

Social Innovation Syllabus

Course Code

MNGT-E3003

Credits

6 ECTS

Instructor

Myrto Chliova

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Office Location

X210

Office Hours

Email me for appointment

Teaching Assistant

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Course Overview

Social innovation, namely the creation of social value through innovative activities, is a topic of growing interest across organizational areas. It is being practiced increasingly by social enterprises and non-profit organizations, by small and large companies, by the public sector, and by informally organized citizen groups. Areas can include the inclusion of vulnerable or marginalized groups in society and in the workforce, the alleviation of poverty, and the creation of collective benefits for communities at large. Social innovation is nevertheless a challenging objective, as multiple tensions need to be assessed and balanced in order to achieve success on these fronts.

Intended learning outcomes

After completing this course, you should be able to:

1. Identify and discuss competently social innovation initiatives that are taking place across sectors such as the corporate, startup, nonprofit, citizen, and government sector.
2. Analyze competently tensions between the pursuit of social and pragmatic (e.g., financial) objectives in social innovation initiatives and apply effectively theoretical knowledge to propose appropriate ways to resolve such tensions.
3. Acquire a thorough understanding of a concrete social problem that interests you, and generate a compelling plan for how to develop a social innovation initiative to address it.
4. Reflect deeply on the opportunities, barriers and limitations of implementing social innovation initiatives across the corporate, startup, nonprofit, citizen, and government sector.

Prerequisites

There is no prerequisite for this course, other than interest, attendance and engagement. You also need to complete the course pre-assignment by January 7th.

Contact hours

Six sessions on Tuesdays, 14.15-17.00pm Jan 9th – Feb 13th

Two sessions on Thursdays 14.15-17.00pm, Feb 1st; Feb 15th

Course readings

This course adopts a partial “flipped classroom” style, where you are expected to have gone through the respective readings prior to attending each class. Time in the classroom will be reserved for presenting additional materials, for clarifications, discussions, team presentations, case study teaching, workshops and guest speakers.

Purchasing a textbook is not necessary for completing this course. Required readings are based on articles and other material listed on MyCourses, that you can access through the Aalto library.

How to complete the course

In order to complete this course successfully you will need to do all of the following:

1. Enrol via the Oodi online platform by the official registration deadline.
2. Complete the individual pre-assignment (found on the MyCourses home page) by January 7th.
3. Attend a minimum of 5 out of 8 sessions.
4. Complete the team assignments by being active in your team, and submit and pass all team deliverables.
5. Complete the peer review at the end of the course.
6. Complete, submit and pass all individual assignments.

The scale for evaluation that will be used for the overall course grade ranges from 0-5, with 5 being the maximum grade, and 1 being the minimum pass grade. The final marks are based on the total points as follows:

50-59 points	1
60-69 points	2
70-79 points	3
80-89 points	4
90-100 points	5

Timetable and content of sessions

Week	Subject	Time and place
Week 1	What is this course about and how is it organized?	January 9 th , 14.15-17.00pm; The Stage, DF*
Week 2	What counts as social innovation and who gets to decide this?	January 16 th , 14.15-17.00pm; The Stage, DF*
Week 3	What are the trade-offs between social and financial value and how can they be balanced?	January 23 rd , 14.15-17.00pm; The Stage, DF*
Week 4	Workshop session I	January 30 th , 14.15-17.00pm; The Stage, DF*
Week 4	How can social innovations scale and how can impact be measured?	February, 1 st , 14.15-17.00pm; The Stage, DF*
Week 5	What is the dark side of social innovation?	February, 6 th , 14.15-17.00pm; The Stage, DF*
Week 6	How do social movements intersect with social innovation?	February 13 th , 14.15-17.00pm; The Stage, DF*
Week 6	Workshop session II	February, 15 th , 14.15-17.00pm; The Stage, DF*

* DF= Design Factory, K3 Building, Puumiehenkuja 5

Assessment Methods

Team assignments 49% - Individual assignments 51%.

