

The University of Hong Kong
School of Business
BBA Program
IIMT3621 Creativity and Business Innovation
Fall 2016

“Without changing our pattern of thought, we will not be able to solve the problems we have created with our current pattern of thought.” -- Albert Einstein

*“In this place it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place.”
-- ‘The Red Queen in Through the Looking -Glass’*

I. Course Facilitator

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Paid to do what he loves to do, Ali considers himself lucky.

He is Professor of Innovation and Information Management, and founding Directors of Asia Case Research Centre and Business Design and Innovation Program at The University of Hong Kong. He has taught and conducted research in universities across the globe, including executive development programs at Oxford, Stanford, INSEAD and as a Visiting Scholar at MIT. A three-time winner of the Society for Information Management Paper Award Ali has been a consultant to the governments as well as large companies. He has written many books, academic articles, and 160 business case studies, over half a million copies of which distributed worldwide by Harvard Business Publishing and other outlets.

Frustrated by the gap between business schools and real world, he conceived and produced the FocusAsia Business Leaders series, which was aired globally by BBC World, PBS and Asia Network. Ali is recipient of a University-wide, as well as several MBA and Undergraduate Outstanding Teaching Awards. For hobby, he dabbles in painting, plays drums and engages in armchair philosophy. His passion is to challenge students to think and to make a difference in life.

II. Course Description

Within a context-rich, student-centred learning environment, this course inspires enquiry and expression; provides a learning platform conducive to creativity, freedom of thought, and design thinking; and encourages teamwork as a way of generating creative business ideas and solutions.

Today the efficient and cost-effective provision and deployment of resources no longer guarantee sustainable advantage. Instead, competitive advantage of a firm is increasingly tied to how its workforce can think outside the box to see fleeting opportunities and leverage these opportunities to design, innovate and market high-margin products and services. Consequently, fast moving businesses are increasingly in lookout to recruit and retain an adaptable, creative, and innovative workforce who can create something new or perceive an existing thing in a new way.

Unfortunately business education has traditionally emphasized specialization in functional areas at the expense of integrative thinking. Rapid technological advancements and business innovations of late, though, have shortened the half-life of many of these functional skills. Specialization has always been necessary for getting a job, but it is no longer sufficient for maintaining a long-term career.

BBA PROGRAM
IIMT3621 Creativity and Business Innovation
Fall 2016

What makes a manager different from another is not the degree of specialization in certain functional area, but her ability to think differently -- and hopefully creatively. This is in tandem with the evolutionary laws where survival is a function of a constant interplay between exploitative stopgaps and explorative opportunities (Ref. Red Queen).

*Because today jobs go where the most skilled and cost-effective graduates are, companies look for **creative** graduates who can think freely and are able to:*

- **Analyze** (separate a whole into its component parts)
- **Judge** (form an opinion or evaluate by weighing up of evidence to make a decision)
- **Synthesize** (combine often diverse conceptions into a coherent whole)
- **Design** (conceive and plan out in the mind)

III. Course Objectives

MBAs are relatively good repositories of general knowledge and basic functional skills. But because in classroom analysis is usually done divorced from synthesis and in the absence of the contextual nuances surrounding the formation and implementation of managerial decisions, students are often left with a distorted impression of real-life practices. Moreover, because of the inherent shortcomings of the majority of the quantitative models and frameworks, students do not learn how to deal with uncertainty and complexity effectively.

*The course aims to put you in a lateral mindset where you can both leverage and challenge the conventional wisdom to think creatively to **discover new opportunities**, ask the **right questions** in order to identify the **right problems** and explore the **trade-offs** involved in your decisions to **design** elegant and well articulated **solutions**. The course aims to encourage you think differently than an average manager.*

IV. Learning Outcomes

Contrary to conventional wisdom, creativity and design thinking are not innate; rather, through concerted effort and conscious persistence, they can be learned, nourished and mastered.

The course relies on cases, simulation, role-playing and hands-on exercises to put you at the centre of learning so that you can tap into the creative part of your mind. After completing this course, you should be able to:

- Become more **mindful** and less disengaged, thus a better thinker
- Achieve a better understanding of the **meaning of life**
- **Communicate** your thoughts more effectively
- Apply related concepts and techniques in dealing with **complexity** and **uncertainty** inherent in the decision making process
- Apply the fundamental principles of **creativity** and **design thinking** in life and business.

BBA PROGRAM
IIMT3621 Creativity and Business Innovation
Fall 2016

V. *Alignment of Program and Course Learning Outcomes*

<i>Program Learning Outcome (PLO)</i>	<i>Course Learning Outcome (CLO)</i>
<i>PLO1: Acquisition and internalization of knowledge of the programme discipline</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Understanding the nature of knowledge</i> ➤ <i>Understanding how the brain functions</i> ➤ <i>Understanding the role of creativity as an economic lever</i>
<i>PLO2: Application and integration of knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Understanding how cognitive biases affect decision making process</i> ➤ <i>Applying relevant theories in designing a social enterprise</i>
<i>PLO3: Inculcating professionalism and leadership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Taking lead in ethical behavior and helping others</i>
<i>PLO4: Developing global outlook</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Understanding about complexities ingrained in global networks</i>
<i>PLO5: Mastering communication skills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Communicating thoughts effectively</i>

VI. *Teaching and Learning Activities*

This is an unconventional course in that it doesn't have a clear structure. It encourages both individual and teamwork as a way of generating creative business ideas and solutions.

