

Spring 2021 Syllabus: Social Innovator's Toolbox

(INCO 505B for UNH/University of Record students; 4-credit course; Dr. Fiona Wilson, faculty of record)
Wednesdays, 4pm-6pm'ish via [ZOOM](#)

Instructors

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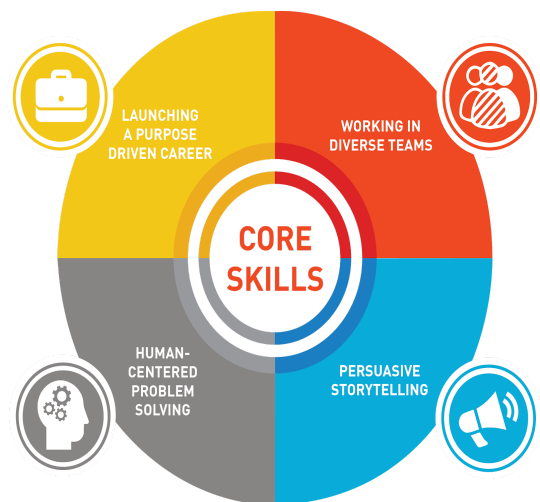
Office Hours: Wednesdays from 3:00-3:45 p.m. via Zoom

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Overview

At the College for Social Innovation, our mission is to educate and inspire the next generation of problem solvers (you!) to tackle humanity's tough challenges. The aim of the **Social Innovator's Toolbox (SITB)**, is two-fold: first, expose you to the main ideas, concepts, methods, and practices in the field of social innovation from a systems-level, multi-sector, and cross-disciplinary perspective; second, provide an opportunity for you to blend theory and practice and apply your knowledge using the principles of Human Centered Design and Storytelling.

The **Social Innovator's Toolbox** course meets virtually via [Zoom](#) on **Wednesdays from 4pm-6pm**. Weekly sessions will include: introductions to new concepts and content; discussion; small group breakout sessions and activities; and opportunities to connect theory and practice by reflecting on how elements of social innovation show up in your internship, communities and lived-experiences. Weekly content will also include pre-work (before class readings and videos) and post-work (self-directed activities, discussion, and reflection based on guiding questions posed by the instructor).



Program Level Competencies

Based on the College for Social Innovation (CFSI) Core Skills, your entire SITC experience will focus on developing the following competencies:

Domain	Category	Competencies: <i>As a result of their SITC experience, Fellows will. . .</i>
Human Centered Problem Solving	Attitudes	develop, explore, and nurture a solutions mindset ; including building a sense of civic identity and a recognition of their individual and collective roles and responsibilities in becoming effective problem solvers .
	Skills	apply design thinking as a set of principles and a series of tools for identifying and understanding complex social and ecological problems , and designing and developing innovative solutions and measuring impact.
	Knowledge	develop an understanding of the complex nature of social systems and ability to think critically and creatively about the roles and responsibilities of self and community in identifying and addressing persistent and pervasive social and environmental challenges .
Persuasive Storytelling	Attitudes	express openness and interest in diverse people and perspectives and to acknowledge the limitations of singular narratives .
	Skills	develop, construct, and share stories that motivate and persuade audiences to act and to listen, empathize, reflect, and learn from the stories of others .
	Knowledge	discover the ways in which storytelling , supported by data and details , facilitates the exchange of knowledge, builds connections, and how it can promote change .
Launching a Purpose Driven Career	Attitudes	develop confidence as young professionals contributing to social change, and a desire to pursue a sustainable career in social impact.
	Skills	translate evidence-based indicators of professional readiness into practical skills for success in the social sector.
	Knowledge	develop an awareness of the importance of building and leveraging robust networks , establishing a professional brand , and making connections between individual values and a professional purpose .
Working in Diverse Teams	Attitudes	take responsibility for considering, analyzing, and reflecting on the ways in which our individual values, mindsets, and beliefs impact self, others, and community to demonstrate a commitment to equity and inclusion.
	Skills	balance inquiry and advocacy and translate systemic knowledge into self-awareness and behaviors that enable one to contribute and collaborate effectively in intersectional workspaces.
	Knowledge	learn from and about diverse identities and experiences , identify one's position in a group, and recognize the ways in which power, oppression, and privilege influence organizations and communities.

