



Insights for Innovation

Course Syllabus

Course Calendar

July 2 – August 9

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
LESSON 0 <i>Getting Started</i>				JULY 2 <i>Orientation Materials Open</i>			
LESSON 01 <i>Observe</i>	JULY 6 <i>Full Course Open, Assignment 0 Due</i>						JULY 12 <i>Assignment 1 Due</i>
LESSON 02 <i>Extremes</i>							JULY 19 <i>Assignment 2 Due</i>
LESSON 03 <i>Interviewing</i>							JULY 26 <i>Assignment 3 Due</i>
LESSON 04 <i>Empathy</i>							AUGUST 2 <i>Assignment 4 Due</i>
LESSON 05 <i>Insights</i>					AUGUST 7 <i>Final Project Due</i>		AUGUST 9 <i>Course Closed</i>



Insights for Innovation

Course Syllabus

Gain a practical understanding of the design thinking approach through our *Foundations in Design Thinking* Certificate. Earn the certificate by completing the *Insights for Innovation* and *From Ideas to Action* courses.

Courses and classes in a certificate program can be taken in any order. You will receive your program certificate upon completion of your last course.

*Your Instructors,
Teaching Team & Community* **03**

*Planning for a Successful
Learning Experience* **04**

COURSE SYLLABUS
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Your Instructors, Teaching Team & Community

A wide range of individuals are stakeholders in your success in learning design thinking. As a learner, you'll interact with...

INSTRUCTORS

IDEO U courses are taught by IDEO practitioners who have honed their skills over many years in the field bringing new ideas to market. They bring real-world case studies and examples into their recorded video lessons, pulling from IDEO's 40+ years of work with global organizations across diverse industries.

TEACHING TEAM

Receive support from a team of design thinking practitioners with teaching and facilitation expertise. These experienced professionals are present to guide discussions, foster peer connection, and provide feedback on your assignments.

COURSE COMMUNITY

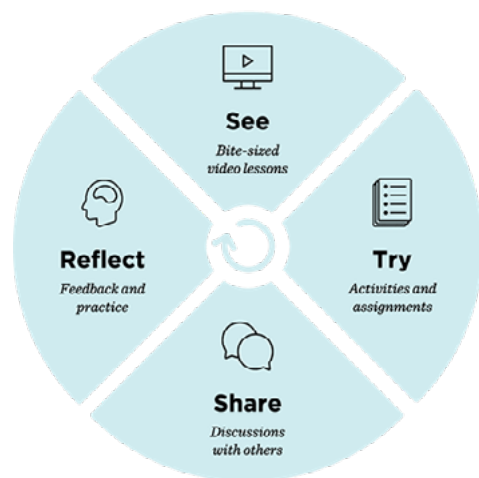
Learn alongside a cohort of hundreds of passionate professionals from around the world seeking to bring innovation and creativity to their work. The IDEO U community spans 120 countries and countless professions and industries. Build your professional network by making valuable connections in each course.



Planning for a Successful Learning Experience

The IDEO U learning experience centers on four key ways of engaging, all designed to help you understand and retain new knowledge. In each lesson you have the opportunity to see, try, share, and reflect. This isn't a passive experience—to get the most out of each course, we recommend that you plan to engage with your fellow learners and practice your new skills with others in real-world settings.

To be successful in a course, we recommend planning for a minimum of 4 hours of work per week, including time to watch videos and read articles, complete assignments, and engage in discussion and reflection.



SCHEDULE TIME FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Some assignments will require you to engage with others outside of the course—hosting a brainstorm, for example. It may be helpful to plan these sessions in advance. Find more information on assignments and activities in the lesson breakdowns in this syllabus.

PARTICIPATE IN VIRTUAL VIDEO CALLS

These optional sessions offer the chance to engage with your peers, dive deeper into course concepts, and broaden your perspective. If you can't attend each week, try to participate in at least one of these video chats.

GIVE FEEDBACK

We believe that asking for and giving feedback play crucial roles in learning. Use our in-course feedback guide to give constructive feedback and make valuable connections with your peers and the Teaching Team.

MEET DEADLINES

Put the deadline for each assignment on your calendar during your first week. These deadlines are suggestions to help you stay on track. The only hard deadline is the day your course closes, by which time you must submit all required course work to receive your certificate of completion.

STAY IN TOUCH

Your learning isn't over when the course closes. Tune in to hear from today's leading innovation experts and change makers on the IDEO U Creative Confidence podcast, get access to our LinkedIn alumni group, and consider guiding others through their IDEO U learning experience as an Alumni Coach or Teaching Lead.

