# Design Thinking and Start-up Launch

## Prof. Annalinda De Rosa; Prof. Jean-François de Jaegher

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide students with knowledge and understanding of design methods specific to the so-called Design Thinking (DT) approach and methods and instruments for writing a business plan.

“Module 1 - Design Thinking” will introduce the theoretical framework of the DT approach, illustrating the “schools of thought”. As a diversified approach to innovation, the teaching of DT will train students to break down the process for framing, defining, and developing a design opportunity to develop the ability to conduct a foresight process and manage a value-creating process.

In “Module 2 – Developing a business plan for a new venture” students will develop and evaluate a new entrepreneurial project. Throughout the module, students will be required to follow the start-up process till the development of a business plan.

At the end of Module 1, students will be able to:

* dive into a different mindset with a critical thinking, merging DT methods in their activities for elaborating an iterative and explorative process.
* experimenting new tools with an iterative and explorative approach
* acquire know-how on the creative process and operational plan, a necessary skill in multidisciplinary working environments.
* articulate and communicate project research roads with a critical thinking capability.

At the end of Module 2, students will be able to:

* analyze and assess the potential of a new business opportunity.
* develop a concise and compelling value proposition.
* design the basic characteristics of the new venture structure.
* engage in basic financial modelling and financial assessment for the new venture.
* write and present a business plan.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course aims to provide students with the basic knowledge of:

* primary design methodologies and history of design thinking (overview).
* tools and methods used within the DT approach for the entrepreneurship curriculum (perspectives).
* future thinking (overview).
* new venture development issues.
* business planning.
* financial structuring and fluency related to the assessment and launch of a new project.

Module 1 will guide teams of students towards a foresight and creative process to frame and develop a design project opportunity through scenarios in teamwork; Module 2 will guide the same teams of students towards developing a business plan on the selected project.

Module 1: the phases of the process will be:

* critical research: which future scenarios might open new foresight perspectives to develop an entrepreneurial idea?
* explorative research: developing a novel vision that redefines the problems worth addressing and proposing a new value proposition.
* concept ideation: converging to the focus.
* development of entrepreneurial idea.
* refining and final presentation, also with possible further directions

Module 2: the module will be based on training students for the development of a business plan for a new business project. Classes are articulated in lectures and exercises (teamwork sessions and tutorials, project work and open discussions).

Specifically, this part will deal with the following topics:

* role, relevance, and content of a business plan.
* value proposition design.
* market opportunity sizing.
* business structure development.
* evaluation of venture profitability and financial viability.
* project communication.

***READING LIST[[1]](#footnote-1)***

Here follows a list of the compulsory readings for the exam preparation and of the recommended readings about the course’s contents.

**Module 1**

***Compulsory readings for the individual exam of attending students:***

* *Books:*

Verganti, R. (2009). *Design driven innovation: Changing the rules of competition by radically innovating what things mean*. Harvard Business Press.

Michlewski, K. (2016). *Design attitude*. Routledge.

* *Papers:*

Simeone, L., & D'Ippolito, B. (2022).The potential of design-driven foresight to support strategy articulation through experiential learning*. Long Range Planning, 55*(6), 102181.

* *Class lectures*

Contents provided on Blackboard during the course.

***Compulsory readings for the individual exam of not attending students:***

* *Books:*

Martin, R., & Martin, R. L. (2009). *The design of business: Why design thinking is the next competitive advantage*. Harvard Business Press.

Verganti, R. (2009). *Design driven innovation: Changing the rules of competition by radically innovating what things mean*. Harvard Business Press.

Michlewski, K. (2016). *Design attitude.* Routledge*.*

* *Papers:*

Verganti, R., Dell’Era, C., & Swan, K. S. (2021). Design thinking: Critical analysis and future evolution. *Journal of product innovation management*, *38*(6), 603-622.

**Module 2**

***Compulsory readings for the individual exam of attending students:***

* *Books:*

Parolini C., Business Planning, 2021, KDP

***Compulsory readings for the individual exam of not attending students:***

* *Books:*

Parolini C., *Business Planning*, 2021, KDP

* *Papers:*

Blank S. (2013). *Why the Lean Start-up Changes Everthing*, Harvard Business Review.

Braun M., Scott L. and Cannatelli B. (2019). *Strategy and business models: why winning companies need both*, Journal of Business Strategy.

Hinterhuber A. (2005). *Customer value‐based pricing strategies: why companies resist*, Journal of Business Strategy

Kim C.W. and Mauborgne R. (2005). *Blue Ocean Strategy: From Theory to Practice*, California Management Review.

Sawhney M., Wolcott R.C., and Arroniz I. (2006). *The 12 different ways for companies to innovate*, MIT Sloan Management Review.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course embraces the studio format, and it wants to sustain students' capabilities in applying their competencies and expertise to foster the investigation of how to learn and develop a foresight and creative process.

The course will be based on class-related activities: frontal lectures (also by guest lectures), class discussions, teamwork, and oral presentations.

Students are expected to come to each class having read and prepared the required material (articles, cases, or project advancement) and prepared to present and defend their analysis of the material. Students are also expected to generate discussion by questioning both the professor and presentations by their peers.

Course content will be delivered in the following methods:

* Lecture/Introduction of the central theme for each session;
* Tutorials (review sessions) on team project advancement
* Required readings and class discussion;
* Case analyses;
* Student presentations and peer feedback.

Professors will use visual presentations to introduce the subject matter for each session and stimulate class discussion. Copies of each session presentation will be available on Blackboard immediately after the session.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

**We define Attending students as those who attend all the course lectures (both modules) and are included in a working team (the same for both modules) for project development, with no exceptions.**

For Module 1, the assessment method is structured as follows.

*For attending students:*

* 40% based on the team project (project reviews during class sessions and final oral presentation through slides)
* 60% based on the individual oral exam: open questions based on the bibliography.

*For students not attending the course lectures; for students rejecting the final grade:*

* 100% based on an individual oral exam: open questions based on the bibliography.

For Module 2, the assessment method is structured as follows:

*For attending students:*

* 40% based on the team project
* 60% based on the individual oral exam: open questions based on the bibliography. A written test on the quantitative elements of the business plan can precede the oral exam

*For students not attending the course lectures; for students rejecting the final grade:*

* 100% based on an individual oral exam: open and closed questions based on the bibliography. A written test on the quantitative elements of the business plan can precede the oral exam

The final grade will result from 50% final evaluation of Module 1 + 50% final evaluation of Module 2.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attendance in Module 1.

Module 2: students should have a basic knowledge of business finance, including but not limited to:

* Fixed versus Variable Costs;
* Profit Margins;
* Breakeven Analysis

Students unfamiliar with these concepts should notify the professor, who will provide additional readings before the beginning of Module 2.

It is also required a basic knowledge of Excel.

1. The texts listed in the bibliography can be purchased from the University bookstores; they can also be purchased from other retailers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)