Also, a peer evaluation will be used to adjust individual grades on the team assignments, and can result in a potential adjustment of a maximum of -1 point of the total course grade.

You are expected to submit all assignments (team and individual ones) on time and before the respective deadline. If you fail to submit any assignment on time, your grade for that assignment will be reduced by 25% for each passing day. You will no longer have an option to submit after three days have passed.

Always double-check that your assignments have been uploaded correctly on MyCourses.

Please note that the grades you receive for both the team and the individual assignments are final. Grades are non-negotiable and resubmission is not allowed. If you wish to improve your grades you need to retake the course next year.

Team Formation

We will form teams during the first class. You are encouraged to try to set clear expectations for teamwork from the beginning, and sign the symbolic “team contract” I will provide you with. It might sound silly, but it really helps to have these discussions and to manage expectations upfront.

Team assignments

As a team you will need to identify through desk research (or other means) four relevant cases of social innovation and develop them into written “mini case write-ups” of 1-2 pages long each (single spaced, 12pt font). Details on the types of cases to look for and on the types of content to include in the mini cases, are provided in the weekly assignment instructions.

You will also need to write three “commentaries” on other teams’ “mini case write-ups”. Commentaries should be approximately 1 page long each (single spaced, 12pt font). Details are provided in the weekly assignment instructions.

If time allows, your team might be called upon to briefly and informally present any of your mini cases in class, so please be mentally prepared. No other preparation needed (e.g. slides).

For both the mini case write-ups and the answers to the teaching case questions, you can find the detailed assignment instructions and submission pages on MyCourses. Deadline for submission is the end of the day prior to class.

Team assignment deadlines

Week	Subject	Deadline
Week 2	1 mini case write-up	January 15 th , 23.55pm
Week 3	1 mini case write-up & 1 commentary	January 22 nd , 23.55pm
Week 4	1 mini case write-up & 1 commentary	January, 31 st , 23.55pm
Week 6	1 mini case write-up & 1 commentary	February, 12 th , 23.55pm

Team assignment evaluation

Team assignments count collectively for 49 points, out of a maximum 100 of the total course grade – namely each submission counts for 7 points of the total course grade.

Mini case write-ups as well as commentaries will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Evidence of sufficient information supporting each case description / commentary (3/7 points)
2. Critical analysis of a specific issue of interest relevant to the case (3/7 points)
3. Reader-friendly composition (1/7 points)

Please see detailed evaluation rubric for team assignments on MyCourses.

Team peer review

To ensure that team grades reflect approximately equal effort by all team members within each team, a peer review will be conducted through MyCourses during the last session.

The peer review is meant to ensure fairness in the grading and discourage freeriding. It will affect a student's team grades in the event that they receive an overall average peer grade of less than 3.5/5.

Example: If the overall peer review score of a student is 3/5 and his team has an overall grade of 40 points in team assignments, the final grade of team assignments for that student will be $40 * 3/5 = 24$ points). However, the effect of this review on the student's total course grade in the 1-5 scale can be up to a maximum of -1 out of 5 points.

Individual assignments

There is a required individual pre-assignment to be completed prior to the course. There is also a weekly individual reflection, and a final individual report that you need to submit. Additionally, in session 5 we will discuss the Kiva case in depth during class. Prior to the session when we will do this, you need to read the respective materials individually, and complete a quiz.

You can find the detailed assignment instructions and submission pages for all individual assignments on MyCourses.

Individual assignment deadlines

Week	Subject	Deadline
Week 1	Pre-assignment	January 7 th , 23.55pm
Week 2	Weekly reflection	January 15 th , 23.55pm
Week 3	Weekly reflection	January 22 nd , 23.55pm
Week 4	Weekly reflection	January 31 st , 23.55pm
Week 5	Weekly reflection + quiz	February 5 th , 23.55pm
Week 6	Weekly reflection	February 12 th , 23.55pm
Week 7	Individual final report	February 29 th , 23.55pm

Individual assignment evaluation

The pre-assignment is mandatory for passing the course but does not count toward the course grade. The same goes for the weekly reflections, which are meant to help you prepare part of the content for the final individual assignment, and also for the quiz, which ensures you are ready to participate in the respective class activity. The individual final assignment counts for 51 points, out of a maximum 100 of the total course grade.

