Faculty:
Alan Van Pelt, Design Strategy consultant, (650) 248-3937, apvanpelt@yahoo.com

Teaching Assistant:
Abdullah Kuraan, Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student, abdullah_kuraan@berkeley.edu

Class Meetings:
M 12:00-3:00 pm; F 2:00-3:00 pm: Jacobs Institute, Room 220

Note:
- The first lecture will be on Friday August 25, 2-3pm.
- No class on 9/4 due to holiday

Office Hours:
Alan Van Pelt: After class and by appointment.
Abdullah and Monica: To be announced.

Duration of course:
August 25-October 13. The final will be held on either Friday October 13 or Saturday October 14, depending on the preference of the class. The final will be 3 hours long. Please hold both dates open until this has been finalized.

Course Description:
Designed for professionally-oriented graduate students, this course introduces students to Design Thinking, a human-centered approach to innovation and problem solving. Design thinking combines empathy for people within the context of a problem, creativity in the generation of insights and solutions, and rationality in analyzing and fitting various solutions to the problem context. Design firms such as IDEO describe it as "matching people’s needs with what is technologically feasible and viable." By understanding how designers approach problems, the methods they use to understand stakeholders and develop creative solutions, individuals and businesses will be better able to improve their own problem solving and creative outcomes. Watch this 4 min video for a nice explanation of Design Thinking: http://vimeo.com/90355541.

This course emphasizes problem solving as a process within a people-centered context, employing methods from design, qualitative research, and prototyping, all
in a collaborative, cross-functional environment. We will focus on collecting qualitative data, translating that data into unique insights and needs, and finally into products, services, and experiences that improve people’s lives.

**Course Objectives:**
Design has become an increasingly powerful force in the last decade. What began as a focus on styling and aesthetics has led to sophisticated methods and processes for creatively tackling a wide variety of problems. More than ever, designers are called upon to place human needs at the center of their design engagement. As a result, Design Thinking has become a powerful approach to addressing issues at micro and macro levels, ranging from complex social and cultural problems, to innovating in startups and Fortune 500 companies alike.

This course aims to teach students to be design thinkers who apply this problem solving and innovation process to a wide variety of problems. We will introduce students to the tools, practices, tenets, mindsets, and theory of Design Thinking, with an emphasis on practical application.

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:
- Explain the methods, processes, and key tenets of design thinking.
- Understand how a Design Thinking approach differs from other problem-solving approaches.
- Investigate problems, develop qualitative research methods, and synthesize results as a platform to create solutions.
- Develop a deeper and more holistic understanding of users and their needs, motivations, and behaviors.
- Develop unique insights about users, and focus those into design that has a clear perspective.
- Understand that, in addition to the creation of innovative objects and places, design thinking can be applied to the development of new processes, services, interactions, and collaborations.
- Recognize the interdisciplinary practice of various design professions and the value of design thinking as a means of innovative problem solving across disciplines.
- Build a rigorous and elegant argument for design projects.

**Course Prerequisites:**
Graduate level standing. This is not an technical course, and as such, no engineering knowledge is required.

**Topics Covered:**
Design thinking models and tenets, qualitative research methods, problem finding and framing, analysis and synthesis of research, abductive thinking, ideation and
creativity techniques, experimentation and rapid prototyping, concept testing, iterative design, and identifying and communicating unique points of view.

**Class/Laboratory Schedule:**
This class builds on Confucius’s notion: "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." There will be a lot of doing in the class sessions to develop facility with the Design Thinking tools that students can apply to their own research projects, careers, and beyond.

- 4 hours of class per week for first half of Fall semester
- The three-hour sessions on Mondays will include lecture, discussion of readings, and some hands-on activities.
- The one-hour Friday session will include workshops and expose students to designers from industry and provide some practical advice.

**Contribution of the Course to Meeting Professional Component:**
The course focuses on "soft" professional skills that are critical for successful innovation in industry today. Design thinking—which involves thinking things forward, thinking laterally, thinking systemically and thinking synthetically—transcends roles and disciplines. It is essential both for analyzing existing conditions and generating new opportunities. By exploring different ways of thinking and learning, and equipping practitioners with processes and toolsets, we will see that the education of a design thinker can be preparation for many possible futures.

