as part of a group activities/assignments. On average, at least 2 hours will be dedicated to working on your projects, in team or in pairs in the classroom. Some of the projects will extend over several weeks, to give you the time to meet with your teams and learn in a meaningful manner. You will be expected to complete some activities and work on group projects outside of the classroom and you should be prepared to meet with your team on a regular basis.

Evaluation

The course is Pass/Fail. **To pass the course**, you will need to demonstrate that you have mastered the tools and methods introduced by submitting "deliverables" associated with a series of projects on which you will be working in teams over the course of the year. The project work is also expected to meet a standard deemed acceptable by the instructor, and opportunities will be given to students to revise and improve project when relevant.

Here is the list of deliverables:

Deliverables	Deadline
Certificate of Completion for the 4 Foundational Collaborative Skills Training e-modules	By September 18, 2023
Project charter	Before December 15th
Skills Assessment and Literacy Reflection	
Executive Summary	
Theory of Change	Before April 6th
Stakeholder Map	
Policy Brief	
5 Individual Reflections (max 1 page)	TBD

If you do not participate fully in group activities or fail to submit an assignment, your participation will be judged incomplete.