MEET YOUR INSTRUCTORS

Insights for Innovation



COE LETA STAFFORD

Managing Director of IDEO U

Since joining IDEO in 2006, Coe has led numerous creative teams across diverse organizations including Microsoft, Target, Intel, Wells Fargo, Ford, eBay, Hasbro, Sesame Street, and Government and Healthcare groups. Known for expertise in digital design, play, and data, her work has won international awards, patents for clients, and been featured in the New York Times and Wired. Coe Leta has a Ph.D. in Education from UC Berkeley and guest lectures at Stanford University's d.School.



JANE FULTON SURI

*Partner Emeritus and
Executive Design Director at IDEO*

Jane founded IDEO's practice of human-centered insights, pioneering approaches that spread throughout organizations across the globe. To increase access to this approach, Jane published IDEO's Method Cards and Thoughtless Acts? Observations on Intuitive Design, a collection of snapshots that depict the subtle and creative ways in which people interact with the world. Jane lectures at Stanford, Harvard and other universities internationally.



Insights for Innovation

Course Syllabus

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Identify what really matters to your end users.
- Solve challenges using design thinking methods.
- Apply immersive technique to adopt your users' perspectives.
- Synthesize what you learn into an actionable insight.

TIME COMMITMENT

- We recommend a minimum of 4 hours per week.

Insights for Innovation is at the heart of what IDEO is known for—human-centered design. This 5-week course, an in-depth focus on the first phase of design thinking, will ground you in the needs of the people you're creating for. In this course, you'll develop empathy for your customers and surface insights for creating products and services they want and need. You'll gain practical design thinking skills and mindsets that will help you turn your customer needs into human-centered solutions.

	INTRODUCTION <i>Choose Your Challenge</i>	Be introduced to IDEO's approach to innovation, explore the power of insights, and choose your project challenge.
<i>Week 1</i>	LESSON 01 <i>Practice Observing</i>	Practice how to listen with your eyes in order to understand what people value and care about.
<i>Week 2</i>	LESSON 02 <i>Identify Extremes</i>	Learning from extreme perspectives can stretch your thinking so that you can get beyond your assumptions and get to bold, new ideas.
<i>Week 3</i>	LESSON 03 <i>Interviewing</i>	Learn activities and tools for asking the right kinds of questions and setting the stage.
<i>Week 4</i>	LESSON 04 <i>Empathy</i>	Get beyond your assumptions by putting yourself in the shoes of the people you're designing for.
<i>Week 5</i>	LESSON 05 <i>Insights</i>	Share compelling, quality insights that will inspire and motivate others to innovate.
	COURSE CONCLUSION	Learn how to continue to refine your skills over time and use your insights out in the world.



INTRODUCTION

Choose Your Challenge

In this lesson, you'll get a brief overview of the course, be introduced to IDEO's approach to innovation, explore the power of insights, and choose your project challenge.

VIDEO

*Insights Fuel Innovation—
Why seeing with new eyes
matters*

In this video, you'll begin to define insights. As you watch, consider how insights fuel innovation. Why is it important to see the world through different lenses?

VIDEO

*How This Course Works—
What you'll be doing and
learning*

In this next video, we provide an overview of the five skills you'll be exploring in this course. We'll also share a simple framework for each lesson so you can easily practice each skill in your own lives. Plus, we'll introduce you to the course project challenge.

VIDEO

*Project Challenge—
Learning by doing
through a project*

We believe in learning by doing. Consider your five-week experience a sandbox—or a place to take risks and try out new methods. You need a problem on which to practice these insights-gathering tools, so that at the end of the course you feel equipped to take them out and apply them to the challenges in your own organizations and communities. In this video, we'll introduce you to the suggested project for this course.

ACTIVITY

Choose the challenge that you will explore during this course.

JOIN A LEARNING CIRCLE

Your Learning Circle is a place to connect with a smaller community of peers working on the same challenge as you. Learning Circles are peer-led, and provide an opportunity to discuss assignments, gain inspiration, and dive deeper into course content. Join a group with those who will inspire and push your thinking. Note: Joining a Learning Circle is optional and you may also create your own.

VIDEO

*Assessing Your Progress—
How creatively
confident are you?*

In this video, you'll dust off your notebook and start getting your thoughts on paper. Let's take a closer look at "a-ha" moments and creative confidence.

DISCUSSION

Why is it important to see the world through different lenses?



LESSON 01

Practice Observing

Observing is listening with your eyes. In this lesson you'll discover how to observe others and unlock your curiosity.

LEARNING GOAL

Practice how to listen with your eyes in order to understand what people value and care about.

