

UGBA 190D.1 Design Thinking

2 Units | Fall 2024
Prof. Mariana Somma | mariana@berkeley.edu
Thursdays, 12-2pm in Chou Hall N500

Scan or Click to contact me with
questions on WhatsApp



What is the Design Thinking course?

Innovating drives change. People drive innovation. Design thinking fuels both. In this class we start with a mindset, add a toolset and hone a skillset. Design thinking requires diligence, discipline, and foresight. It requires imagination, empathy, comfort with ambiguity and creative courage. It also requires shared language, common tools, and trust. All this plus a high-functioning team. Welcome to UGBA 190D.

How does it work?

This course introduces students to the tools and practices of design thinking and the innovation process. Students work collaboratively in small teams to identify, understand, and then solve complex problems focused in our local community. The goal of this course is to equip a select group of people with the skills and practices that power change in five core segments of innovation: product, service, business, policy, and civil society. These practices equip one to meaningfully contribute to human-centered innovation and changemaking.



What will we do?

Weekly sessions consist of talks from faculty combined with hands-on innovation and human-centered design practices. Outside of class, student teams meet for a minimum of one hour per week to work on their dedicated project. The course features research, readings, field work and solving a local community problem using the design thinking methodology taught in class. The course is a learn-by-doing process.

About the instructor:

Mariana Somma is an experience designer, facilitator, and Design Thinking expert. Mariana has been teaching Design Thinking since 2015, as well as courses in Creativity. She is a Senior Partner and Experience Design Lead at Employera. Her formal background is in Architecture, holds an MS in Industrial Design, and an MBA. Be prepared to expand your abilities in problem finding/problem solving, work on impactful projects, build meaningful relationship, and have fun along the way!

Student Comments from TIES:

"This is a very hands on and innovative project based course; different from most courses on campus. Applicable across many fields and interests, whether that be business, technology, design, or overall pure exploration."

"I felt like my thinking evolved a lot because of this course. I became way more comfortable about not knowing the answer right away and trusting an overall process."

"It inspires me a lot to see innovation with fresh eyes! Also, it's fun in a way that it's a class that's not a traditional lecture, more like a workshop, and you get to interact with the faculty and professor on a personal level."