**Think Bigger Spring 2023**

**Course Logistics**

| **Room** | Geffen 420 |
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| **Time** | Section 01: Wednesdays, 2 pm – 5:15 pm  Section 02: Wednesdays, 6 pm – 9:15 pm |
| **Professor** | Dr. Sheena S. Iyengar  Contact: siyengar@columbia.edu |
| **Executive Teaching Assistant & Coach** | Blaine Horton |
| **Course Teaching Assistant** | Katelynn Boland |
| **Course Coordinator / Administrator** | Eleanor Bentley  Contact: sheenaiyengaroffice@gsb.columbia.edu |

**Course Overview**

How do we get our best ideas? And, once we have an idea, how do we know if we should pursue it? That’s what the Think Bigger course is about: what it takes to create our best ideas.

Over the last decade, modern science—in particular, neuro- and cognitive sciences—have revealed to us how creative ideas develop in the human mind. Here, I present this new knowledge to you as a six-step method called Think Bigger. In every class session, I draw on the relevant science and on many instructive examples to explain the method’s rationale and how it works in practice.

We use a workshop format, where every session includes individual in-class exercises, or “creative challenges,” which enable you to develop your skills as an ideator. In addition, all students join a group project, take on an important problem facing our world, and strive to use the six-step method to generate a solution which will be showcased on the last day of class.

Think Bigger is a new and unique ideation methodology only offered here at Columbia Business School. It is different from previous mainstream methods of ideation, like Design Thinking. We will use as a textbook a complete draft of Think Bigger, a book by me that will be published in April 2023.

**The Think Bigger Mentor Program**

As part of the Think Bigger course, every student group will receive coaching and mentorship from members of the Columbia Business School Innovation Fellows Program. The Innovation Fellows is a group of 200+ leading global business practitioners from industries spanning technology, media, sustainability, food and beverage, venture capital/private equity, consulting, blockchain, and fintech – to name a few.

**Course Readings and Assignments**

**Readings**

*Think Bigger: How to Innovate* by Sheena Iyengar

Columbia University Press (2023)

\*Additional readings will be posted in Canvas

\*\*All readings should be completed following the session for which that particular reading has been assigned. Readings are used as an aid for completing homework assignments. A digital copy of your readings will be posted to Canvas.

**Assignments**

* Following every class session, you will be asked to do a one to two-page assignment. These assignments will be posted for each class on the course overview page. Homework is due on the Monday following class at 11:59 pm ET.
* In class, you will be responsible for completing individual assignments in addition to group assignments as prompted. These in-class assignments will count toward overall participation.

**Grading**

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**Attendance and In-Class Participation (25%)**

Includes attendance, submitted class exercises, etc.

\*\*\*Please note that attending class is necessary! There are in-class exercises that are submitted in every class. 25% of your grade depends on your presence in person and submission of in-class exercises.

**Homework Assignments (35%)**

**Individual Assignments:** Following every class, your homework will constitute a 1-2 page written assignment where you will answer specific questions.

**Group Assignment:** From Sessions 5 through 12, you must complete group assignments posted to Canvas.

\*\*\*Please note: On the last day of class, all group members will be asked to confirm whether other members were equal contributors to the work throughout the semester.

**Mentor Day (10%)**

On April 12, every group will meet with ~five industry leaders for 30-minutes at a time in order that they may present their idea and receive feedback. Mentors will evaluate student groups on the quality of the idea presented.

**Day of Judgement (30%)**

On April 26th, all groups will present their ideas in 3-minutes presentations to a panel of judges, including industry leaders and venture capitalists. All group projects will be judged on the quality of their ideas. There will be no expectation of a business model or a business plan.

***\*\*\*Note on group work\*\*\****

All group members will be asked to confirm whether other members were equal contributors to the work throughout the semester.

