

## **THINK BIGGER**

Curriculum for Spring 2021 Bidding Only  
Columbia Business School

Instructors: Professor Sheena S. Iyengar

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

When you have a complex problem that needs solving, you need an innovation, a solution that is both novel and useful. This course focuses on *The Innovation Method*, which utilizes decision making theory, cognitive science, and industry practice to facilitate creativity and innovation. The course is designed to foster new ideas during the beginning of the semester which will then function as the seeds for an entrepreneurially minded final project. The course culminates in a final project where you will be required to help present a formal and polished pitch of an innovative idea in front of a distinguished panel of successful minds from across the city.

Along the way, we'll ask some pretty big questions: What is a big idea? Where does it come from? Is it a physical invention, like the printing press? Is it a way of doing things, like democracy or capitalism? Does something like 'civilization' qualify as a big idea? We will wrestle with these questions and more, so you can start to think big about how to approach the problem of problem-solving. We'll couple this with examples of 'big ideas', where they come from, and how you can replicate past success. More importantly, we'll give you a set of tools that have been designed exclusively to help you develop the skills and strategies needed to discover foreseeable and transformative ideas of your own.

You will be challenged with hands-on experiential exercises (both in and outside of the classroom) throughout the course to be your most creative and resilient self. Each exercise contributes to a step in *The Innovation Method* and has been designed to take you through the processes of discovering, ideating, evaluating, and editing your ideas. We'll also draw heavily from the latest scientific research on creativity and innovation. You'll learn the benefits and challenges of the Cognitive Innovation as a method as well as drawbacks to other ideation methods like brainstorming, Design Thinking, and Design Sprints. Finally, all students receive direct feedback and coaching from influential business minds (entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, leaders, etc) from across the city.

*To learn more about the instructors for this course, please see the attached bios at the end of the syllabus.*

#### **Grading:**

**Class Participation**

**(20%)**

<b>Homework Assignments</b>	(30%)
<b>Mentor Sessions</b>	(20%)
<b>Final Presentation</b>	(30%)

### **Notable Class Elements**

**The Innovation Method Tools:**

We will introduce you to a number of tools (digital and otherwise) designed specifically to help you search, ideate, and innovate.

**Coaching Sessions:**

Students will have multiple coaching sessions with our prestigious Columbia Innovation Fellows over the course of a single class. These fellows will assist in the ideation process and ultimately assist in the evaluation of team performance and ideas.

**Innovation Fellow Reception:**

Each semester, we hold a reception inviting all students to mingle with Think Bigger alumni and the Columbia Innovation Fellows in a more relaxed environment.

**Final Presentation:**

Using the medium of their choice, students will be required to create a short group presentation of their big idea. Presentations will be given in front of a distinguished panel of judges and receive feedback in real time.

Jan 30 - **Lecture 1** - The State of Innovation

Feb 6 - **Lecture 2** - How to Redefine the Problem

Feb 13 - **Lecture 3** - How to Uncover and Leverage Desires

Feb 20 - **Lecture 4** - How to Break the Problem Down

Feb 27 - **Lecture 5** - The Problem Tournament

Mar 5 - **Lecture 6** - How to Preserve and Foster Creativity in Groups

1 Week of Exams

1 Week Spring Break

Mar 26 - **Lecture 7** - Search and Research: The Insight Matrix

Apr 2 - **Lecture 8** - Imagine and Reimagine: The Bainstorming Alternative

Apr 9 - **Lecture 9** - Mentoring and The Third Eye Test

Apr 16 - **Lecture 10** - Revisit and Revise

Apr 23 - **Lecture 11** - Pitching for Creativity

Apr 30 - **Lecture 12** - Judging

## SUGGESTED READINGS

### Books:

1. *Strategic Intuition* by Bill Duggan
2. *Sprint* by John Zeratsky, Jake Knapp, Braden Kowitz
3. *Where Good Ideas Come From* by Steven Johnson
4. *The Innovators* by Walter Isaacson
5. *The Upstarts: How Uber, Airbnb, and the Killer Companies of the New Silicon Valley Are Changing the World* by Brad Stone
6. *Think By Design* by Tim Brown

### Articles:

1. Fallows, “[The 50 Greatest Breakthroughs Since the Wheel](#),” ([Links to an external site.](#)) *The Atlantic* AND Schienoff, “[What Are the 10 Greatest Inventions of Our Time?](#)” ([Links to an external site.](#)) *Scientific American*
2. Watch Alec Ross, author of *Industries of the Future*, describe the challenges the workforce of the future will face due to globalization, "gig-ification," and robotics.
3. Christensen, Raynor, & McDonalds, “[What is disruptive innovation?](#)” ([Links to an external site.](#)) *Harvard Business Review*
4. Naughton, “[Thomas Kuhn: The Man Who Changed the Way the World Looked at Science](#),” ([Links to an external site.](#)) *The Guardian* ([Links to an external site.](#))
5. “[How the blockchain will radically transform the economy](#).” talk by Bettina Warburg at TEDSummit
6. “[Startups That Seek to ‘Disrupt’ Get More Funding Than Those That Seek to ‘Build’](#)” by Dana Kanze and Sheena S. Iyengar

## INSTRUCTOR BIOS

**Professor Sheena S. Iyengar** is one of the world’s experts on choice and decision-making. Her book *The Art of Choosing* received a Financial Times and Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year 2010 award, and was ranked #3 on the Amazon.com Best Business and Investing Books of 2010. Her research is regularly cited in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and The Economist as well as in popular books, such as Malcolm Gladwell’s *Blink* and Aziz Ansari’s *Modern Romance*. Dr. Iyengar has also appeared on television programs like the Today Show, the Daily Show, and Fareed Zakaria’s GPS on CNN. Her TED Talks have collectively received almost four million views and her research continues to inform markets, businesses, and people all over the world.

Dr. Iyengar is the inaugural S.T. Lee Professor of Business in the Management Division at Columbia Business School. She graduated with a B.S. in Economics from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and received her Ph.D. in Social Psychology from Stanford University. She received the Presidential Early Career Award in 2002 and in 2011 she was named a member of the Thinkers50, a global ranking of the top 50 management thinkers. She was also awarded the Dean’s Award for Outstanding Core Teaching from Columbia Business School in 2012 and was named one of the World’s Best B-School Professors by Poets and Quants.

**Professor William Duggan** is the author of three recent books on innovation: *Strategic Intuition: The Creative Spark in Human Achievement* (2007); *Creative Strategy: A Guide for Innovation* (2012); and *The Seventh Sense: How Flashes of Insight Change Your Life* (2015). In 2007 the journal *Strategy+Business* named *Strategic Intuition* “Best Strategy

Book of the Year.” He has BA, MA and PhD degrees from Columbia University, and twenty years of experience as a strategy advisor and consultant.

Professor Duggan teaches innovation in three venues at Columbia Business School: MBA and Executive MBA courses, and Executive Education sessions. In 2014 he won the Dean’s Award for Teaching Excellence. He has given talks and workshops on innovation to thousands of executives from companies in countries around the world.