**Assessment of Student Progress Toward Course Objectives:**
25% on homework assignments
20% on participation and deliverables in final innovation challenge
20% on attendance and participation in class
15% on post-reflection
10% on teammate evaluation
10% on weekly reading quizzes

**Online Tools:**
We will make extensive use of the course bcourse web site to both communicate information to you and to converse with you about your homework and your class challenges. You will find the bcourse site at:
[https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/courses/1464547](https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/courses/1464547)

**Laptop, Tablet And Smartphone Policy:**
Class time will focus almost entirely on in-class exercises to bring to life problem-based learning. You will need to give your full attention to your teammates, to the work you are being asked to do together, and to what you are taking away from that work. Please do not use your laptops or smartphones in class, unless it is for a class exercise or to take notes (no email, texting, web browsing, Facebook, etc.) Any
violation of this policy will lead to a reduction in your participation grade. We love
the way Adaptive Path, one of the design firms we work with, describes its policy
along these lines:

**Honor the gathering.** *In this ever more interrupt-driven digital world, it's a challenge
to bring together all the right people at the same time to think, make and solve
problems that are too complex for just a few people to figure out. Gatherings of this
magnitude need opening ceremonies to acknowledge the value of the time we are
about to spend together. Typically these ceremonies don’t include marching bands or
fireworks (although that would be cool), but there are small and simple actions that
help us all recognize that this is a sacred time. These small things include sending out
invitations ahead of time, providing food and drink, creating an environment where
people can focus without laptops or smart phones, welcoming and orienting people to
our day together, and having the client sponsor begin the workshop with essentially an
opening blessing for the people gathered and the work we will accomplish.*
(www.adaptivepath.com)

**Textbook (s) and/or Other Required Readings:**
*Interviewing Users: How to uncover compelling insights* by Steve Portigal.
Hardcopy available on Amazon and elsewhere. Search around for the best price.

Other assigned readings are linked in the syllabus below and are also on BCourse.
All readings should be finished before class, and there will be a weekly quiz on them.
Additionally, your grade is partially based on your participation in class discussions
about readings.

**Class Attendance and Participation:**
There are only seven weeks of class for this course. All of these sessions will entail
active discussion and exercises with others in the class. Your participation grade
will be based on your *on-time arrival to and active participation in class sessions.*

Understandably, there may be a time we're you're absolutely unable to attend class,
so we allow each student 1 free absence without penalty. Feel free to use it as you
wish, no need to request permission. If you miss a quiz on that 1 free absence, the
grade for that missed quiz will be the average of your other quiz grades.

**Homework Assignments:**
For each class session there will be individual and group assignment that students
must complete before coming to class. These assignments allow students to
experiment with some of the techniques being taught in the class and will be the
basis for in-class exercises.
Homework will be assigned in class, and detailed on BCourse, and is due by 12pm of the following class. Late homeworks will be penalized one-third of a grade for every day it’s late. Eg, An A- becomes a B+ for one late day.

**Weekly Reading Quizes**
At the start of every Monday class, we will have a short quiz on the readings that are due that day. This ensures that students stay up to date on readings, which will be helpful for homeworks and team projects. You may take notes on the readings and use those notes during the quiz. The notes should be printed on paper, as no laptops or phones are permitted during the quizzes.

**Post-Reflection**
An individual deliverable. We will ask you to write a short, 1-2 page reflection on what you learned from the class. This will be due after the last class.

**Course Design**
This is a project-based course. Students will form teams and work on a team project of their choosing (subject to instructor approval) for 6 of the 7 weeks. In the final week, all students will work on the same final design challenge, which will be announced in the 6th week of the class.

**Working in Teams and Teammate Evaluation**
This is a project-based class that relies on effective teamwork. It’s each team member’s responsibility to show up to their team meetings on-time, prepared, and ready to be an active participant. Prepared means doing the class readings and bringing the learnings from them to group discussions. It also means doing the individual homework assignments before meetings and bringing them to the group to share. Being an active participant means contributing thoughts, ideas, and effort, while also being open and receptive to others’ perspectives. Each team member is responsible for creating a comfortable environment for others to share their perspectives.

