Course Title: Design Thinking and Rapid Experimentation for Practical Innovation  
Course Code: BUS 99  
Instructor: Robert Hoekman, James Young

Course Summary:
This course is interactive, participatory, and activity-oriented. Here, you’ll gain knowledge about techniques from Design Thinking, Lean Manufacturing, Agile, rapid experimentation, and more. Using real-world scenarios combined with Mural boards provided during the course, we will explore how to deliver innovation and value for your organization in a way that’s provable and repeatable.

Each week before class, you’ll watch a short video introducing a concept/skill and familiarize yourself with the relevant exercise. Then during class, with support from the instructors, you’ll complete that exercise in collaboration with your student team.

By the end of the course, you’ll have the tools & templates to discover audience opportunities, diagram the current state, identify critical problems, conceive of and prioritize potential solutions, and then test them to prove their value. As the person who brings these tools to your organization, you will be able to change how your company thinks and acts for the better.

Please see course page for full description and additional details.

Grade Options and Requirements:
1. No Grade Requested (NGR)  
   1. This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
2. Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)  
   1. Students must attend and participate in six of the eight course sessions.
3. Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)  
   1. All assignments will be graded on a completed / not completed basis  
      1. Attendance 40%  
      2. Participation 40%  
      3. Homework completion 20%

Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.
Tentative Weekly Outline:

WEEK 1
Fixing Innovation: The Problem with How We Think and How to Fix It

Presentation: Starting with the messy story of the typical innovation process, we’ll introduce Value Centered Innovation as its remedy. We’ll describe the roots of this methodology, as well as its core principles, and offer concrete examples of it in action through case studies from real projects. Finally, we’ll present a menu of market opportunities to solve for during the course, organize “delivery teams,” and forge agreements for how these teams will work together to run solution experiments.

In class: Teams will meet and self-organize via the Team Norming canvas, agree on problems to solve, and align on a work structure.

Homework: Watch Finding and Defining Part 1 video, and get familiar with the Research board.

WEEK 2
Finding and Defining Part 1: Preparing for research and conduction...

The first step in finding market success is to interview and observe potential beneficiaries to identify their motivations, needs, pains, and wishes. In this session, we’ll craft interview scripts and write How Might We’s to discover the most interesting problems for our audiences.

In class: Prepare as a team to do research using the Research board.

Homework: Conduct interviews as a team, document findings, and watch the video for Finding and Defining Part 2.

WEEK 3
Finding and Defining Part 2: Analysis and synthesis of research findings

The second step in finding market success is to review what you learned in your research, synthesize it into themes, and translate the best opportunities into problem statements.

In class: Start/complete steps 5-8 of the Research board.

Homework: Finish the Research canvas, watch the Value Stream Diagram video, & review the Value Stream Diagram board.
WEEK 4
The Value Stream Diagram: Illustrating the Current Reality to Spot Opportunity and Track Progress

Hidden within every problem statement is an often complex sequence of steps required for a person to achieve or receive something of value from those tasked with delivering it. While a person’s problem, for example, may be as simple as the need for reliable transportation, the manufacturer, wholesaler, retailer, customer, and financier must each undergo a grueling relay race to solve it. The Value Stream Diagram is where we capture the current state of things so we can discover key problems as a launchpad for valuable solutions.

In class: Start/complete the Value Stream Diagram board in Mural.

Homework: Finish the Value Stream Diagram, watch the Solution Ideation video, & review the Solution Ideation board.

WEEK 5
Solution Ideation

Next, we identify problems in the value stream, then free-list solutions of three types: pain-relievers, gain-creators, and table-stakes. We’ll then organize potential solutions according to level of effort and degree of risk involved in providing it.

In class: Start/complete the Solution Ideation board.

Homework: Finish the Solution Ideation board, watch the Value Proposition Statement and Business Outcome Definition videos, and review the relevant Mural boards.

WEEK 6
Value Proposition statement + Desired outcomes

Solution ideation culminates in a simple 3-part team mission statement that frames our offering, and a breakdown of objectives and key results that should become true once that mission is fulfilled. Using several Mural canvases and quick exercises, each team will generate potential solutions, prioritize them, and align on a description of your product or service offering.

In class: Start/complete the Value Proposition and Desired Outcomes boards.

Homework: Finish the Value Proposition and Desired Outcomes boards, watch the videos for Rapid Experimentation 1-4, & review the Rapid Experiment board in Mural.

WEEK 7
Rapid Experimentation: Indoor Tests

Here, we introduce rapid experiments, their purpose, their structure, and their testing and measurement methods. Then we discuss “indoor” test types, show examples, and prepare for each team’s first experiment.

In class: Start/complete the Rapid Experiment board for your team’s first experiment.

Homework: Finish the Rapid Experiment board, run your team’s indoor test, & watch the Rapid Experimentation 5 video.

WEEK 8
Rapid Experimentation: Outdoor Tests

In this session, we review the outcomes of the first round of experiments and what to do next based on what was learned. Then we plan the next round, moving from indoor research to outdoor research to highlight the often enormous difference between what people say and what people do.

In class: Record the results of each team’s first experiment, discuss iteration or pivot recommendations, & complete the Rapid Experiment board for each team’s outdoor test.

Homework: Finish the Rapid Experiment board, run the team’s outdoor test, & watch 2 videos on Business Outcome Mapping (inc. one about pitches and case studies).

WEEK 9
Storytelling for Success: Cinderella Pitches and Case Studies

Using tried-and-true storytelling structures and techniques, we’ll review the critical elements of product pitches and case studies, both of which are critical for communicating the intent and resulting success of any innovation effort. We’ll review examples, break them down, and discuss how to create and improve these key artifacts.

In class: Start/complete your team’s Cinderella pitch using the Case Study board in Mural.

Homework: Finish the Case Study board, create your case study, and practice your final presentation.

WEEK 10
Show & Tell: Final Presentations
After reviewing each team’s final presentations, we’ll celebrate the wins and talk about what each team can do next.

In class: Present your pitch or case study, summarize the outcomes of your experiments, and describe the next steps were the innovation to move forward after the course is complete.

Note About Live Attendance and Recording:

These class sessions will be recorded.

Live participation is required in order for students to receive the full benefit of the course. Class recordings are not intended to be a replacement or substitute for class attendance.