Strategic foresight for positive change

Course syllabus

Introduction

COURSE DESCRIPTION

As our lives are being altered in ways we have yet to comprehend, organisations are looking for future direction. This course will look at how understanding the changing socio-economic, political and cultural landscape, in tandem with human values and behaviours, can help you anticipate change and identify white spaces of opportunity for you and your organisations. The good news: we are all capable of making a positive change.

This course will help you understand how and why change happens, and how you can create the change you want to see. We will explore how to use insight and foresight skills to help create and influence a more human-centric, positive future for all. We'll dive deep into the principles of strategic foresight, how to easily translate what you have learned into making more informed business decisions, and how you can achieve impactful outcomes through your work.

OUTCOMES

- Improve your ability to use hindsight and insight effectively to plan for the future
- Gain understanding of multiple possible futures
- Apply trend thinking to any business challenge
- Boost your ability to identify key drivers and values that can instigate change
- Learn the main tools and methods to integrate strategic foresight into your ways of working
- Feel more prepared for uncertain futures
- Gain confidence in leading your organisation in futures thinking

Course overview

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

- Why research trends?
- The past, present and future
- Why strategic foresight?
- What are trends?
- Weak signals, game changers and wildcards
- What are macro trends?

CHAPTER 2 SCANNING AND DETECTING

- Strategic Foresight Lexicon
- Cultural scan
- PESTEL Forces
- Diffusion of innovations
- Ethnography
- Causal layered analysis

CHAPTER 3 ANALYSING AND MAPPING

- Mapping and visualisation
- Futures Wheel
- Backcasting
- Delphi method

CHAPTER 4 DEEPENING AND SHARING

- Alternative futures
- The bias trap
- Future scenarios
- Storytelling and evidence

CHAPTER 5 CORPORATE FORESIGHT

- Foresight at work
- Foresight and design thinking
- From foresight to service innovation

CHAPTER 6 THE VALUE OF STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

- Collaboration, conversation, co-design and co-evolution
- Continuous foresight and change
- Long term effects of foresight activities

CHAPTER 7 CASE STUDY

- Final Chapter Challenge

Structure and workload

1 CHAPTER = 1 WEEK

Strategic foresight for positive change is a *semi-self-paced* course consisting of 30 to 40 hours of material over a period of 8 weeks. Each week, you will be able to access new course content and will be responsible for completing the exercises in that time frame. In each chapter, you will find lessons, videos, papers, articles, ebooks or other resources. Each chapter includes reflection questions and various exercises that put into practice the concepts exposed and inspire you to think about and imagine the road ahead.

PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING

The course is offered via our online Campus, a community-based peer-to-peer learning platform that offers professionals the opportunity to learn and (re)think, charge, and reset in a supportive environment. You will be supported by fellow participants making the experience an investment not only in yourself and your career, but also in contributing to the growth of others. You will share your reflections and answers on questions and exercises with fellow participants and comment and discuss the outcomes.

MENTORING

The Course Mentor, a seasoned foresight expert, will provide support and guidance on the course content. As you complete the exercises, the mentor will check them out, comment and encourage debate among participants. It is essential to share, look at others' exercises, comment and promote discussion in order to make the most of the learning experience. The interaction in this course is led by you, the participants.

Support and certificates

SUPPORT AND OFFICE HOURS

During the 8 weeks, you will receive support from the Course Team regarding access to content, logistics, general question, technical issues, etc. There are live office hours every week for the duration of the course to answer practical questions or discuss any issues you have encountered. You can chat (and if needed: virtually meet) with our Program Manager who will help you to resolve any problem or convey content questions to the tutors.

CREDITS AND CERTIFICATES

This course is worth 40 SDC study points. Service Design College offers study points for participants who have satisfactorily demonstrated mastery of the course material. The decision to award any such points to a given participant will be solely within the discretion of Service Design College. You will receive a certificate of completion.

TUTORING

The course set-up is unique and based on the so-called cafeteria system, referring to the application of flexible choices for the learner's benefit. On top of the weekly exercise guidance by Alexandra Whittington and live sessions with Maya Van Leemput, you can also book one-on-one video calls with other experts, the tutors, who are happy to advise and guide you. They have reserved 30-minute and 60-minute time slots for you. Select your tutor based on qualifications, expertise and background, and also on availability or even language. You can buy these additional tutoring sessions as often as you like to, depending on availability.

Meet tutors Alexandra and Maya

Alexandra Whittington (United States) is adjunct lecturer at the University of Houston, where her students describe her as ‘passionate’ about the future. Her courses explore the impact of technology on society and the future of human ecosystems.