If a teammate is not pulling their weight or is otherwise making the team less effective, please let a GSI or the instructor know. At the end of the class, each team member will have an opportunity to grade the contributions of their teammates.
Week 1 (Fri 8/25): Introduction to Design Thinking
Design Thinking is an iterative process of Understanding, Ideation, and Realization. Using a human-centered approach, Understanding comes from empathy building and analysis techniques. Ideation is the process of generating and refining ideas based on that understanding. Realization is the process of making those ideas real enough that they can be interacted with to further understanding. You will be introduced to different models of Design Thinking but we will use the one pictured here to organize class material.

In the first week, we'll introduce you to the Design Thinking process and talk about its relevance and importance.

Readings (complete before 8-25 class, Take notes):
• Design Thinking Handbook: Chapter 1 – Why we need design thinking. https://www.designbetter.co/design-thinking/why-we-need-design-thinking
• IDEO Shopping Cart Project. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=taj0V-YCiel
• “Asking the important questions: A guide to design thinking.” http://www.innovationmanagement.se/2011/05/30/assembling-the-questions-a-guide-to-design-thinking-and-a-better-way-to-serve-customers/
• Process and Problem definition. https://vimeo.com/57617635
• What is Problem Framing in Design? https://vimeo.com/6180364
• Problem Framing, Jeremy Alexis. https://vimeo.com/groups/iitdesigncommunity/videos/21770257

Week 2 (Mon 8/28, Fri 9/1): Building empathy through qualitative research
At the heart of Design Thinking is the ability to build empathy for users, to see situations from multiple perspectives, and to see with a “beginner’s eye.” Deep understanding of your users leads to new perspectives which, in turn, spawn novel solutions. This involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, and being
open to questioning assumptions and trying on others’ points of view. For many reasons, people often have trouble directly articulating what they need and want. (Henry Ford: “If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses.”) Your job is to watch people closely and elicit stories from them that give us clues about their unarticulated beliefs and needs.

This class session will focus on how to build deep empathy for users, including what to watch for, how to ask good questions and elicit stories from people, how to get to the heart of motivations, and why we need to question our initial assumptions and interpretations.

Readings (complete before 8/28 class. Take notes):
• Class slides: Research.pdf (on bcourse)
• What fuels great design (and why most startups don’t do it), https://library.gv.com/what-fuels-great-design-and-why-most-startups-don-t-do-it-a8dd2c4f5cb4
• Getting People to Talk: An Ethnography & Interviewing Primer, http://vimeo.com/1269848
• Interviewing Users by Steve Portigal. Chapters 1, 2, and 5

Readings (complete before 9/1 class. Take notes):
• Teamwork Tools handout. PDF on Bcourse.
  http://iic.wiki.fgv.br/file/view/LEONARDO%3BSpark+Innovation...DesignHBRv75i6nov-dec_97.pdf
• Interviewing Users by Steve Portigal. Chapters 6 and 8
• Alex Blumberg Interview: Part 2. The Tim Ferriss Podcast.
  http://fourhourworkweek.com/2015/01/29/alex-blumberg/
  Also here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7KdASy-2jI
• A palette of interview questions. PDF on bCourse.

Optional readings

Week 3 (Monday 9/11, Fri 9/15): Interpretation - Analysis of research
One of the most challenging parts of the Design Thinking process is making sense of the research data and developing insights. Dev Patnaik of Jump Associates calls it
“cutting cubes out of fog.” This data can be hard data – statistics you’ve collected about your product, issue or situation, and it can be soft data – videotapes of the interviews you did with your customers, quotes from users and the like. Inevitably, when you start this part of the process, the pile of data looks overwhelming and it is hard to believe you will be able to learn anything meaningful from it. It may also appear to be nothing new, or overly subjective and anecdotal. We’ll focus on analysis techniques to help dissect stories you hear, find patterns, and draw out needs and unique insights that can be abstracted to a larger group. In this phase, you’ll seek to understand more deeply why people are doing and saying what they are, and describe that understanding with simple diagrams, models, and frameworks.