**Class Sessions**

**Session 1: The Creative Brain**

January 25, 2023

*How do our minds create? In this class, we will discuss the myths about creativity, how our minds actually come up with ideas, and how you can become the innovator you were born to be.*

Post-Session Reading: *Think Bigger: How to Innovate*, Preface

**Session 2: Where do Big Ideas Come From?**

February 1, 2023

*We will walk you through the “why” behind the Think Bigger methodology, what a big idea is, how Think Bigger works, and an overview of the Six Steps.*

Post-Session Reading: *Think Bigger: How to Innovate*, Chapters 1-2

**Session 3: Choosing the “Right” Problem**

February 8, 2023

*We often take it as self-evident that we know what problems we want to care about and what problems are worth solving. Yet, choosing the right problem – meaning a problem that is both solvable and worthy of solving – is one of the hardest things to do. In Session 3, we will complete in-class exercises to help us identify the problems we want to spend time solving.*

**Session 4: The Innovation Marketplace**

February 15, 2023

*Everyone comes to class with a problem they want to solve. Here, we created a unique exercise to survey the myriad potential ideas present amongst your peers. You’ll be able to invest in different ideas and seek investment in your own. This exercise serves as our “matching algorithm,” the process by which we will place you in your groups. Each group will be tackling a problem they collectively care about.*

**Session 5: Think Bigger Steps 1 & 2 – Choosing & Breaking Down the Problem**

February 22, 2023

*In this class, you will be introduced to the first two steps of Think Bigger. You will be introduced to your first tool for Think Bigger, the Choice Map. Additionally, we will go over exercises to ensure you drill down to the specifics of the problem and identify the core of what you want to solve. Every problem is composed of sub-problems; the pieces that make it whole. We will show you the process for breaking down a problem, and how much to break it down.*

Post-Session Reading: *Think Bigger: How to Innovate*, Chapters 3 & 4

**Session 6: Think Bigger Step 3 – What’s the Big Picture?**

March 1, 2023

*Why do you want to solve this problem? And, other than you, who else cares? This class introduces you to the second tool of Think Bigger, the “Big Picture Score.” You’ll use this tool to assess your problem breakdown and to eventually choose among the ideas you’ve generated so you’re able to find the best solution for your problem.*

Post-Session Reading: *Think Bigger: How to Innovate*, Chapter 5

**Session 7: Think Bigger Step 4 – Search Inside and Outside the Box**

March 22, 2023

*You have probably been told at some time to “think outside the box.” But has anyone ever told you how to do it? Today, you will learn a method for searching that shows you how to get your most out-of-the-box ideas. Here, we will teach you how to search far and wide – going into other boxes – so you can create your most meaningful solutions.*

**Session 8: Step 4 (Continued) & Step 5 – Choice Mapping**

March 29, 2023

*We continue with Step 4 and begin Step 5: The Choice Map. In this session, we will show you different techniques for Choice Mapping so you can generate multiple solutions to your problem.*

Post-Session Reading: *Think Bigger: How to Innovate*, Chapters 6 & 7

**Session 9: Choosing Your Best Idea**

April 5, 2023

*In this session, each group will have multiple solutions to choose from. You will share your individual solutions and use your Big Picture Score to iterate and make a choice about which solution you will take to the next step which you will expand upon for a presentation.*

**Session 10: Step 6 – The Third Eye**

April 12, 2023

*You now have an idea that feels like a flash of insight. But what is it, exactly? How does it differ from what’s already out there? How will others see it? In the sixth and final step of Think Bigger, you will learn a new, unique way to collect feedback.*

Post-Session Reading: *Think Bigger: How to Innovate*, Chapter 8

**Session 11: Mentor Day**

April 19, 2023

*Each group is paired with up to five mentors for thirty minutes to present their idea and gain constructive feedback.*

**Session 12: Day of Judgement**

April 26, 2023

*Time for some fun! We will invite judges across industries to hear and “invest” in your group ideas. Each group will complete a 3-minute presentation of their final idea in front of a panel of judges. The average judge rating constitutes 30% of your overall grade.*