

**Global Immersion India: Design for Social Impact**  
Spring 2021, B-Term

DRAFT SYLLABUS

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**Class Meeting Times:** On Zoom, Wednesdays and Fridays, B-term, 8:30am to 11:45am.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

One of the critical skills that business leaders need is the ability to see opportunities and create value to solve problems for the benefit of consumers and society. *This course will focus on solving problems for one set of consumers, those at the bottom-of-the-pyramid, by designing products and services to serve them.* Designing for this segment of consumers is challenging because of the severe constraints that come into play—financial as well as social. Learning to do so successfully will enable you to innovate for all segments of the market using specific tools drawn from design thinking as well as other innovation methodologies. We will learn these perspectives and skills through experiential learning activities as well as readings, videos, movies and case discussions. Guest lecturers will introduce us to problems facing bottom-of-the-pyramid consumers in different regions of the world and also educate us about the sectors and countries they operate in.

We will discuss a systematic approach for solving problems by relying on human-centered and iterative processes. *These include generating consumer insights, prototyping products and services based on an understanding of “jobs to be done,” and learning how to set up critical experiments to test the assumptions underlying a potentially successful product launch.* We hope to strengthen your individual and collaborative capabilities to identify customer needs using indirect and qualitative research, create sound concept hypotheses, and develop a prototype that allows for meaningful feedback in a real-world environment.

*Through the six weeks of the course, you will work in a diverse team of students on a project for a social enterprise working in rural India. We will partner with a social enterprise in India, [Mrida](#), which means soil in Sanskrit. Mrida works in rural India to “facilitate sustainable and scalable, holistic development at the Bottom of the Pyramid.” During the course, we will learn about India, and about Mrida’s work and the design challenges they face in specific areas such as agriculture, clean drinking water, skills training and creating market linkages. The client will speak with the class regularly and provide detailed information (including videos and interview transcripts) to help you get consumer insights and understand the reality on the ground. You will also learn about the history, economy, and culture of this diverse country, the world’s largest democracy that is home to more than a billion people.*

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The course will illuminate how Design Thinking can enhance innovation activities in terms of market impact, value creation, and speed.

The course objectives are:

1. To provide you with a strong conceptual as well as practical understanding of design thinking.
2. To enable you to reliably come up with creative solutions to challenging social problems.

More specifically, the course aims to:

1. Strengthen your individual and collaborative capabilities to identify customer needs using indirect and qualitative research, create sound concept hypotheses, and develop a prototype that allows for meaningful feedback in a real-world environment.
2. Help you translate broadly defined opportunities into actionable innovation possibilities and recommendations for client social enterprises.

## **CLASS FORMAT, DATES, AND TRAVEL PLANS**

This is a B-term, full course (3 credits) that meets 6 hours per week. We will meet twice a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:30am to 11:45am. The course will be fully remote, but student teams may be able to use the Design Studio for project meetings by prior appointment. We will use a digital workspace <https://www.mural.co> that will help teams collaborate and apply systematic creativity and design templates while working on their group projects.

*Global Immersion Program* classes typically travel to the region of focus following six weeks of class time to bridge theory and practice for the students. Given current global conditions, we think travel is unlikely to take place as part of this course. If we find that conditions for travel become safer, we will travel to rural India during the week of May 3rd so that students can work with Mrida on the ground. *A decision on this will be made prior to Spring Break, and we will communicate this with students; you will be able to drop the course at that point if you wish.* If we travel, class meetings will only take place for 90 minutes every Friday in the B term (Fridays from 8:30am to 10:00am). Students would be charged the program fee of \$1850 after that decision is made to cover the cost of travel. Students can opt out of travel in which case they will need to discuss their options for fulfilling course requirements with me.

If we travel to India, we will focus on understanding consumers through deep observation and in-depth interviews (facilitated by interpreters), designing prototype solutions based on these insights, and testing these solutions with the target market. Mornings will be spent with the villagers observing, interviewing, and data gathering; afternoons with classmates ideating and prototyping. Teams will have the opportunity to test their prototypes with villagers so that they may iterate on their initial designs before presenting them to our partners. We will work closely with the client on the ground and make final presentations to them on our solutions.

We recognize that these virtual cross cultural interactions are not the same as those you would have in person, but student safety is a top priority. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please reach out to Jennifer Tromba Morisco at the Chazen Institute at [jt2121@gsb.columbia.edu](mailto:jt2121@gsb.columbia.edu).

## **COURSE PROJECT**

A week prior to the first day of class you are expected to select the design challenge that you would like to work on for your project (from list of projects to be posted). You will receive input from Mrida about the specific project, the work that they have done to date, and observations and secondary data on the market.