Readings (complete before 9/11 class. Take notes.):
- Class slides: Interpretation.pdf (on bcourse)
- Jeremy Alexis 2/6: Analysis and Synthesis. Watch up to 13m45s. [https://vimeo.com/148034721](https://vimeo.com/148034721)
- Interviewing users by Steve Portigal:
  - Chapter 6 “Debriefing after the interview” section only
- Design Research: From Interview to Insight Part 1 Summarizing the Interview. [https://medium.com/design-research-methods/design-research-from-interview-to-insight-part-one-summarising-the-interview-dceee9ba0969](https://medium.com/design-research-methods/design-research-from-interview-to-insight-part-one-summarising-the-interview-dceee9ba0969)
- Design Research: From Interview to Insight Part 2, Synthesizing Insight. [https://medium.com/design-research-methods/design-research-from-interview-to-insight-f6957b37c698](https://medium.com/design-research-methods/design-research-from-interview-to-insight-f6957b37c698)
- Case Study: How to use empathy to create products people love. Start at 25m20s through end. [https://vimeo.com/126976733#t=1520s](https://vimeo.com/126976733#t=1520s)

Optional readings
- Digging beyond user preferences. Indi Young Google tech talk. Watch up to minute 47. Take notes. Hint: if you click on the gear icon, you can increase the
playback speed. I like to watch at 1.25 or 1.5x.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4AsxNg9nNU
• Observing the User Experience by Ch 15: Analyzing Qualitative Data. Look on BCourse.

Week 4 (Monday 9/18):
Directions - Finding a Unique and clear POV
While analysis techniques help clarify and organize your research, synthesis techniques help you come to a point of view. Your point of view is your unique design vision, derived from discoveries made in your empathy building. It’s a guiding statement that focuses on specific users and insights. In this class, we’ll focus on tools and methods that help to develop focus and a unique point of view. We’ll learn to think about whitespaces and to create design principles.

Readings (complete before 9/18 class. Take notes.):
• Class slides: Directions.pdf (on bcourse)
• Point of View. https://vimeo.com/50933741
• Design Principles example: http://www.designkit.org/stories/154

Optional readings
• Excerpt from Needfinding by Dev Patnaik. Design Principles. On Bcourses
• Creating How Might We Statements. https://vimeo.com/50934255
• How Reframing a Problem Unlocks Innovation. Fast Company.  
  http://www.fastcodesign.com/1672354/how-reframing-a-problem-unlocks-innovation

**Week 5 (Monday 9/25): Solutions - Ideate, Prototype, Testing, Selection**

The secret to good ideation is that the good ideas come from provocative prompts and questions. These prompts are often most successful when they come from specific and meaningful insights about your users and your challenge. When you mix user insights with other kinds of prompts and force yourself to make connections, great ideas happen.

In the first three weeks, you will hear multiple times about the dynamic balance between diverging and converging. This session will focus on really diverging – or in other words generating a LARGE volume and WIDE range of ideas for your design challenge.

Prototyping is getting ideas and discussions out of your head and into the physical world. Prototypes force you to stop discussing and start creating. Your goal is to build to think and learn. Prototypes foster clarity and help engage your users in a different way, to further your understanding. A prototype need not be very polished, but should push you learning forward. A prototype could be as simple as a storyboard, or as complex as a 3D printed object. The idea is that the fidelity should be commensurate with your progress and what you want to learn about.

Getting feedback from others is an important part of the design process. Early on, your prototypes and ideas will be crude, so the type of feedback you solicit will be different than when your prototypes and ideas become more refined. We’ll discuss different approaches to collecting feedback and how to address that feedback.

