

Social Innovator's Tool Box

Lead Instructor

Lisa R. Jackson, Ph.D. | 617-420-2460
lisa.jackson@collegeforsocialinnovation.org

Course Overview

This course will expose students to the concepts and practices associated with social innovation and social entrepreneurship – i.e., the development and growth of new, sustainable, and scalable approaches to the major social economic, and environmental challenges facing society. Students will learn a variety of tools and methods used for the development, implementation, management, and assessment of social solutions that they will be able to use over the course of their careers.

This course provides the theoretical foundation and academic counterpart to the Social Innovation Fellowship and Social Innovation Fellowship Workshops. The course will emphasize the systemic, interdisciplinary, and often cross-sector nature of both the problems and their solutions.

As a course rooted in the social sciences, students will learn some basic concepts of social science methodology and data collection techniques and analysis. This will be important to support their ability to read, understand, and interpret some of the research and data driven materials we plan to use in the course. In addition, there will be an emphasis put on using a systems approach to understanding the complexity of the social issues we will cover. While students' internships will provide one context for their understanding of social issues, the course will aim to provide the broader cultural, community, and societal contexts relevant to how issues arose and what solutions are the most likely to succeed.

Student learning will be assessed through a set of writing assignments and a group project with writing and presentation components. As a seminar course, students will experience the course as highly participatory and interactive, experiential and dynamic. Students will actively engage with instructors and each other on the complex social issues facing our society using a variety of sources including texts and articles, cases, video, and guest speakers.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course students should be able to:

- Identify and understand complex social, economic, and environmental issues, the context in which these issues have arisen, and the stakeholders involved;
- Demonstrate knowledge of different levers of change and the role of social innovation in solving social problems;
- Apply a variety of tools including theory of change and root cause analysis to define social problems and propose solutions; and
- Effectively demonstrate improved competencies in communication, generating insights and recognizing patterns in data, and identifying social problems and assessing the efficacy of solutions.

What to Expect

I will use a combination of teaching methods during the course including lectures, guided and facilitated group discussions, student presentation, and guest speakers. I will also draw on a variety of resources for the course including videos, cases, traditional texts, articles and interviews.

The Semester in the City's standard grade for meeting expectations is a B/B+. What this means is that if you do what is required in this course, the Social Innovator's Tool Box, and/or your Internship, the grade you will receive will be either a B or B+. An A grade in any component of the program represents a student's work and effort that *exceeds* expectations. For course assignments and grading we will provide you with rubrics and samples to help you understand what is required to meet expectations and what is required to exceed those expectations. We do take a competency-based approach, which means that you are encouraged to take feedback and coaching and try again if you are not pleased with your initial results or grade on a project.

What's Expected of YOU

Show Up!

- It is essential that you attend all course meetings.
- When in class, participate fully! Ask questions, offer ideas, get out of your comfort zone, and *put away your tech!*

Be Prepared & Ask Questions!

- Critical to success in this course is that you ask questions. This includes questions for clarification, questions to learn more, questions that help the large group learn more, and questions that demonstrate you are critically thinking about an issue or topic.
- Being prepared means not asking questions about information available in the syllabus because you've already read it (unless it is a clarification question), responding when asked a question about the pre-work required because you have done it and engaged with it, and paying attention to what is happening during class.

Be a Partner

- Powerful learning communities accelerate all participants' growth and development. Take responsibility for making the class the best it can be – for yourself and the other students.
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Course Schedule