### **PROJECT EXAMPLES (these are only examples; actual projects will be different)**

#### *Agriculture and allied activities*

1. Given that water is a scarce resource, and drip irrigation systems commercially available are very expensive and out the reach of most small and marginal farmers. Can we look at locally developed, low cost alternatives which would serve the same purpose?
2. Farmers typically cultivate grains which are commodities and subject to price fluctuations beyond their control. Vegetable cultivation is an option which can fetch better realizations and remuneration – subject to availability of market linkages of course. Likewise, poultry and fisheries in themselves offer opportunities for livelihoods and income generation. In such a situation, is there a possibility of creating a synergistic ‘ecosystem’ comprising fisheries, poultry and cultivation. For instance, waste matter from the poultry farm serves as manure for the fields, the output from the fields becomes food for the poultry, and even fatalities from the poultry farm become feedstock for the fish-pond.
3. From another perspective, given that electricity is intermittent in rural areas, and temperature control is vital for the health and survival of poultry, what kind of innovations can students come up with, to regulate temperature in the absence of electricity.

#### *Clean Drinking Water*

Study the entire system of drinking water in a village ecosystem – availability, collection and consumption. Understand and critique an existing solution to provide clean drinking water in a sustainable manner, assess its acceptability within the village community, and come up with improvements – technological, procedural and systems related, to take the intervention to the next level(s).

#### *Rain-Water Harvesting*

As against conventional rain water harvesting systems aimed at improving the water table at the community level, explore opportunities for rain water harvesting at the household level within a village, and examine how such a solution can be made widely acceptable within the community – this would include collation of water and its basic filtration for use for cooking, cleaning and washing purposes, and also for low cost, conventional ground water re-charging solutions

#### *Design Thinking led Innovations in Thought Process and in the Design of Interventions at the Bottom of the Pyramid*

Leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility funds as seed capital to facilitate holistic development initiatives comprising community engagement, skill development, livelihood generation, promoting entrepreneurship, and facilitating market linkages, resulting in Virtuous Circles of social and economic empowerment at the Bottom of the Pyramid. Study existing

interventions on the ground, assess impact and opportunities for improvement, and propose modifications, including conceptualizing and driving some live innovations/interventions to access low hanging fruit.

### REQUIRED READINGS

Readings Packet: Readings, cases, videos, and class notes will be posted on Canvas.

### GRADING

Assignment:	Due Date:	% of Grade:
Class Participation (individual)		20%
Pre-trip Presentations (team)		15%
Design Project (team)		
Presentation	Last day of class or in India	20%
Slides (to be handed in)	Last day of class or after return from India	35%
Reflections presentations (individual)	Last day of class or after return from India	10%

Your class participation / class preparedness grade will be based on:

- Attending classes and being on time** - Much of the learning will occur in the course of the discussions and assignments in class, and regular attendance is required in order to receive credit for class participation. **Excused absences must be cleared through the office of student affairs (OSA), who will then inform me of the excused absence.** In general, reasons for excused absences include health problems, personal emergencies, and religious observance (not interviews).
- Being prepared for class** - Class preparedness will be assessed based on your comments in class as well as on your feedback to other students. Reading the required readings and cases for each session is the best way to prepare for class discussion. Evaluation of class participation is based upon the quality (not the quantity) of your comments, as reflected by their relevance, insightfulness, and coherence. Attendance is a necessary but not sufficient condition for participation. If you do not actively participate, you will receive a low participation grade even if you attend every class.
- Your conduct and behavior in class** – Out of respect for the other students in your class, it is important for you to focus your full attention on the class for the entire class period. Most students observe proper decorum, but it takes only one person’s behavior to distract the entire

class. Columbia Business School students have complained to the school about students who use class time for other purposes or act in a distracting manner. Class will be conducted using the same rules of decorum that would apply in a business meeting. These rules include the following: Arrive in class on time; once you have arrived, you should leave the classroom only if absolutely necessary--leaving to make or take phone calls, to meet with classmates, or to go to an interview, is not considered appropriate behavior. If for some reason you must be late for class or leave early, please let me know. Unless otherwise directed, use of laptops, cell phones, PDAs, or any other wireless devices is prohibited.

- **Your conduct during the trip** –We will discuss local norms and culture and you are expected to keep these in mind during the trip. You are expected to fully participate in each day’s in-class discussions and field work.
- **Your contribution to the team project** – Each team member is expected to fully contribute to all aspects of the group project. Your contribution will be evaluated by your team members and you will also be required to evaluate other team members’ contributions. On the last day of class, you will allocate 100 points between your team members based on their contributions to your project. This evaluation will be used as input to your class participation grade and will also be used to weight your grade on the team project.