The final individual assignment combines action-oriented and research-oriented components.

The criteria of evaluation are the following:

1. Selection and delineation of a concrete social problem and disadvantaged group, supported by relevant background information (15/51 points)
2. Focused analysis of the most important aspects of the problem as well as on most prominent solutions to it, based on interviews with experts, archival materials and/or own experience (15/51 points)
3. Description and justification of your own point of view on the issue, as well as of the proposed future actions that you could undertake to address the social problem and overcome obstacles, based on collected information as well as class materials and discussions (15/51 points)
4. Reader-friendly composition, including writing style, flow of arguments and structure of the plan (6/51 points)

Please see detailed evaluation rubric for the final individual assignment on MyCourses.

Class etiquette

I am committed to creating a safe space for exploration, discussion and debate in my classroom. To contribute to this, let's be respectful of one another, and of our individual opinions and differences.

It is strongly recommended that you are on time for class. Please avoid eating while in class.

I strongly advise putting mobile phones out of sight and in mute mode, and keeping notes on paper, or if using a laptop, having only a single program for note-taking open. Use of devices and social media in class have been proven to be detrimental to the learning experience.

Feel free to stand up and stretch if you feel the need.

In general, class participation is not demanded or graded. However, it is encouraged, as it makes the sessions more interesting for everyone involved. There are no "stupid" questions or "wrong" opinions, so feel free to speak up if you have something to ask or share.

There is one exception to the above: the case teaching session (February 6th). Case teaching requires that students have read the case materials (in this case several online posts) prior to class, and that they actively participate in the case discussion during the class. If there are no volunteers, I might cold-call you to get the discussion going. So be prepared!

If you have any questions related to the design and delivery of the course, please consult the syllabus first. If it does not provide the answer, email us.

Feel free to approach me after the class or email me to arrange a meeting, if you are experiencing any course-related issues, including team-related issues.

We will share with you a link for submitting anonymously questions or concerns you might have that you don't want to raise in person.

We expect you to answer the team peer review honestly and to your best judgment. By taking the course you acknowledge that you will fully respect the right of other students to provide an honest and confidential peer review. The peer review is a safeguard against severe freeriding behavior. If you don't have enough time for teamwork you should not be taking this course.

If you are under excessive stress in respect to your coursework and/or grades to an extent that you cannot sleep, eat, or enjoy your life, please get in touch with the university's counselling psychologists:

<https://www.aalto.fi/en/palvelut/psychologists-service>

AI Policy

(adapted from Dr. Ethan Mollick, The Wharton School)

AI is permitted in this course, but there are certain restrictions to keep in mind:

Providing prompts with minimal effort will yield subpar results. To achieve satisfactory outcomes, you'll need to put in the effort to fine-tune your prompts.

Do not blindly accept any information the AI provides. If it presents a fact, treat it as incorrect unless you can confirm it from reliable sources or already know it to be true. You will be held accountable for any inaccuracies or oversights provided by the tool. It is most effective when used on topics you are familiar with.

While AI is a tool, it's important to acknowledge its use. Please add a paragraph to the end of any assignment that utilizes AI, detailing what you used it for and all the prompts you used to obtain the results. Failure to do so breaches academic honesty policies.

Consider carefully when this tool is beneficial. Avoid using it when it's not suitable for the situation or context.

Description of sessions and assignments

Week 1: What is this course about and how is it organized?

In this session we will first cover the course logistics, i.e. the structure, agenda and evaluation of the course. We will also start discussing what social innovation means, and develop a collective “bottom-up” definition. We will end the session with a guest speaker: Amanda Sundell, Nordic Director at Ashoka.

Teams will be formed during (and at the latest soon after) this session.