Course Learning Outcomes

By completing the Social Innovator's Toolbox course, Fellows will be able to:

1. Examine how different theories, definitions, and models of social changemaking, including storytelling, apply to complex social and ecological systems, stakeholder groups and communities

- 1.1. Evaluate the impact of existing models, methods and approaches for addressing social and ecological problems

- 1.2. Identify opportunities to translate theory into practice, build connections across learning environments and promote action

2. Implement Human Centered Design and design thinking as tools to address complex social problems in the context of Boston

- 2.1. Examine the role of diverse perspectives in developing and proposing innovative solutions that are feasible, desirable and sustainable

- 2.2. Demonstrate a solutions mindset

3. Question the ways in which your individual experiences, privilege and biases impact how you show up as a changemaker

- 3.1. Maximize opportunities for self-reflection and demonstrate a commitment to learning from self and others

4. Effectively use data and details to compose and deliver compelling stories that inform, inspire and influence others to take action

What You Can Expect

College for Social Innovation believes in experiential, project-based learning inside and outside of the classroom. Social Innovator's Toolbox is designed to feel different from a typical undergraduate university course, with an emphasis on **Human Centered Design (HCD) and Storytelling**. Together we will adopt the mindsets of human centered design (Empathy, Optimism, Iteration, Creative Confidence, Making, Embracing Ambiguity, and Learning from Failure); review theories, definitions and models of social changemaking; explore the ways in which individuals, organizations and communities are working together to address complex issues including food insecurity, criminal justice reform, climate justice, and wealth inequality; and implement storytelling as a tool to help us to learn, organize, educate, and advocate.

What We Expect From All of Us: Guiding Principles for SITC

- *Inclusion and Belonging:* At Semester in the City, we invite you to choose to bring your full self each day knowing that you will be seen, respected, and embraced. We aim for our community to practice empathy and develop connections with others, and to allow ourselves to be shaped by those interactions. Empathy does not require shared experience, rather it is the ability to connect based on shared feelings, whether loss, disappointment, and anger, or joy, pride, and gratitude.
- *Engaged Learning Community:* Social change is a team sport, individuals - and organizations - are more likely to thrive, learn, and solve complex problems when we enlist the help of others, support our colleagues, and work in diverse groups. We will be our best together and learn the most when we are comfortable being uncomfortable and make room for diverse experiences and ways for learning. In our learning community, kindness and generosity should be extended as gifts, with the most generous interpretation of the intentions, words, and actions of others; it is the assumption that we are all doing the best we can. When the work is hard, and progress is challenging, we give extra.
- *Take Agency and Be a Problem Solver:* You are in charge of your own experience and your presence impacts the community as a whole. Be curious and acknowledge gaps in your knowledge to enable learning new things and expand your perspective. Listen, ask questions, and at times, sit with the discomfort of uncertainty and not knowing. Then, challenge yourself to take action knowing you might fail. No one is expecting perfection, rather you are encouraged to take risks, be vulnerable and engage in productive struggle. Persevere! Your abilities as a problem solver will develop with dedication and hard work.
- *Health and Wellbeing:* Engaging in social change, even in the form of a semester-long fellowship, is challenging. Know that we are a community that recognizes this and values self-care as essential to a career in social change. We are committed to each fellow cultivating personal, emotional, and academic well-being during SITC. In this effort, you are not alone. Communicate your needs and ASK FOR HELP without feelings of shame, guilt or embarrassment. We are all working on these skills and need help from time to time. As an organization, we set policies and procedures to create an environment in which Fellows' well-being is valued, whether that be in our housing, courses, or through our code of conduct.
- *Explore New Things:* This semester is a rich opportunity to try out new experiences, places, and pieces of your current and future self. Be curious and acknowledge gaps in your knowledge to enable learning new things and expand your perspective in the City of Boston and this group of new colleagues in the coming months. Band together with your fellow Fellows to check out brand new experiences.

Class Structure

The **Social Innovator's Toolbox** course meets virtually via [Zoom](#) on **Wednesdays from 4pm-6pm** and through occasional **Friday in-person sessions and weekly asynchronous online assignments**. While the approach may vary based on the weekly content, each week will include both synchronous (online, together at the same time!) sessions and self-directed learning (post-work, activities, reflection).

Sample Session Schedule

4pm-4:30	Openers, overview, breakouts, and small group discussion
4:20-5pm	New & Review: Core Concepts, discussion, and Q&A
5pm-5:10	Break
5:10-5:55	Applied Learning: Small group discussions, activities, guest speakers etc.
5:55-6pm	Closing and Reminders
6pm-7pm	Zoom Power Hour: *Optional, but encouraged independent work time

Learning Community Engagement: Attendance and Participation

As a Semester in the City Fellow you are a valued member of our learning community and our organization as a whole. As such, consistently attending classes, both virtual and in-person, is critical. **The expectation for attendance is that all Fellows will be present for every class.**

In our classrooms, you are an influencer. Your behavior impacts others. Listen, reflect, engage, and take ownership over your experience as a learner. We recognize that in a time where many of us have become used to our smartphones being extensions of our hands, it can be difficult to unplug, but 15 weeks is a short time to be together and it's time we can't get back. For the few hours a week that you are in class, we ask you to stop scrolling, texting, and surfing and give yourself the opportunity to connect with the material and each other.