Details on other elements of the grade will be provided on Canvas and discussed in class.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The Wednesday classes will focus on learning and practicing Design Thinking and Creativity tools. The Friday classes will focus on India, Mrida's design challenges (our course projects), and social innovation examples and guest speakers.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Pre-Class Readings (draft)</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Session 1  Wednesday, March 10  <i>Introduction to the subject of design thinking. Explore the entire process of design and development with a focus on meeting end users' needs.</i>	-Course Introduction  -Why Design Thinking and The Design Process  -frog Design Case	<a href="#">frog Design Case</a>  <a href="#">Reclaim your Creative Confidence</a>  <a href="#">Why Design Thinking Works</a>  <a href="#">Design Thinking Comes of Age</a>	
Session 2  Friday, March 12  <i>Introduction to India and to the course partner, Mrida. We will learn about this social enterprise, their philosophy, and our design challenges.</i>	-India: History, Culture, Economy, Politics  -In class video case: Chotukool  -Introduction to our Course Projects Partner: Presentation by Mrida	<a href="#">Ideas for India's Future Video</a>  <a href="#">Changing Face of Rural India</a>  <a href="https://www.mridagroup.com">https://www.mridagroup.com</a>  <a href="#">Press release on Mrida in Bokaro</a>  <a href="#">Blood and Soil in Narendra Modi's India</a>	
Session 3  Wednesday, March 17  <i>Challenges and tips on observation and ethnographic interviewing. Design Thinking Tools.</i>	-Case: IDEO Human-Centered Service Design  -How to do high quality qualitative Research (Guest Speaker)  - Introduction to Empathy Maps	Case: IDEO Human-Centered Service Design (case + multimedia)  <a href="#">Stories that Deliver Business Insights</a>  <a href="#">Empathy on the Edge</a>  <a href="#">Get Better Customer Insights</a>	- Observation of life in rural India using videos to draw insights

<p>Session 4</p> <p>Friday, March 19</p> <p><i>Learn about a CBS MBA team's solutions to a clean drinking water problem. See how IDEO addressed a similar challenge. Get details on the class projects from Mrida.</i></p>	<p>-Case: Byrraju Foundation SWEET Water Project</p> <p>-Presentation of class projects by Mrida</p>	<p>Case: <a href="#">Byrraju Foundation SWEET Water Project</a></p>	
<p>Session 5</p> <p>Wednesday, March 24</p> <p><i>How to derive insights from interviews and observation. Building mind maps, journey maps and personas.</i></p>	<p>-Case: Great Lakes</p> <p>-Insight tools: Journey maps and Personas</p>	<p><a href="#">Know your Customers' "Jobs to be Done"</a></p> <p><a href="#">Great Lakes Case</a></p>	<p>-Identify the opportunity based on the project presentation</p> <p>- Scope the project and draft your design brief</p> <p>-Submit design brief on Canvas</p>
<p>Session 6</p> <p>Friday, March 26</p> <p><i>Learn about opportunities and challenges when designing for social impact.</i></p>	<p>-Case: PlayPumps: A Playful Solution to Africa's Water Problem?</p> <p>-Guest speaker on social innovation in South Africa</p>	<p>Case: Playpumps Part A (pre-read). Part B (read in class).</p>	
<p>Session 7</p> <p>Wednesday, March 31</p> <p><i>Finalizing insights and developing design criteria, How Might We Questions. Share Learnings and Inspiring Stories</i></p>	<p>-Design Criteria</p> <p>-Create posters and share stories</p>	<p><a href="#">Design Thinking for Social Innovation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Marrying Empathy and Science to Spread Impact</a></p>	<p>-Fill in Design Criteria</p> <p>-Complete HMW statements</p>
<p>Session 8</p> <p>Friday, April 2</p> <p><i>Mrida uses the 'Earthspired' brand to sell products made from high-value plants and herbs to middle-class consumers. Mrida needs to</i></p>	<p>-Mrida: Earthspired Case</p> <p>-Team discussions with Mrida</p>	<p>Case: <a href="#">Earthspired</a> (INSEAD)</p> <p><a href="#">Re-Framing Opportunities: Design Thinking in Action</a></p>	