**Readings (complete before 9/25 class. Take notes.):**

  http://www.inc.com/magazine/19970501/1229.html


• Design Thinking Handbook: Chapter 4 – Ideate.  
  https://www.designbetter.co/design-thinking/ideate

• How to have an Idea. http://www.frankchimero.com/writing/how-to-have-an-idea/


• Prototyping. [https://vimeo.com/52442076](https://vimeo.com/52442076)

Optional readings
• “Napkin Sketches 101.” Steelcase. PDF on Bcourse.
• What Google Learned from its Quest to Build the Perfect Team. [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/what-google-learned-from-its-quest-to-build-the-perfect-team.html?_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/what-google-learned-from-its-quest-to-build-the-perfect-team.html?_r=2)
• Finding your innovation sweet spot. HBR March 2003. [https://hbr.org/2003/03/finding-your-innovation-sweet-spot](https://hbr.org/2003/03/finding-your-innovation-sweet-spot)

**Week 6 (Monday 10/2): Storytelling and Effective Presentations**
Throughout the class so far, stories have played an important role. We've talked about gathering stories from users or customers so that we can better understand their needs, and have shared the insights gained from observation and interviews in stories. We've used metaphors to generate ideas and frame compelling stories around those ideas, and created short stories to motivate adoption of new offerings. Broadly speaking, the Design Thinking process can be thought of one of “figuring out the story” and then “telling a new story”. In this session, we focus on storytelling for its importance in engaging others in the ideas we generate through the design process. You'll learn about how to use story-telling techniques to inspire others to embrace your ideas.

The presentations of your class projects will either be on Friday 10/6 or Monday 10/9.

**Readings (complete before 10/2 class. Take notes.):**
• This Advice will transform the way you give presentations: [http://firstround.com/review/This-Advice-From-IDEOs-Nicole-Kahn-Will-Transform-the-Way-You-Give-Presentations/](http://firstround.com/review/This-Advice-From-IDEOs-Nicole-Kahn-Will-Transform-the-Way-You-Give-Presentations/)
• The Irresistable Power of Storytelling. [https://hbr.org/2014/03/the-irresistable-power-of-storytelling-as-a-strategic-business-tool](https://hbr.org/2014/03/the-irresistable-power-of-storytelling-as-a-strategic-business-tool)
• Kurt Vonnegut on the Shapes of Stories: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oP3c1h8v2ZQ&sns=em](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oP3c1h8v2ZQ&sns=em)
• How to Give a Killer Presentation. [https://hbr.org/2013/06/how-to-give-a-killer-presentation](https://hbr.org/2013/06/how-to-give-a-killer-presentation)
• “How to design and deliver presentations like a pro.” Garr Reynolds. http://www.garrreynolds.com/Presentation/pdf/presentation_tips.pdf
• Watch TEDX: Nancy Duarte: The secret structure of great talks, http://youtu.be/1nYFpuc2Umk

Optional

Week 7 (Monday 10/9): Final Innovation Challenge & Summary
The remaining class time will be used to introduce the final innovation challenge, Review what we’ve learned, and discuss further topics for consideration.

The final exam will take the form of a final innovation challenge. You will have an opportunity to follow the entire Design Thinking process during this week. You will be given the final innovation challenge during an orientation session the prior week. We expect that you will compete in the same small teams. You will have time in class to plan your attack on the problem, how you will conduct your interviews, how you will share the insights you’ve gained, and anything else you want to do to prepare yourselves for the challenge. You’ll have the opportunity to solicit feedback from instructors and TAs during the week.

Readings (complete before 10/9 class. Take notes.):
• Agile, Lean, Design Thinking, Continuous Delivery… which should I use? https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/agile-lean-design-thinking-continuous-delivery-which-should-jaye
• Lean vs Design Thinking. https://medium.com/art-marketing/lean-vs-design-thinking-6ae7c04453a6#.7l54p9un9

**Final Exam: Final Innovation Challenge (10/13 or 10/14):**
The final innovation challenge presentations will be either on 10/13 or 10/14, based on a class vote. An award will be given to the team with the best research and the team with the best solutions.

**Post-Reflection (due date: tbd after 10/14)**
An individual deliverable. We will ask you to write a short, 1-2 page reflection on what you learned from the class. This will be due after the last class.