She has published dozens of articles on diverse aspects of the future, often taking a feminist perspective. Popular speaking topics include the future of women, women and A.I., the future of education, emerging trends and technologies, and an engaging experience called ‘Invitation to Futurology’, a user-friendly approach to thinking about the future.

Alexandra is the Course Mentor and will guide you through the course.

Maya van Leemput (Belgium) is UNESCO Chairholder in Images of the Futures & Co-creation for the research group Open Time | Applied Futures Research at Erasmushogeschool Brussel where she teaches Strategic Futures Orientation for final year Idea & Innovation Management BA students.

Over 20 years ago, Maya co-founded Agence Future, a non-profit futures collective. Maya is a Fellow of the World Futures Studies Federation and a senior fellow of the Centre of Postnormal Policy and Futures Studies. She is a Member of the board of directors of the Association of Professional Futurists, and a founding member of the interdisciplinary visual arts collective OST and Plurality University.

Maya will invite you to join live learning and Q&A sessions.

Meet tutors Filippo, Mansi and Thomas

Filippo Cuttica (Italy) is former UX Principal for Ethical Experiences at the BBC, and currently an independent designer, artist and researcher, helping companies build futures that are both exciting and desirable. As a designer and artist, he has one foot in the world of Speculative Design and Art Research, and the other in UX Design, Strategy and Creative Leadership. He loves to mix reflection with innovation, helping organisations enter the future in a bold and sustainable way.

Filippo is also a co-founding member of artist group IOCOSE, whose work deals with our narratives around the future, and the way they are constantly renegotiated.

Mansi Parikh (India) is founder of Future Tense Inc. As a futurist & experimenter extraordinaire, she explores the liminal spaces between the past, present & future, real & imagined, questioning biases and finding new ways to rebuild through the lenses of sustainability and inclusivity.

Mansi defines herself as ‘insatiably curious’; she’s like a swiss army knife. Mansi has worked on innovation, cultural insights and trend mapping for brands like Bacardi and Playboy, as well as across the social impact sector in conservation, livelihoods and healthcare.

Thomas D’hooge (Belgium) is professor at VIVES University of Applied Sciences in Belgium where he plays both a coordinating and teaching role within courses on ‘emerging technologies’ and ‘futures thinking’. In addition, he mentors and coaches students with their entrepreneurial projects. His basic approach is always inspired by design and lean startup thinking.

Throughout his career he has gained a broad experience in digital marketing and strategy, innovation and transformation. What really makes Thomas happy is to stimulate and coach people. He likes to think both critically and creatively with projects that touch his soul.

Meet tutors Galdino and Maja

Galdino Pedron (Brazil) is a transdisciplinary researcher working in various fronts - covering public and private sectors. As director of Zukunfte.eu, he helps public and private organisations to better understand people, culture, and emerging technologies to create the next thing.

Galdino applies design, ethnography and futures thinking to map, analyse, and visualise emerging technologies, as well as speculate about their possible future impact in businesses, and society as a whole. He then uses these insights to guide decision makers towards more desirable futures. Galdino mentors startups and new ventures inside large organisations. As a Brazilian living in Europe, he brings a more global south perspective to the table.

Maja Grakalic (Croatia) is an independent foresight strategist, UX and service designer and PhD candidate at Central Saint Martins in London. Her design work merges strategic foresight with the human-centred collaborative approach. Her academic work explores omitted histories of speculative and critical design.

She believes design fiction can help us challenge the status quo and build desirable futures together. She worked at the BBC and co-facilitated the BBC's Future Casting workshops with the aim to teach ethical innovation through speculative futures thinking. As a teaching assistant at MA Material Futures and MA Narrative Environments, she mentors students about future-facing design approaches.

What others thought of this course

“Great start to the course, especially the engagement of the tutors and fellow participants. Makes learning more engaging and insightful!”

“The thought-provoking articles and exercises help reinforce my learning.”

“The content is covering a lot of material that I have not come across in other courses on Futures Thinking.”

“Good pace of the materials and learning.”

“This course has been one of the best I have ever taken. It’s extremely well structured and very well detailed.”

“Definitely one of the best courses about the topic.”

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By participating in this course, you agree to complete all work, including any exercises or exams, with your own original work, and you agree not to engage in any activity that would dishonestly improve your results, or improve or hurt the results of others. In addition, unless otherwise stated, you agree that any exercises, exams, quizzes or questions provided in connection with the course are for your individual use only.

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Any questions? Reach out to us!

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