DESIGN THINKING STUDIO in SOCIAL INNOVATION

AN IMMERSIVE SEMESTER PROGRAM

STUDIO-BASED CLASSES

USE SKILLS TO ENACT SOCIAL CHANGE

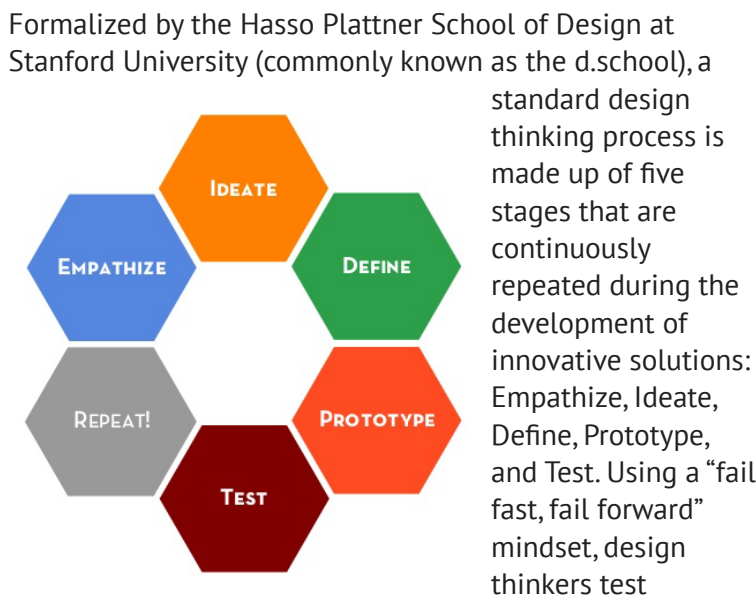**ONE LARGE PROJECT, NOT MANY SMALL ONES**

EARN 16 HOURS OF COURSE CREDIT

» A multidisciplinary community engagement program—all majors are welcome

» Collaborate with interdisciplinary peers, faculty, and staff

» Become a social changemaker

» Work with Alamance County Wellness Collaborative to identify and address complex local problems

» Spend the semester working in a start-up agency environment

» Learn about human-centered and empathetic design processes, and develop divergent and convergent critical thinking skills

» Employ rapid prototyping processes

» View failures as data, not mistakes

DESIGN THINKING STUDIO in SOCIAL INNOVATION

As part of a unique, experiential 16-credit immersive semester, students will collaborate with community leaders and interdisciplinary faculty to study and address a local social issue using design thinking methods.

What is Design Thinking?

Design thinking is a process used to generate insights about human problems in order to create innovative ways to address those issues. Design thinkers start with a goal in mind (e.g., make it easier for non-designers to share data visually, or make life better for those living in poverty) rather than a problem to solve (e.g., cool infographics, or poverty). Because problems often have many potential causes, design thinkers try to approach problems from a variety of angles.

Formalized by the Hasso Plattner School of Design at Stanford University (commonly known as the d.school), a standard design thinking process is made up of five stages that are continuously repeated during the development of innovative solutions: Empathize, Ideate, Define, Prototype, and Test. Using a "fail fast, fail forward" mindset, design thinkers test multiple concepts early and often to see what works for real users and invest energy in the best options.

What is Social Innovation?

According to Stanford University, social innovation "is a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than current solutions. The value created accrues primarily to society rather than to private individuals." Social innovation is a broader term than social entrepreneurship or social ventures, which often have a business model attached. Social innovation is really about creating valuable and sustainable social change in the community.

Why Care about Design Thinking and Social Innovation?

Our communities and our businesses need people who can think differently about complex and messy problems, who are comfortable collaborating with others from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives, who can generate innovative options, and who aren't afraid to try something and learn from how it works (or doesn't). This takes a very different type of thinking than current approaches, and design thinking is one process being applied to projects all over the world, from Lean start-ups to social labs in India. Employers are demanding these skills now. Are you ready?

What is the Community Issue for the Semester?

We will partner with the Alamance County Wellness Collaborative, a group comprised on experts from non-profit organizations; local government, parks and recreation, and city planning offices; hospitals; and local colleges, who have joined forces to identify and tackle wellness-related issues in the county. Wellness touches many aspects of the region, from access to healthy food and recreation options, public health, poverty, and transportation, just to name a few. You don't have to be an expert in wellness to join the program; we'll use design thinking and our partners to learn as we go.

What Will You Earn During the Semester?

In addition to a transformative experience, a set of crucial skills, invaluable community contacts, and a solid portfolio of work, you will also earn the following:

- Your two COR Advanced Studies courses
- Your required COR capstone seminar
- Three Professional Writing Studies minor courses
- An ELR for service-learning

MORE INFORMATION: blogs.elon.edu/innovationstudio

Have questions or want more information now? Contact any of the following faculty:

Rebecca Pope-Ruark — rruark@elon.edu

Joel Hollingsworth — jhollingsworth@elon.edu

William Moner — wmoner@elon.edu

Phillip Motley — pmotley@elon.edu