Assignments for Week 2:

- Materials to go through individually:
 1. Besharov, M., Litrico, J.-B., and Kislenko, S. (2019) The many roads to revenue generation. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall, 34-39.
 2. Seelos, B. C. and Mair, J. (2012) Innovation is not the holy grail. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall, 44-49
- Team assignment: Develop one mini case write-up following the instructions provided on MyCourses.
- Individual reflection following the instructions provided on MyCourses.

Week 2: What counts as social innovation and who gets to decide this?

In this session we will first discuss the origins of the term social innovation (and the related term of social entrepreneurship), and the types of actors that have promoted competing definitions of these terms. We will also practice identifying different types of social innovations that fit a popular conceptual framework, and also identify those that don't. We will then continue with a selected team presentation, and further discussion prompted by it. We will end the session with a guest speaker: Roope Mokka of Demos.

Assignments for Week 3:

- Materials to go through individually:
 1. <https://hbr.org/2019/03/the-dual-purpose-playbook>
- Team assignment: Develop a mini case write-up and a commentary on another team's write-up from session 2, following the instructions provided on MyCourses.
- Individual reflection following the instructions provided on MyCourses.

Week 3: What are the trade-offs between social and financial value and how can they be balanced?

In this session we will first cover science-based evidence on the tensions and trade-offs between social and financial objectives in the context of social innovations, and the ways they can be managed. We will then continue with a selected team presentation, and further discussion prompted by it. We will end the session with a guest speaker: Mikko Salo of Faktabaari.

Assignments for Week 4 (Thursday session):

- Materials to go through individually:
 1. Worsham, E., Langsam, K., and Martin E. Ensure Data Efforts Drive Toward Equity and Inclusion. *Medium*. <https://medium.com/scaling-pathways/the-foundation-ensure-data-efforts-drive-toward-equity-and-inclusion-630840142a14>
 2. The One Acre Fund story in Duke University's Scaling Pathways series: https://centers.fuqua.duke.edu/case/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2022/02/ScalingPathways_OneAcreFund-ScalingSnapshot_March-2019.pdf
- Team assignments: Develop 1 mini case write-up and 1 commentary on another team's case write-up from session 3, following the instructions provided on MyCourses.
- Individual reflection following the instructions provided on MyCourses.

Week 4 (Tuesday session): Workshop I (No preparation needed!)

In this session we will work on two intensive interactive exercises that will help you: a) imagine alternative futures; and b) give feedback to peers on their emerging social innovation interests and ideas.

Week 4 (Thursday session): How can social innovations scale and how can impact be measured?

In this session we will cover the science-based evidence available for understanding the mechanisms and implications of scale for social innovations, and the role of impact measurement. We will then continue with a selected team presentation, and further discussion prompted by it. We will end the session with a guest speaker: Sofia Chaichee, Impact Management Lead Specialist of the Nordic Development Fund.

Assignments for Week 5:

- Materials to go through individually:
 1. <https://medium.com/@Kiva/1-billion-in-change-how-kiva-bet-on-human-connection-and-became-a-global-force-for-good-502fcb7fe512>
 2. <https://nextbillion.net/nexthought-monday-the-kiva-fairytale/>
 3. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/kiva-not-quite-what-it-seems>
 4. <https://www.technologyreview.com/2023/08/14/1077351/microfinance-money-making/>
- Individual assignments:
 1. Individual reflection following the instructions provided on MyCourses.
 2. Quiz based on the case readings above, following the instructions provided on MyCourses.

Week 5: What is the dark side of social innovation?

In this session we will cover the science-based evidence available on the topic, through an interactive exercise. We will then continue with a selected team presentation, and further discussion prompted by it. We will end the session with the discussion of the KIVA case study.

Assignments for Week 6 (Thursday session):

- Materials to go through individually:
 1. Ganz, M., Kay, T., and Spicer, J. (2018) Social Enterprise Is Not Social Change. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Spring, 59-60.
 2. King, A. A. and Pucker, K. P. (2021) The dangerous allure of win-win strategies. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter, 35-39.
- Team assignments: Develop one mini case write-up and one commentary on another team's write-up from session 5, following the instructions provided on MyCourses.
- Individual reflection following the instructions provided on MyCourses.