After a short introduction about the importance of creativity as a major economic lever, you are put in the centre learning using different methods and techniques, including:

- ***In-class discussions:*** *Most of the learning happens in the classroom in form of your participation in different exercises and your contribution to case and class discussions.*
- ***Reflection and thinking exercises:*** *In the beginning of each class you will be asked to clear your mind by focusing and reflecting on a particular thinking task. In some classes you will be given a puzzle, paradox, or thought experiment to "solve". The objective of these exercises is to introduce you to different sets of problems whose solution entails creative, lateral thinking.*
- ***Creativity exercises:*** *You will be asked to perform specific tasks in your daily life and report back to the class as to how these tasks help you to see the world around you in a more creative light.*
- ***Using the Six-Hat method:*** *This method represents six modes of thinking, and promotes thinking outside the box, taking into account many different modes of thinking.*

- **Right side of the brain exercises:** You will be given drawing and other exercises that help you suppress the left-side of your brain and flow to the right-side in order to tap into the creative part of your brain.
- **Listening to Jazz:** You will learn how to use jazz as a metaphor in approaching and solving business problems. More specifically, by listening to jazz you learn how to use improvisation as a way for creative expression, while at the same time, using synchronization as a way to work harmoniously in groups.
- **Using the case method.** The case method will be used as a vehicle not only to solve problems but more importantly to find the right problem, ask the right questions, see the unseen, and consider contextual and cultural issues involved in managerial decision making.
- **Watching videos.** Majority of cases used in the course are accompanied by professionally produced videos of the corresponding companies and executives.
- **Using the course Blog:** The learning outside the classroom is in form of a free discussion blog, where you will be required to contribute to different topics under discussion. The course facilitator monitors this online forum to ensure wide and useful contribution.

VII. Assessment

<i>Learning outcome</i>	<i>Teaching and Learning Activity</i>	<i>Assessment</i>
<i>Understanding the nature of knowledge</i>	<i>Lectures, in-class exercises, in-class discussions, online discussions</i>	<i>Attendance, participation in class and online discussions</i>
<i>Decision making under uncertainty</i>	<i>Lectures, in-class exercises and discussions, online discussions, case assignments</i>	<i>Attendance, participation in class and online discussions</i>
<i>Creative and design thinking</i>	<i>Lectures, videos, in-class exercises and discussions, online discussions, case assignments, filed projects, term projects</i>	<i>Attendance, participation in class and online discussions, case assignments, term projects</i>
<i>Communicating thoughts effectively</i>	<i>Videos, in-class exercises and discussions, online discussions, case assignments, term projects</i>	<i>Attendance, participation in class and online discussions, case assignments, term projects</i>

BBA PROGRAM
IIMT3621 Creativity and Business Innovation
 Fall 2016

VII. Assessment (Cont'd)

1. Case, Class and Blog Discussion	20%
2. Individual Written Case Assignment	30%
3. Group Case Presentation	10%
4. Group Term Project	20%
5. ThinkPad	20%

Notes on Assessment:

1. Success of this course depends on your active participation in and effective contribution to case, class and blog discussions.

You are expected to have prepared all the cases and read all the assigned articles before coming to class. Please keep track of and contribute to the course's Blog before and during the course.

Please use the following guidelines for assessing your contribution to the case discussions:

i. Facts	<i>Am I sticking to the case facts?</i>
ii. Analysis	<i>Have I distinguished the critical and relevant from incidental and irrelevant?</i>
iii. Synthesis	<i>Have I organized the conclusions of my analysis into an intelligible whole?</i>
iv. Presentation	<i>Is my presentation clear and to the point? Does it follow the flow of the discussion, or is it an isolated comment?</i>
v. Learning	<i>Am I listening to what others are saying, reassessing my own analysis and conclusions accordingly?</i>
vi. Consistency	<i>Do I do this consistently and as a rule?</i>

2. You should **submit written analysis of three cases** (numbered 1-3 in the course schedule). Your reports (around 2000 words) should highlight the major issue(s)/problem(s) in the case, provide an analysis of the situation under study, and present a well thought-out course of action, and a doable implementation plan. Please submit all your three case assignments electronically, paying attention to the following issues:

- *Are all major issues and problems in the case identified?*
- *Are your analysis and interpretation of the case accurate, valid and appropriate?*
- *Are your recommendations based on a synthesis of your analysis?*
- *Is your implementation plan credible?*
- *Have you made a compelling and credible "case"?*
- *Is your presentation clear, appropriate and organized?*

BBA PROGRAM
IIMT3621 Creativity and Business Innovation
Fall 2016

Please use the following guidelines on preparing the case assignments:

Submission

All written case assignments should be submitted online the day before the case is scheduled for discussion in class. **Late submissions will not be accepted.**

Formatting Standards

Assignments should be in Microsoft Word (.doc format). Please include in the filename your last name, first name, and assignment title, e.g., chan_john_assignment1.doc. For the group project you may use your group number or name instead, e.g., group_2.doc. Please submit all your assignments to the course Moodle.