Date	Location*	Theme for the Day	Provocative Question	Readings Due
Sept. 13	Conference Center East	What is a social problem?	How can the same problem look different to different people? What are examples of social problems that have been solved in your lifetime?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Papi-Thorton, D. (2016). <i>Tackling Heropreneurship</i> (http://tacklingheropreneurship.com/) 2. Best, J. (2008). <i>Social Problems</i>, pp. 3-16. W.W. Norton and Company.
Sept 20	Conference Center East	Tools for Understanding and Solving Social Problems	What causes a social problem? What problem(s) is your organization trying to solve?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to conduct a root cause analysis (2012). (http://www.thehealthcompass.org/how-to-guides/how-conduct-root-cause-analysis) 2. Childhood obesity prevention (2011)
Sept. 27	Community Room	Tools for Understanding and Solving Social Problems	How do you know your solution to a problem is the best solution? How can you test whether a solution is working?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Theory of Change Basics: A primer on theory of change (2012). 2. Guided examples: Project Superwoman (2003).
Oct. 4	Community Room	Lever for Change and Social Innovation	How do you know social innovation when you see it? Under what circumstances might social innovation produce winners as well as losers?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Phillis Jr., J., Deiglmeier, K., Miller, D. (2008). <i>Rediscovering Social Innovation</i>. Stanford Social Innovation Review. Leland Stanford University. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/rediscovering_social_innovation
Oct. 11	Video Conference Room	Understanding data in context	How can the same data tell two completely different stories? Can the use of data ever be truly objective?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Best, J. (2004). <i>Magical numbers, in Damned Lies and Statistics</i>. University of California Press.
Oct. 18	Community Room	Putting data to use	Are we helping and how do we know?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fruchterman, J. (Summer, 2016). <i>Using data for action and for impact</i>. Stanford Social Innovation Review. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/using_data_for_action_and_for_impact
Oct. 25	TBD	In-Class Midterm		
Nov. 1	Community Room	Opportunity, Equity and Equality – The American Dream	What are the most important indicators of opportunity and why?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leonhardt, D. (2016). <i>The American dream, quantified at last</i>. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/08/opinion/the-american-dream-quantified-at-last.html 2. Opportunity Nation (2014). <i>Opportunity since 1970: A historical report</i>. https://opportunitynation.org/history-of-opportunity/

Date	Location*	Theme for the Day	Provocative Question	Readings Due
Nov. 8	East Room	Economic Opportunity	Assuming a society with varied economic outcomes, what should be our goals for economic opportunity?	1. Asante-Muhammad, D., Collins, C., Hoxie, J., & Nieves, E. (2016). <i>The ever-growing gap: Without change, African American and Latino families won't match white wealth for centuries</i> . CFED and Institute for Policy Studies. http://www.ips-dc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/The-Ever-Growing-Gap-CFED_IPS-Final-2.pdf
Nov. 15	Community Room	Human Rights: Human Trafficking	How do the values of different cultures inform how we define human rights? How do we ensure the human rights of everyone?	1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/)
Nov. 22		NO CLASS		
Nov. 29	Community Room	Environmental Sustainability	Using an ecosystem perspective, what are opportunities to affect the challenges of environmental sustainability?	1. Nidumolu, R., Prahalad, C.K., & Rangaswami, M.R. (2009). <i>Why sustainability is now the key drive of innovation</i> . Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2009/09/why-sustainability-is-now-the-key-driver-of-innovation
Dec. 6	TBD	Public Education in the US: Equality and Equity	What are we trying to accomplish with our public education system?	1. Center for Public Education (2016). <i>Educational equity: What does it mean? How do we know when we reach it?</i> http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/educationalequity
Dec. 13	Community Room	Class Summary and Final Paper Submission		

Assignments and Grading

You will be assigned a letter grade based on the following requirements and assignments. Additional details about assignments will be provided in class and on Schoology. Grading rubrics are also provided in Schoology.

Category	Details	% of Grade
Attendance and Class Participation	Showing up matters! Active class participation includes coming prepared, and participating in whole and small group discussions.	10%
In-Class Assignments	There are three in-class assignments across the semester each worth 10%: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Theory of Change Practice2. Insights through Data Practice3. Opportunity Profile	30%
Midterm: Data Driven Insights Assignment	Using the data provided, students will develop a set of recommendations for the Mayor of Boston regarding the sites he should select for a working garden summer initiative he is launching. Students will identify the number and location of sites they recommend, an explanation of why they recommend those sites based on their use of the data provided, and develop a logic model for the program identifying what indicators should be tracked to determine the program's progress. This assignment will be done in-class and requires students to bring their laptops to do the assignment and submit it at the end of class.	30%
Final Assignment: Impact Gap Analysis	Using the Impact Gap Analysis tools from <i>Tackling Heropreneurship</i> , students will conduct a Challenge Map and Solution Map demonstrating their ability to define a problem in context and generate insights from existing solutions. Students will also generate a recommendation for future solutions based on their analysis. The report will be submitted in PowerPoint slides and presented in class.	30

* Excused Absences: If you need to miss a session, communicate with the instructor in advance. She may or may not approve the absence, depending on the reason given. In the case that an absence is excused, it will be your responsibility to work with the instructor to get any missed assignments, notes, etc. from your classmates, and to find a creative way to make up any missed assignments graded towards participation.