

UGBA 190T.1 Needfinding In The Wild

Spring 2021 – Wed, 2:00PM-4:00PM

2 units

Mode of instruction - remote

Method of delivery - both synchronous and asynchronous

Are you a budding entrepreneur trying to create something new that people will love? Are you an environmentalist trying to change the less than sustainable behavior of the American public? Are you curious about pursuing a career in the user research domain? Or are you just looking to elevate your empathy and synthesis skills?

As the starting place for all user-centered design and innovation, Needfinding (also known as empathy and synthesis or user research) is easy to get started with, and deceptively hard to master. The only way to get better at it is to do it, and the best way to do it is in the wild.

For this class we will explore the **Needfinding** process with a particular focus on ethnographic interviewing, framing and re-framing. It is important to recognize how qualitative research (customer information gathered through ethnography) informs the innovation process. We will thoroughly cover the details of interviewing, recruiting and field guide development in the context of a design challenge. Every question implies a frame and by asking questions that reveal unexpected answers we reframe our problem and open up an opportunity space for innovation.

We create successful innovations by satisfying a system of human needs and discovering those needs requires hard work, practiced skills and a really good toolset. For this class we will put you in the wild, conducting fieldwork in public and private settings to resolve a needs-centered design challenge. Emphasis is on developing the flexible thinking skills that enable the design researcher to transition from being a problem solver (working on problems she has been given by others) to becoming a design leader who finds, re-frames and defines problems. This is the transition from *receiving* established design requirements, to *creating* them.

Teaching Team

Michael Barry, Adjunct Professor, Stanford University, Department of Mechanical Engineering and the d.school
mrbarry@stanford.edu

Michelle Jia, Design Researcher and Lecturer, Stanford University,
mjia@quotient-dr.com

Readings

Available on line

1. David Foster Wallace, "This Is Water," 2005.
<http://moreintelligentlife.com/story/david-foster-wallace-in-his-own-words>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CrOL-ydFMI>
2. Oliver Burkeman, "The Antidote Happiness For People Who Can't Stand Positive Thinking," pp. 1-22, Faber and Faber 2012. <http://www.amazon.com/The-Antidote-Happiness-Positive-Thinking/dp/0865478015>
3. Ray Bradbury, "The Sound of Summer Running" 1957
<https://the24hourtala.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/sound-of-summer-running.pdf>

Available on Canvas

4. Sara Beckman & Michael Barry, "Innovation as a Learning Process: Embedding Design Thinking", California Management Review, 2008.
5. Bernard Carlson, "Artifacts and Frames of Meaning", Thomas A. Edison, His Managers and the Cultural Construction of Motion Pictures" Shaping Technology/Building Society, MIT Press, 1992.

To Purchase

This reading is for discussion in class on January 17, so we suggest that you purchase it as soon as possible.

6. Hazel Markus, "Clash! How to Thrive in a Multicultural World", Hudson Street Press 2013, Introduction and Chapters 5, 6, and 10.