Being present goes beyond simply coming to class and passively absorbing the content. The non-traditional, experiential elements of SITC require you to actively engage in learning as both a process and an outcome. This means:

- Arriving on-time and prepared;
- Demonstrating a willingness to think creatively and critically;
- Fully committing to contribute your unique ideas, experiences, and perspectives; while also being receptive and open to the ideas of others.

Excused Absences

While the expectation is that you make every effort to attend all of the synchronous elements of the program, we also recognize that life happens. **If you are sick, have an emergency or other extenuating circumstances, please email courses@collegeforsocialinnovation.org to alert your instructors if you will be missing class, will be more than 10 minutes late, or will need to leave class more than 10 minutes early.** Whenever possible, emails should be sent prior to the class start time.

Learning Management System (LMS)

CFSI uses the Schoology LMS platform, and this is where all assignments, up-to-date schedules, course materials, and other resources will be concentrated. Each Fellow will be enrolled in three courses and one group for the semester, and most communication from the program team will be centralized on this platform. **It is the expectation that Fellows will log-in to Schoology on a daily basis** and are responsible for all the information contained within it.

Grading & Assignments

I strongly believe that learning is both a process and an outcome. This semester I want to push you to prioritize the *process*. Each of you comes to SITC with your own toolbox of sorts; some will be overflowing– packed with knowledge, strategies and resources you’ve gathered along the way. Others may find lots of space in their box– room to add and grow. The goal for our learning community isn’t to equip everyone with the exact same set of tools, rather it is to help you to learn how to confidently identify the right tools needed to fix what might be broken and to encourage you to share that knowledge with others.

*The assignments and activities that follow are designed to help us both to ensure that you will leave our time together feeling better equipped to tackle the challenges ahead. Unfortunately, for many of us, grades have existed solely as a tangible flex– a way to quantify our learning and prove to ourselves and others that we “get it”. But here’s the thing–**your grades do not define you**; nor do they always accurately reflect the effort, thought, and time you’ve invested.

Let’s try something a little different– something *innovative*. Let’s work together this semester to reframe the way we think about what success looks and feels like. Let’s find meaningful ways to prioritize the process of learning. Let’s commit to grades existing as just one piece of the learning puzzle. Let’s focus on mutual accountability and progress over perfection. Let’s go into this semester with open minds, open hearts, and space to surprise ourselves with just how much we have to offer ourselves and each other.

CFSI Grading Scale

The baseline for the College for Social Innovation— “meets expectations”— means that students who have demonstrated overall proficiency in the learning outcomes of the course will earn a B level grade.

To the extent you exceed expectations in the quality of your work, your grade will be a B+ or an A-, depending on the level and frequency of that performance. An A grade is for those who consistently exceed expectations, or to a significant degree. Receiving a C grade or less is usually the result of failure to submit your work on time, or to follow instructions, or to simply fail in making the effort to produce a college-level work product.

For all assignments, an assignment overview, a grading rubric, and samples will be provided to help you understand what is required to meet expectations and what is required to exceed those expectations. CFSI takes a competency-based approach and as a result, most assignments for this course will be eligible for resubmission to improve your grade. More information about resubmission opportunities will be detailed in each assignment overview.

93–100% A Exemplary performance	70–72% C- Below expectations, needs improvement
90–92% A- Consistently above expectations	
87–89% B+ Above expectations, very good	67–69% D+ Consistently below, but enough to get credit
83–86% B Meets expectations, good overall performance	63–66% D Underperforming
80–82% B- Meets expectations most of the time	60–62% D- Should consider repeating the course
77–79% C+ Mostly meets expectations but below at times	
73–76% C Below expectations but passing	< 60% F No credit for the course

Grade Components

LEARNING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (LCE)			
R1-R10:	Weekly Reflections (10X10pts.)	100pts	40%
D1-D10:	Weekly Discussions (10x10pts.)	100pts	
LCE +	LCE: A-la-carte *See Schoology for options	100pts	
STORYTELLING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE			
S1	What's Your (Insta) Story: The Human in Human Centered Design	25pts	30%
S2	Storytelling with Data	25pts	
S3	Public Narrative	25pts	
S4	Fellow's Choice *See Schoology for options	25pts	
HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN			
HCD1	HCD Prototype Presentation (Team)	50pts	30%
HCD2	Designer Debrief (Individual)	50pts	

More on Assignments

- Each week you will complete one discussion post and one reflection
 - Prompts will be provided via Schoology and will be linked in the weekly learning plan
- Due dates/days/times for submissions will be determined by the learning community during our first class
- Additional details about each grading component will be provided in class and on Schoology
 - Rubrics and detailed assignment overviews will included
- You will be assigned a letter grade based on a weighted average of the above assignments
 - *See above for more details on grades

Course Outline

The course outline and content schedule below is a working draft and **Fellows should ALWAYS refer to Schoology for the most up to date, detailed information** (Schoology> SITB> Weekly Course Materials> Program Week).