Week 6 (Tuesday session): How do social movements and conditions intersect with social innovation?

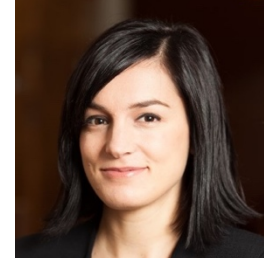
In this session we will discuss how social movements relate to social innovation, and cover the science-based evidence available on this topic. We will continue with today's student team presentations and further discussion of the possible failures of social innovation and their consequences. We will end the session with a guest speaker: Anastasia Koptsyukh, co-founder of Help Center for Ukrainians in Helsinki and doctoral researcher at Aalto.

Week 6: Workshop II (No preparation needed!)

In this session we will work on two intensive interactive exercises that will help you: a) imagine alternative futures; and b) give feedback to peers on their emerging social innovation interests and ideas.

Course leader: Associate Professor Myrto Chliova, Ph.D.

I am currently Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship at the Aalto University School of Business, having joined in 2015. During this time, I have taught multiple B.Sc. and M.Sc. courses that challenge students to develop their own entrepreneurial ideas and to practice skills that foster an entrepreneurial mindset. From last year, I am focusing on the courses Social Innovation, and Market Entry Strategies for Entrepreneurial Business, at the M.Sc. level.



My research focuses on the ways that entrepreneurship and organizations can help tackle grand social challenges such as poverty, refugee crises and inequality. My work has been published in the Journal of Business Venturing, Academy of Management Perspectives, Organization Studies, Research in the Sociology of Organizations, and Entrepreneurship and Regional Development. My ongoing studies are focusing on refugee relief grassroots organizations in Greece, social performance of commercial entrepreneurs in Finland, and non-profit organizations navigating a hostile institutional environment in Hungary.

I have a Ph.D. and an M.Res. in Management from ESADE Business School in Barcelona, an M.Sc. in Management from Bayes Business School of City University in London, and a B.Sc. in Marketing and Communication from the Athens University of Economics and Business. During my PhD studies, I have held visiting scholar positions at the Wharton Business School of the University of Pennsylvania in the US and the Universidad de los Andes in Colombia.

Prior to joining academia, I worked as a trade and brand marketing executive for multinationals, and supported on a part-time basis the marketing of nascent tech startups, in my home city of Athens, Greece.

Teaching assistant: Juliana Rodrigues, Doctoral Candidate

Juliana Rodrigues is a doctoral researcher in Management Studies at Aalto University. Her doctorate research project is positioned at the intersection of Social Innovation and Critical Development Theories. She holds a master of research degree in Management from the University of São Paulo and a bachelor's degree in Social Communications from the Faculdade Casper Líbero, both in Brazil.



She brings an interdisciplinary and multifaceted background, both researching and teaching topics related to social innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development. She has experience as a university lecturer and researcher in topics related to social innovation, social enterprises, sustainability, and communications in Brazil and internationally. Focused on experiential learning, she has been a traveling professor for two semesters in the international comparative studies program on Social Innovation at IHP SIT Study Abroad, traveling with two cohorts in the United States, Uganda, India, and Brazil.

As a researcher, she is a member of the Social Enterprise Knowledge Network (SEKN), the European Research Network for Social Enterprise (EMES), and the Academia ICE Program in Brazil. She is currently the PhD representative on the Board of EMES. She is also a member of the B Lab's Latin America Regional Standards Advisory Groups, the organization behind the B Corps certification.

Before being dedicated to topics related to social innovation and enterprises, she had an executive career in corporate communications in national and multinational companies from different segments, such as healthcare, IT, finance, paper industry, and consultancy. She has also worked in projects in partnership with practitioners on social innovation, communications, research, and executive training to strengthen Brazil's impact investing and entrepreneurship ecosystem.

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