

Innovation Salon

Taught by Professor Sheena Iyengar

About the Course

As the COVID crisis escalates, industry is being disrupted and changing in unprecedented ways. In less than one year, millions have grown sick or died, while others have lost their jobs. And markets are volatile, as companies grapple with how to adapt to the new social and economic paradigms. But this moment also represents an opportunity to study and learn from such real-time change. Old ways of thinking are being challenged, and rules being revised. In sum, we are witnessing innovation, and the evolution of business, right before our eyes.

From sports, entertainment, and retail to public health, urban planning, and privacy, students will be hearing from industry leaders, government officials, and C-level executives about challenges and opportunities that face their industries. This is an exciting opportunity for students to hear and learn from a first-hand perspective on how businesses across the globe are being disrupted in response to the global pandemic, and the innovative solutions being developed to address them. There is a strong networking component to this course, and each session will culminate with an intimate networking event via Zoom breakout rooms. Here, students will be spending time with industry panelists, leaders, and Columbia alum to discuss these problems and innovations in a more personal setting. After 7:10pm networking is optional, but highly recommended!

The Innovation Salon is a one year course for 1.5 credits, and 500 bidding points will be deducted from your account. Any student who is accepted into the class for Fall 2020 will be automatically enrolled for this class in Spring 2020 – there will be no need to complete another application. It is open to CBS students (enroll for course credit) to discuss and debate this new world of innovation. Each session will begin with an overview of the industry which is the topic for that night, and industry panelists will present to discuss what they have been seeing on the ground. Each session will also consist of a Q&A, and, as mentioned before, will culminate with an intimate networking event in Zoom breakout rooms.

Before each session, all participants receive readings on the particular industry, and submit questions to the faculty leader. From these questions, the faculty leader defines a discussion agenda, and acts as moderator for each panel discussion. After each session, students will write a 100 word reflection. In addition, at year's end, they will submit a final, 1,500 word paper, either proposing how to solve an industry problem, or synthesizing an industrial trend they have analyzed.

Course Schedule

To reiterate - ALL STUDENTS ACCEPTED INTO THIS CLASS THIS FALL WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY ENROLLED FOR SPRING

All sessions run from 5:40pm - 7:10pm

Fall Semester

Thursday, September 10, 2020

Reimagining the New Normal

What exactly is the new normal going to look like? And how similar will post-pandemic life be to pre-pandemic life? What have we learned about our economic system? How are businesses being affected, how are they adjusting, and what do they need to do to compete after the pandemic ends? We have so many questions about the future, and it's difficult to say what the answers are. Our panelists have spent their careers in business and economics, and will speak to what they see as our future at all levels.

Thursday, September 24, 2020

Reimagining Government

New York State, what was once the epicenter of the pandemic, is now one of the safest places to be in America. New York has contained and subdued the virus, due to their massive public health response. This response clearly affects other areas such as education, business, and work-life. Joining us will be members of Governor Cuomo's administration who worked on the pandemic response, and have served in a variety of roles within state government.

Thursday, October 8, 2020

Reimagining Retail

Retail trends already demanded innovation before the virus, particularly as ecommerce continues to grow. How traditional retail responds to this and how ecommerce is preparing for the future are critically important questions to consider. Executives from traditional retail with an eye toward ecommerce will be joining us to discuss the challenges, opportunities, and future of the industry

Thursday, October 29, 2020

Reimagining Truth

What is truth? A seemingly simple question with an incredibly complex answer. Is it the objective truth? Is it the "fact" that the largest quantity of people believe in? Due to social media, misinformation, and blatant lying, the formerly defined line between fact and fiction has become blurred. Can we simply look at data and statistics to point us toward truth? Is truth a democracy, where all truths are equal? Our panelists will be discussing the transformation of truth in our lives, and their perspectives on what truth actually is.

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Reimagining US-China Relations

China and the United States outline two different schools of thought that play out in all sectors of life, and their relationship is only becoming more complex. The two countries have been competing to be the most innovative and influential country. Whether it is the fight for AI, stronger national security, a COVID-19 vaccine, or stronger cyber-presence, the relationship influences world affairs in innumerable ways. Our

panelists, both with years of experience in technology and cyberspace, will be speaking from a military and national security perspective, and from a civilian, business, and AI perspective.

Thursday, December 3, 2020

Reimagining Sports

Without a doubt, Americans love sports. But with the pandemic baseball, basketball, and hockey all lost months of playtime and in-person ticket sales. College conferences have canceled fall seasons. What league models can keep players safe while giving them the most possible freedom? How do revenue streams look without fans? Are there innovations happening now which will be kept post-pandemic?

Spring Dates

Thursday, February 4, 2021

Thursday, February 18, 2021

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Thursday, March 25, 2021

Thursday, April 8, 2021

Thursday, April 15, 2021

To apply:

Please upload both your CV and a one-page response which addresses the following questions. Please submit these as one document, and please make sure your name is visible.

- Why are you interested in exploring industry issues affected by the pandemic?
- How will your background inform your contributions to the course discussion with fellow students, guest speakers, and industry panelists?
- How will you benefit from the networking component of this class?

Applications are due by 9:00 a.m. on Friday, August 14, 2020 to Sheena Iyengar (sheenaiyengaroffice@gsb.columbia.edu) in the format specified.

All students will be notified of decisions by Monday August 17, at 5:00 p.m.