SITB Spring 2021: Content Schedule		
Week 1	1/20	Launch Week, No Wednesday p.m. Class
Week 2	1/27	Building Community and Telling our Stories
Pre-Work		READ: Ashley's Teaching Statement-See Schoology WATCH: The Danger of a Single Story
Deliverables		DISCUSS: 10 Word Challenge REFLECT: Welcome to the Arena (Theodore Roosevelt)
Week 3	2/3	Intro to Social Innovation
Pre-Work		READ- *Primer: Social Innovation 101-See Schoology READ- Choose One: Meals on Wheels ; Maternal Mortality App ; Solar Power ; Oysters ; Drug Treatment ; Campus Sexual Assault WATCH: Solving the World's Toughest Problems (2 minute listen)
Deliverables		DISCUSS: You should see this REFLECT: Change Takes Time (John Lewis) SUBMIT: Instastory
Week 4	2/10	Principles of Human Centered Design
Pre-Work		READ: *Primer* Review HCD Toolkit- See Schoology READ: Op-Ed: To persuade Georgians to vote, I learned to slow down and engage. It works WATCH: Want to help someone? Shut up and listen.

Deliverables		DISCUSS: 99 problems, let's focus on one REFLECT: The "human" in HCD
Week 5	2/17	Working in Systems
Pre-Work		READ- *Primer: Systems Thinking: An Introduction (Oxfam, 2015) READ: Chef points out what's wrong with the food industry by comparing two pics WATCH: Shape Up Somerville: Building and Sustaining a Healthy Community with Collective Impact
Deliverables		DISCUSS: HCD Team DB #1- Identifying the Problem REFLECT: Systems of privilege
Week 6	2/24	Broken(?) Systems
Pre-Work		READ- The National Center for Victims of Crime's " The Criminal Justice System " READ/Watch: TBD
Deliverables		DISCUSS: HCD Team DB #2- Learning from Others REFLECT: This is America
Week 7	3/3	Power
Pre-Work		READ- *Optional Primer: READ: Second Chance Pell Grants Expand to 67 More Prison Sites WATCH: What prosecutors and incarcerated people can learn from each other
Deliverables		DISCUSS: HCD Team DB #3- Brainstorm REFLECT: Education as Freedom
Week 8	3/10	SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS
Week 9	3/17	Progress
Pre-Work		READ: *Primer* Unveiling the Informal Economy READ: First NYC housing complex bought by and for the LGBTQ+ community opens WATCH: Sex Education, Last Week Tonight with John Oliver
Deliverables		DISCUSS: HCD Team DB #4- Concept Note REFLECT: I exist...I exist
Week 10	3/24	Intersectionality
Pre-Work		READ: TIME's " She Coined the Term 'Intersectionality' Over 30 Years Ago. Here's What It Means to Her Today " READ: Mortality rate for Black babies is cut dramatically when Black doctors care for them after birth, researchers say WATCH: The urgency of intersectionality: Kimberly Crenshaw

Deliverables		DISCUSS: HCD Team DB #5- End User Feedback REFLECT: History repeats itself
Week 11	3/31	Activism and Advocacy
Pre-Work		READ: *Primer- Storytelling for social change READ: The New York Times' " What If Instead of Calling People Out, We Called Them In? " WATCH: Why it's worth listening to people you disagree with (Wood, 2018)
Deliverables		DISCUSS: HCD Team DB #6- Draft Presentation REFLECT: How do you show up?
Week 12	4/7	How Change Happens: HCD Presentations #1
Pre-Work		TBD
Deliverables		SUBMIT: HCD Prototype Presentation & Artifact
Week 13	4/14	HOW CHANGE HAPPENS: HCD Presentations #2
Deliverables		SUBMIT: Public Narrative
Week 14	4/21	WHAT'S IN YOUR TOOLBOX? Sharing our stories
Deliverables		SUBMIT: Designer Debrief
Week 15	4/28-4/30	SHOWCASE WEEK- NO CLASS
Deliverables		PRESENT: Showcase Speech, yay!

****IMPORTANT NOTE:** Additional readings, videos, resources and activities will be posted to Schoology. PLEASE refer to the weekly course materials folder on Schoology for the most up-to-date information