Structure and Content of Written Assignment

Your individual assignment should consist of a cover page, a one-page executive summary, the report itself, references (if any), and exhibits/appendices (if any).

The one-page executive summary should not be more than one page in length, allowing the reader to grasp the major issues, the trade-offs involved in different scenarios, the recommendations and implementation plan without having to read the report itself.

The report itself should include the following major sections: introduction, analysis of the issues, analysis of options, recommendations, and conclusions. The report is graded on the quality of the analysis, logic and coherence of the arguments, as well as its readability, and overall organization and presentation. Special attention is paid to how well you have articulated your "case" for certain course of action.

Plagiarism, or using other people's words or ideas as if they were your own, is a serious academic offense. When using other people's work, please ensure to properly cite and reference the source using a consistent referencing style throughout your report. Even though you may use exhibits to supplement your written report, please bear in mind that exhibits should not replace written analysis.

3. With your group you will make a 20-minute presentation of an assigned case.
4. You will work in groups of 4 during the course to come up with a new and creative venture relating to **social innovation** or **social enterprise**. All members of your group should participate in presenting your project in the last two sessions of the course. Special attention will be paid not only to creativity of your idea, but also to how creatively you present your idea (stay away from Powerpoint!) A written report of your project should be submitted a week after the your presentation.
5. At the end of the course you will submit your **ThinkPad** containing all the assignments, exercises and reflections you complied throughout the course.

BBA PROGRAM
IIMT3621 Creativity and Business Innovation
Course Schedule
Fall 2016

Session 1 – September 6

Business Education, Creativity and Innovation

What they teach and do not teach you in business schools

The case method

Reflection exercises

Session 2 – September 13

Creativity and Today's Economic Landscape

Creativity, innovation and economic development

Forces shaping the network economy

What is creativity? Can it be learned?

Read Article 1: Creative Capitalism and the Global Creativity Index

Prepare Case 1: Blue Man Group: Creativity, Life and Surviving an Economic Meltdown

Session 3 – September 20

The Inner Working of the Brain

What goes in our mind: The new developments in neuroscience

Read Article 2: How to Free Your Inmate Creativity

Prepare Case 2: Lenovo: Disruption of the PC Industry

Session 4 – September 27

The Inner Working of the Brain (cont'd)

How to think outside the box

Impediments to creative thinking

Read Article 3: How to Kill Creativity

Prepare Case 3: Nintendo: Disruptor Being Disrupted

Session 5 – October 4

Art, Creativity, Business

How to use empathy as a tool to see different perspectives

How to use jazz as a business metaphor

Read Article 4: Understanding Creativity: The Manager as Artist

Prepare Case 4: Miles Davis: Kind of Blue

Session 6 – October 11

The Inner Working of the Brain

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Read Article 5: A key link to entrepreneurial behavior

Prepare Case 5: Insight Robotics Limited: A Start-up with a Happy Problem

BBA PROGRAM
IIMT3621 Creativity and Business Innovation
Course Schedule
Fall 2016

Session 7 –October 25

Business Model Innovation

What is business model innovation?

Read Article 6: Innovating Across the Business Model

Prepare Case 6: Xiaomi, Inc.: The Rise of a Chinese Indigenous Competitor

Session 8 –November 1

Business Model Innovation (cont'd)

Six Thinking Hats exercise

Read Article 7: Reinventing Your Business Model

Prepare Case 7: Microsoft: Is the Creative Spark Burning out?

Session 9 – November 8

Service and Product Innovation

Turning creative ideas into viable products and services

Read Article 8: How Samsung Became a Design Powerhouse

Prepare Case 8: Ideo Product Development

Session 10 –November 15

Service and Product Innovation (cont'd)

Turning creative ideas into viable products and services

Read Article 9: Innovator's DNA

Prepare Case 9: The Boeing Company: Moonshine Shop

Session 11 –November 22

Service and Product Innovation (Cont'd)

Design exercise

Read Article 10: If Managers Thought Like Designers

Prepare Case 10: Creativity at Design: Experimenting and Innovating at Teamlab Japan

Sessions 12 –November 29

Group Project Presentations

Hand-In Your ThinkPad

The University of Hong Kong
BBA PROGRAM
IIMT3621 Creativity and Business Innovation

Social Contract

Please fill in both parts, keep the top part, and return the bottom part before entering the class.

I promise that during this course, I will:

1. Always be engaged during all classes.
2. Show utmost collegial and ethical behaviour throughout the course.
3. Not use any electronic device during classes.

I understand that failing to comply with this contract may adversely affect my grade in the course.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

----- Cut here -----

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