



tu-e4060

design & innovation in context

fall 2020 (thursdays 14.00 – 16.00)

6 ectS

your mentor

dr peter kelly
connector @ aalto

my habitat
my handles

tuas 2168 (next to avp space)
+358 41 503 4508 (mobile)
theideastudio (skype)
peter.kelly@aalto.fi

executive assistant

angelica mendez
angelica.1.mendezreyes@aalto.fi

covid considerations

Life is full of risks and uncertainties and especially so given present circumstances. Our primary concern at Aalto and my primary concern as your mentor is to ensure, as best we can, an impactful and safe learning experience for you. Customer facing industries, universities among them, are rapidly rethinking strategies on how to compete. Social distancing measures impact a high touch, improvisational experience like higher education especially hard. Transforming this experience to digital is a long term undertaking and while the technology enablers are there, the ongoing challenge is to figure out what to migrate online, creating the touch and feel of the classroom “on screen”, while retaining the ability to impart knowledge and develop talent face-to-face as conditions allow.

This course is a **prototype** – an experiment with an “e” to validate whether a digital version of this course can recreate the intimacy and impact of face-to-face encounter. Put another way, you will be putting your creativity to work within a course that itself is a prototype in the making.

Operating conditions might change very quickly, but at this moment the evolving redesign of this course will be guided by the following principles:

1. Course encounters will be conducted online through **Zoom**. Traditionally a time slot has been reserved in your schedule – in this case Thursdays 14.00 – 16.00 – online encounters will be scheduled at this time through Zoom.
2. You will note that I had scheduled this class in Aalto Design Factory. This was a deliberate decision as I consider this space to be among the most creative and stimulating on campus. If conditions allow you to visit and/or for us to safely meet as a group there, I encourage you to do so in a COVID compliant way.
3. A significant part of the course is group related involving me deeply as a team mentor, Students in past years said this was the MOST impactful aspect of the experience. I want to keep this element intact though **remotely**. (Although I still don't know how to digitally recreate the experience of having cappuccino in my office --- I have my own equipment!)
4. We are all “kids again” – we are experiencing the world with fresh eyes and creative perspectives. Uncertainty creates nervous energy but, to those who embrace it with creative and open minds, it also creates conditions where transformational opportunities emerge and can be brought to life, albeit in challenging circumstances.

course objectives

By the end of this course, students will:

- Develop a deep appreciation for and exposure to design thinking principles
- Apply these principles to address “customer experience challenges”
- Develop an ability to craft persuasive and engaging messages
- Appreciate that entrepreneurship is a design infused discipline by its very nature
- Be confident and able to apply insights from this course to drive innovation in their own fields of interest

content

This course aims to acquaint students with the design thinking “movement” currently taking place in a wide variety of contexts including established companies, start-ups, not-for-profits and governments. At its core, entrepreneurship is a design driven activity; the entrepreneur attempts - which implies setback and failure - to design a solution to a nagging problem or challenge.

The visual on the face page of this syllabus is a very powerful entrepreneurial paradigm. Do people want it? (DESIRABILITY) Can we make it? (FEASIBILITY) Is it worth making? (VIABILITY)

Successful entrepreneurs (and entrepreneurial individuals):

- Spot patterns where others see chaos
- Are grounded in a deep and empathetic understanding of the context within which customers operate
- Prototype potential solutions quickly and cheaply to garner feedback and guide future action
- Trust their instincts and intuition in knowing what customers want even if they are unable to articulate it, read Apple!

To guide your discovery process, we will rely on an approach called effectuation, a set of decision-making principles that **expert entrepreneurs** use in situations of high uncertainty:

- 1) Action is initiated based on means available and not pre-set goals
- 2) Limits of investment both in terms of time and money are set up front
- 3) Opportunities are explored and developed in co-creation with outside parties
- 4) Surprise opens up new possibilities if you are open to reshape the opportunity
- 5) The future is shaped by the actions you take

Using available means as a starting point, expert entrepreneurs create an artifact (idea), set limits on how much time/money to spend evaluating the opportunity potential, engage the outside world with an open mind to shape the opportunity with an aim to secure pre-commitments from some to take an opportunity forward. All the while, they are open to insights from surprises they encounter along the way demonstrating a knack for "turning lemons into lemonade".

Expert entrepreneurs are the epitome of intentional learners continually honing their skills and abilities by treating every experience, conversation, meeting and moment as a **learning opportunity**. The fuel that drives their intentional learning is adopting a growth mindset that considers intelligence and capability as traits to be developed coupled with a determination to feed their innate curiosity.