VIDEO

Practice Observing

In this video, you'll explore what it means to "listen with your eyes" and get an overview of the activities and mindset of this first lesson.

VIDEO

*Getting Curious—
What's in your bag?*

Time to get curious as you take a peek inside the walls of IDEO. What do these IDEO designers carry with them every day?

VIDEO

*Practice Interpreting—
Part 1: Whose life?*

Now we'll practice interpreting your observations. In this classic IDEO activity, you'll look at four photos from someone's life. What can you learn about this person through observation?

VIDEO

*See what an Expert Sees—
Part 2: Whose life?*

In this next video, you'll continue to practice observing. As you watch, make note of the what, why, and how of observation. These three simple questions will help you throughout the course.

VIDEO

*Compare an Observation
to an Interview—
Part 3: Whose Life?*

Whose life? Time to find out. Meet Katie.

VIDEO

*6 Tips for Observing—What to
Look for in the real world*

It's almost time to get out in the world and start observing. But first, check out these 6 Tips for Observing. What helps you get into a curious and non-judgmental mindset?

ACTIVITY

Practice Observing

Get out in the world and start observing your target audience and their behaviors.

PEER FEEDBACK

Provide feedback on the work of at least two of your peers' assignments.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Did you make assumptions or judgments about someone's (or a group's) character? Did you have any "a-ha moments"? What do you personally find most challenging about listening with your eyes?

EXPLORE MORE

There are endless ways to train your eye. Here are more examples to inspire and help you practice seeing with new eyes.



LESSON 02

Identify Extremes

In this lesson, you'll learn why it's important to look at extremes, and how to go about identifying extreme people to interview and observe.

LEARNING GOAL

Understand how learning from extreme perspectives can stretch your thinking so that you can get beyond your assumptions and get to bold, new ideas.

VIDEO

*Why we learn from extremes—
Stretching beyond
assumptions*

Learning from extremes will help you stretch your thinking to get beyond your assumptions and arrive at bold, new ideas. In this video, we'll explain what we mean by "extremes" and share how learning from extremes inspires us at IDEO to design innovative new solutions.

VIDEO

*Identifying Extremes —
Find edges to explore*

Let's take a look at an approach for identifying extremes. Feel free to jot down some notes on this two-step process during the next video.

VIDEO

Experts Identify Extremes

Watch an IDEO team in action.

ACTIVITY

Identify Extremes

Extremes help us get out of our comfort zones and stretch beyond normal ways of thinking. In this assignment, you will identify five to eight extreme people and behaviors to help you see new angles of your project challenge.

PEER FEEDBACK

Provide feedback on the work of at least two of your peers' assignments.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Did you stretch yourself to move beyond the obvious? Did you push past broad demographics to also think about concrete examples of extreme moments and behaviors? What does it mean to see beyond your assumptions? How can learning from extreme perspectives apply to your daily life and work?

EXPLORE MORE

Hungry for more resources on how to learn from extremes? Check these out.



LESSON 03

Interviewing

Asking the right kinds of questions is just one aspect of becoming a great interviewer. Setting the stage is equally as important. The activities and tools in this lesson will help you hone your skills at both.

LEARNING GOAL

Learn activities and tools for asking the right kinds of questions and setting the stage.

VIDEO

*An Interview Gone Wrong—
And how to make it right*

In this video, you're going to take a look at an interview gone wrong. Sometimes seeing something done wrong can help you get it right.

VIDEO

*5 Tips for Interviewing—
Conducting an awesome
conversation*

Great interviews take practice and a deep sense of self-awareness. Here are five tips for interviewing others.

ACTIVITY

Conduct an Interview

In this assignment, you'll plan and conduct an interview. As you work on it, think back to our tips for interviewing and how you might use these to get to deeper, more honest answers.

PEER FEEDBACK

Provide feedback on the work of at least two of your peers' assignments.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Did you practice true curiosity? Were you able to move past pre-existing assumptions, judgement and stereotypes about people and the problem?

EXPLORE MORE

Good interviewing takes practice. Check out these additional resources if you want some more tips, tricks, and perspective.



LESSON 04

Empathy

Empathy experiences are important because they help us get beyond our assumptions by putting ourselves in the shoes of the people we're designing for. Emotional triggers are motivating for both individuals and teams. And sharing these emotional experiences helps bond and align colleagues and clients around a common goal. Immersive empathy is one of the most powerful tools we use in our work at IDEO. Of course, aspects of empathy are embedded in all of the lessons throughout this course, but the difference here is that you are immersing yourself directly into an experience to evoke empathy.