<i>address several interconnected questions on the value proposition, distribution etc.</i>			
<p>Session 9</p> <p>Wednesday, April 7</p> <p><i>Create/Select a set of concepts using brainstorming, attribute-value maps and the attribute dependency template</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ideation</li> <li>-Concept Development</li> <li>-Attribute Value Maps</li> <li>-Attribute dependency template</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Finding your Innovation Sweet Spot</a>	Each team generates ~20 ideas, selects most promising 10 by mapping back to design criteria and insights
<p>Session 10</p> <p>Friday, April 9</p> <p><i>Create a pre-experience using storyboards, journey map, user scenario, digital mock-ups, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Prototypes: Protobot</li> <li>-Prototype testing</li> </ul>	<a href="#">What Design Thinking is Doing for the San Francisco Opera</a> <a href="#">Prototyping is the Short Hand of Innovation</a> <a href="#">D-LITE II: Market Research and Prototyping in Remote Regions</a> <a href="#">D-LITE III: Building Credibility and Trust</a>	Select 3 concepts and fill in Napkin Pitches for all of them
<p>Session 11</p> <p>Wednesday, April 14</p> <p><i>How to frame questions and learn from evaluation research. Run experiments to test critical assumptions and to get feedback</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Evaluation Research Techniques: Guest speaker</li> <li>-Experimentation</li> <li>-Positioning Statement, Storytelling</li> </ul>	<a href="#">How Design can Boost Social Impact and Social Results</a> <a href="#">Why Design Thinking Works</a>	<p>Create and Test Prototypes</p> <p>Prepare final pitch</p>
<p>Session 12</p> <p>Date TBD</p>	Presentations	<a href="#">Lessons for Creating Better Global Health Programs</a> <a href="#">Partnering with Women at the Grassroots Level</a> <a href="#">Lessons from India on Scaling Up Market-Based Solutions</a>	Final team presentations to class and client

## Instructor Bio

### Dr. Gita V. Johar, Meyer Feldberg Professor of Business

Gita V. Johar (PhD NYU 1993; MBA Indian Institute of Management Calcutta 1985) is the Meyer Feldberg Professor of Business at Columbia Business School and the inaugural Vice Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. She received her PhD from the NYU Stern School of Business in 1993 and her MBA from the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta in 1985. She received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta in 2019. Gita has been on the faculty at Columbia Business School since 1992. She served as the school's Faculty Director for Online Initiatives from 2014-2017, Senior Vice Dean (Dean of Faculty) from 2011 to 2014, and inaugural Vice Dean for Research from 2010-2011. Gita's work as Vice Dean of DEI is focused on three areas—building community diversity, ensuring that the classroom and curriculum is inclusive, and embedding a culture and climate at CBS that is consistent with the school's values of inclusion and respect. As a scholar, Gita studies consumer identity, beliefs, and persuasion as they relate to branding, advertising, and the media ecosystem. She teaches the core Marketing course and Global Immersion courses in emerging markets such as India and Myanmar, as well as courses on Innovation, Research Methods, and Consumer Behavior to MBA, Executive MBA and PhD students. Gita served as co-editor of the premier academic journal on consumer research, the *Journal of Consumer Research* from 2014 to 2017 and is currently editing a Special Issue of the *Journal of Marketing* on *Better Marketing for a Better World*. She serves on the Global Advisory Board of the Jerome A. Chazen Institute at Columbia Business School and the Board of Advisors at *Asia Initiatives*, a nonprofit based in New York. Gita is passionate about girls' education and contributes to the work of *Educate Girls* an India-based nonprofit focused on this issue.

**Recommended Books on India (\*highly recommended)**

**History**

*\*India: A History by John Keay*

India Unbound: From Independence to Global Information Age by Gurcharan Das

A Concise History of Modern India by Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf

**Nonfiction**

*\*Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found by Suketu Mehta*

*\*I do what I do by Raghuram Rajan*

*\*The Billionaire Raj: A Journey through India's New Gilded Age by James Crabtree*

Aadhaar: A Biometric History of India's 12-Digit Revolution by Shankkar Aiyar

The Argumentative Indian by Amartya Sen

India: A Million Mutinies Now by V. S. Naipaul

India Calling by Anand Giridharadas

Butter Chicken in Ludhiana: Travels in Small Town India by Pankaj Mishra

Nine Lives: In Search of the Sacred in Modern India by William Dalrymple

*\*The Age of Kali by William Dalrymple*

Around India in 80 trains by Monisha Rajesh

Empire of the Soul by Paul William Roberts.

India's Unending Journey by Mark Tully

**Fiction**

*\*Behind the Beautiful Forevers by Katherine Boo*

Midnight's Children by Salman Rushdie

The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy

A Suitable Boy by Vikram Seth

*\*A Fine Balance by Rohinton Mistry*

*\*Sharam by Gregory David Roberts*

*\*The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga*

**List of Indian Movies**

(somewhat random list including Bollywood, indie, art house and English language films)

1. The Lunchbox
2. The Last Viceroy
3. Monsoon Wedding
4. Slumdog Millionaire
5. Satyajit Ray's "The Apu Trilogy"
6. Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India
7. Rang De Basanti
8. Bombay
9. Three Idiots
10. Bhaag Milkha Bhaag
11. The Chess Players
12. Mr. and Mrs. Iyer
13. English, August
14. Fire
15. Salaam Bombay
16. Dil Se
17. Chuk De! India
18. The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel
19. Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna
20. Kal Ho Na Ho
21. My Name is Khan
22. SonRise