Given the inherent uncertainties associated with COVID, effectuation appears to be especially well suited for guiding decisions as we move forward. Individuals with an entrepreneurial mindset are not paralyzed by uncertainty but rather embrace it viewing it as opportunity not threat.

deliverables & evaluation

Course deliverables involves both **individual tasks (50%) and group project (50%)**

Each participant will need to complete the following:

1. **Coffee Experience Challenge (20%) (Week 3):**

As you may be aware, Starbucks has established two outlets at Helsinki-Vantaa airport (temporarily closed at the moment) and a flagship store in the iconic Aalto designed Academic Bookstore in central Helsinki. Additional outlets were being opened and developed in partnership with Kesko Group – four were opened but since last year two of these have subsequently closed down permanently. It appears that the company is not making inroads into one of the highest per capita coffee consuming countries on the planet! Each participant is to put their creative hats on and propose some ideas that Starbucks should consider adopting.

For background, download a copy of "The Coffee Experience" where you will find a candid and critical email written by Howard Schultz, Chairman of the Board at Starbucks. I want each of you to prepare a succinct 1 page memo to Howard proposing what Starbucks should do to recapture the vision and inspiration that made the company one of the most successful IPOs in the 1990s and a \$100+ billion market capitalization company today.

DO NOT BOUND YOUR IMAGINATION TO THE ISSUES RAISED IN THE (DATED) MEMO AS MANY OF THEM HAVE ALREADY BEEN ADDRESSED IN SOME RESPECT.

In addition to the one page memo, I want each of you to prepare a presentation for Howard (5 minutes maximum). Append copies of your proposed slides to your memo. I WANT TO SEE HIGHLY VISUAL, IMAGINATIVE AND CAPTIVATING WORK.

2. **Coffee Experience Presentation/Critiques (10%):**

On a voluntary, first come, first served basis, you will have an opportunity to take the "stage" and make a presentation to the class. A strict 5 minute time limit will be imposed and there will be an additional 5 minutes allocated for questions from the audience.

OR

If you do not present, you will be required to submit detailed and thoughtful critiques on any **TWO (2)** of the presentations. Needless to say you need to be "present" in class to prepare the critiques!

3. **Reflective Essay (20%)**

Download a copy of the article "What Makes Entrepreneurs Entrepreneurial?" by Saras Sarasvathy from:

<http://www.effectuation.org/sites/default/files/documents/what-makes-entrepreneurs-entrepreneurial-sarasvathy.pdf>

Based on insights from reading through the substantial resources that I have provided you on the course web, I want each of you to write a reflective piece

to support the answer “because they embrace design thinking” to the question posed by Saras.

WORD LIMIT: 2000 (PDF)

Rethink the Concept of “New Normal” University (Group Task 50%)

Building on the insights gained from the **Opportunity Prototyping** course, the **group task** will be focused on the challenges (opportunities in disguise) being experienced in economies around the world as we adapt to a rapidly evolving “new” normal both in terms of society in general and higher education in particular.

When we speak of **normal**, we think of something that “conforms” to a standard, common type, or regarded as regular or usual in nature. Adding the modifier “**new**” denotes a process of change from an existing to an imagined future state. This is exactly the context within which creativity is most needed and fresh perspectives can flourish.

The “normal” world of higher education has for a long time been ripe for disruption according to the late Harvard Business School Professor Clayton Christensen, author of *Disrupting Class* (a book published in 2008 by the way!). In an opinion piece published in the New York Times long before COVID took hold, he wrote:

“Historically, higher education has avoided competitive disruption. One reason for this past immunity is the power of prestige in the higher education marketplace, where the quality of the product is hard to measure. In the absence of comparable measures of what universities produce for their students, the well-respected institutions have a natural (read networking) advantage. A related stabilizing force is the barrier to disruptive innovation created by the accreditation process which in the past made **conformance to tradition** the price of entry into the industry.”

And then an unexpected storm front (COVID) moved in ...

**“The notice went out on 6 March, a Friday afternoon. All classes at the University of Washington in Seattle, the city then the US epicenter of the outbreak of COVID19 – would shift online the following Monday. Instructors scrambled to set up remote learning options for more than 40.000 students (over a weekend).”
Nature (2020)**

The pandemic has forced universities to fundamentally “rethink the game” of higher education on the fly. Consider the following:

- In an effort to contain the spread, practically all face-to-face teaching was moved to digital in a matter of weeks in early 2020. **Lecture Room** was replaced with **Lecture Zoom**. The speed with which this transition was made was breathtakingly fast in a traditionally slow-paced university environment. It is interesting to note that the digital educational experience has been around a long time – University of Phoenix pioneered this in 1976! **Why were universities so late on the uptake?**
- Think back to your own university educational experience before COVID and social distancing. **How has the design of the experience changed? How can a high touch experience be transformed into a low or no touch one? What does this mean for universities in terms of how they compete for talent?**
- Travel restrictions have wreaked havoc both for students who are not allowed to travel to pursue studies and faculty who are restricted to participate in professional and academic conferences at a distance. **Does the concept of exchange and networking need a rethink or redesign?**
- The economic impact and uncertainties associated with COVID19 have also severely impacted the internship market. **How will the concept of work change? What skills are required to navigate a socially distanced new normal? What new jobs need to be done and/or created?**
- Aalto like many universities around the world relied on Zoom in place of face-to-face interaction. Zoom was never really designed with higher education in mind but proved a useful patch as universities had to rapidly go digital. Incidentally, Zoom's stock is up by 700% since the beginning of the year. **But "Zoom university isn't proper online learning" says MIT Vice President for Open Learning. What should the design of future university education look like?**
- A recent report released by the Institute for Fiscal Studies in the UK (July 2020) predicted that 13 UK universities face "a very real prospect" of insolvency – particularly those with large numbers of foreign students and of relatively lower prestige in rankings tables. Potential revenue losses this year are estimated at £11 billion. Australian universities are expected to shed 21,000 full time jobs this year, including 7,000 in research due to the revenue shortfall caused from the decline in international students. **Do we have too many universities?**
- University of Cambridge has cancelled all face-to-face lectures for the entire 2020-2021 academic year. University of California system and a growing number of others have followed suit. **Will the face-to-face interaction element of university education be forever changed?**
- Moody's – the rating agency – downgraded the US higher educational outlook from "stable" to "negative" in March with 30% of US universities' operating performance as weak. **What is required to turn the outlook back to stable or ideally, positive?**
- As decisions are made to move to online modes, students and parents are demanding tuition fee waivers or reductions. At Rutgers University, 30,000 signed a petition calling for the elimination of fees and a 20% cut in tuition.

One university student commented “Who wants to pay \$25,000 a year for glorified Skype?” And the US, being the US, lawsuits have been launched against universities for breach of contract for switching in-person instruction to online! **Can universities develop impactful models at lower price points?**

Hybrid Mode

A great deal of strategic thought is taking place in higher education circles (and at Aalto) on exploring “hybrid” models of operating by reframing the discussion from “digital **versus** face-to-face” to “digital **and** face-to-face”. I am working from the presumption that we will not return to the traditional ways of interacting in a classroom. There are some very interesting and challenging issues to think through in redesigning the experience of higher education, including, but not limited to:

- What topics and material best lend themselves to self-paced and/or digital delivery platforms?
- What topics and material best lend themselves to high touch face-to-face interaction?
- How should courses be re-designed?
- What tools are available to create the truly interactive feel of the classroom online?
- How do you build a sense of community while respecting social distance?
- How should universities foster a sense of well-being and engagement for students who largely work in isolation?
- A lot has been written about working from home (WFH) – what are the elements to effectively study from home (SFH)?
- How do we reconfigure space on campus to adhere to the new normal?
- What new skills, experience and competencies do intentional lifelong learners need to know in the new normal?
- Is it time to rethink how companies and outside organizations collaborate with universities in the new normal?
- Are universities and their backers going to be encouraged to focus on research projects most relevant to their national interests going forward?

Time for a Rethink

In the Opportunity Prototyping course, groups identified and explored an “ideation nugget” for the challenge Rethink the Concept of New Normal University. They had complete freedom to explore any domain of interest to them.

In Design & Innovation in Context, you will be building on the insights of this talented group to develop a proposal that meets the “desirability” “feasibility” and “viability” tests. Customers want this to happen, we have the tools and technologies available to make it possible (perhaps with refinements) and it makes good “business sense” to implement.

Presentation materials from Opportunity Prototyping will be uploaded into MyCourses as a resource for you. During our first session, we will speak about the overarching themes identified in that body of work.

YOU WILL BE WORKING ON THIS TASK IN GROUPS OF 6. AS IN OPPORTUNITY PROTOTYPING, I WILL BE JOINING EACH TEAM AS A MENTOR.

The Presentation

- 1) Stimulated by the insights from your colleagues in Opportunity Prototyping and your own ideation as a group, each team will quickly devise and deploy a design driven strategy to explore an ideation nugget and develop it into a prototype. You have complete freedom to interpret the brief.
- 2) Each team will be allocated private time with me "in camera" where I will provide you with detailed and thoughtful critique. This method proved to be the most valuable and impactful learning experience for course participants in previous years and addresses a very real need for students to develop the ability to create and deliver high impact messages.
- 3) Final presentations will be arranged through Zoom or Teams in the form of Pecha Kucha – a highly visual story telling format that requires you to communicate messages in 20 second sound bites. Some examples and guidelines of this format can be found at: www.pechakucha.org.
- 4) **ABOVE ALL ELSE HAVE FUN WITH THIS AND DON'T CONSIDER IT A "TASK"!**

Schedule of Coming Attractions (subject to revision) **ALL SESSIONS WILL BE HELD ONLINE**

29 October	Course Introduction From Design Thinking to Design Doing
5 November	Empathetic Research Methods
12 November	Coffee Experience Challenge
19 November	Rapid Opportunity Prototyping
26 November	Team Consultations
3 December	Final Presentations