LEARNING GOAL

Get beyond your assumptions by putting yourself in the shoes of the people you're designing for.

VIDEO

*Why Empathy Matters—
A visceral way to
inspire action*

In this video, we'll share how immersing in empathy allows our senses to become tools for learning and gathering insights. How does empathy spark creative problem solving?

VIDEO

*An Exercise in Empathy—
Cycling commutes around
the world*

This video will help you practice seeing through other people's perspectives. You'll meet three individuals from around the globe and get a first-person view of their daily bicycle commute. As you watch this video, keep track of how each bike ride makes you feel.

VIDEO

*4 Tips for Empathy
Immersion—Ways to
experience new perspectives*

In this video, you'll take a closer look at immersive empathy. As you watch, think about how our 4 tips for empathy immersion might help you and your team uncover solutions in new ways.

ACTIVITY

*Conduct an
Empathy Experience*

Design and conduct an empathy experience to better understand a different perspective. The steps provided will help walk you through the planning and implementation process.

PEER FEEDBACK

Provide feedback on the work of at least two of your peers' assignments.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Were you able to challenge some of your incoming assumptions to discover surprising needs and opportunities? If not, re-examine your experience with an increased attention to the objects, environments and interactions you encountered. How did each affect you (Or not affect you? "Flat" moments can be great opportunities for intervention)? What's challenging about walking in someone else's shoes? What ways might you practice empathy in your daily life?

EXPLORE MORE

Want to learn new ways to approach immersive empathy? Check out these additional resources.



LESSON 05

Insights

Take what you've learned—through observation, interacting with extremes, interviewing, and immersing in empathy—and turn it into compelling insights that you'll share with others. This is a critical step that turns insights into fuel for innovation. Even if you are working independently, it's still great practice to capture your insights to motivate and guide yourself.

LEARNING GOAL

Share compelling, quality insights that will inspire and motivate others to innovate.

VIDEO

The Anatomy of an Insight—Leveraging what you've learned

At this point in the course, you've probably identified lots of interesting opportunities in your project challenge, but you might be asking, "Which of these are insights?" In this video, you will learn how to define and craft compelling insights.

VIDEO

4 Steps for Summarizing Insights—Narrow down and make sense of it all

Now it's time to narrow down your learnings. Here are 4 tips for summarizing insights.

ACTIVITY

Final Project

Now it's time to distill what you've learned from the previous lessons. Move through the 4 Steps for Summarizing Insights to narrow down and create one to three insights.

You'll then incorporate these insights, along with specific pieces of evidence or things learned while observing, learning from extremes, interviewing, and immersing in empathy, to create an Insights Report that brings your insights to life through images, quotes and stories. If possible, do with a group.

PEER FEEDBACK

Provide feedback on the work of at least two of your peers' assignments.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Did you use visuals to bring your story to life? Consider how you might amplify your audience's connection with the people and the problem through thoughtful visual storytelling. What was challenging about capturing insights? In your own words, what makes for a compelling insight?

EXPLORE MORE

Want more on how good insights are used to identify new opportunities for products, services, and experiences? Resources here.



Course Conclusion

Take what you've learned—through observation, interacting with extremes, interviewing, and immersing in empathy—and turn it into compelling insights that you'll share with others. This is a critical step that turns insights into fuel for innovation. Even if you are working independently, it's still great practice to capture your insights to motivate and guide yourself.

VIDEO

Insights are just the beginning


You've almost made it to the end of your course journey, but insights gathering doesn't stop here. Before we bid you adieu, you'll hear some final thoughts from Coe Leta and Jane, and complete your final project. In this video, you'll learn how to continue to refine your skills over time and use your insights out in the world.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

What was the biggest challenge you faced in gathering insights? Reflect on how you overcame or might overcome this challenge. What was the most revealing moment for you in the course? How will you apply what you've learned to a current challenge in your life or work? Share your "a-ha" Moments.

EXPLORE MORE

If you're seeking additional inspiration, here are a few starters. We encourage everyone to add to the list.

A top-down view of two hands holding the corners of a large yellow sheet of paper. The paper is slightly wrinkled and has a bright, saturated yellow color. The hands are positioned at the top-left and bottom-right corners, with fingers gripping the edges. The background is a light, neutral color, possibly a table or desk.

“Sharing insights is the heart and soul of creating solutions. You can’t leverage the richness of what you’ve learned if it’s locked inside your head. Hundreds of raw learnings need to be distilled and brought to life.”

COE LETA STAFFORD
IDEO U Managing Director

For any additional questions, reach out to us at hello@ideou.com