



**SO/ES 330 SOCIAL INNOVATION:  
STRATEGIES OF SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**  
IES Abroad Milan

**DESCRIPTION:**

This course explores the emerging reality of social innovation, social production and social businesses and their ability to generate social impact efficiently, effectively, and sustainably. We will explore this global phenomenon through international case studies, with an emphasis on local Milanese cases. During this process the city of Milan will unfold itself through its many creative communities and its unique model of social change "all'italiana". Milano has been for decades a breeding ground for numerous cases of social innovation especially in the fields of housing and food and in recent years it has established its place as a research hub on social innovation with prominent thinkers like Ezio Manzini, François Jégou and Anna Meroni of the Politecnico di Milano university.

**CREDITS:** 3

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** English

**PREREQUISITES:** none

**METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**

Lectures, discussions, creative sessions, case studies, field studies, student presentations.

**REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**

- Course participation – 10%
- Homework – 20%
- Written Exams – 35% (15% mid, 20% final)
- Group Project and Oral Presentation – 35%

**Course Participation**

An important part of the learning will be done in class through discussions and presentation of case studies. Students are expected to take an active part in these discussions and contribute their own experience as well as things they have learned from the assigned readings, homework and lecture material.

**Written Exams**

The exam is comprised of open questions based on material covered, required readings, guest lecturer topics and discussion.

**Group Project**

Each group is asked to:

- select a social cause to work on,
- do primary and secondary research to understand the context, people's needs, critical issues to focus on
- design a concept
- understand the key elements of their communication: viral campaign or initiative.

The project comprises three parts:

1. In the first part students are asked to make a public presentation of their 'cause' - the problem they want to tackle.
2. In the second part students are invited to share what they have discovered after a short research phase and to reformulate their project question.
3. In the final presentation students are asked to present their results and documentation of their work. This process will be explained in detail in class. The presentations will be made in front of the class.

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## **Presentation**

During the course students will be asked to present case studies, visions and critical analysis of phenomena. These presentations will be evaluated according to presentation style, content and critical capacity.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Gain an understanding of the role of social innovation in sustainable development
- Gain a deeper understanding of the different terms used to describe various aspects of social innovation
- Critically compare different approaches to social innovation
- Consider sustainability from many viewpoints, identify signals of promising cases of social innovation in contemporary society and project them into the future in order to see if they are sustainable in the long run
- Connect these single cases from different fields to larger trends in order to provide a clear and coherent vision of sustainable development
- Conduct a primary research
- Conduct a secondary research
- Imagine and storytelling an idea

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

As a member of our class community, you are expected to be present and on time every day. Attending class has an impact on your learning and academic success. For the reason, the IES Abroad Milan attendance policy allows for the following number of absences, which are intended to be used for physical and mental health reasons:

THREE (3) absences in each Italian language course,

TWO (2) absences in each Area Studies course,

ONE (1) absence in each seminar course or course meeting 1 day a week,

ZERO (0) absences in each course of individual music instruction.

Every absence beyond this allowance will automatically result in a penalty of 2 percentage points off the final grade. SEVEN (7) absences will result in a failing grade in Italian language and Area Studies courses. FOUR (4) absences will result in a failing grade in seminar or 1-day-a-week courses. Failure to attend a scheduled exam, test, quiz, or presentation will automatically result in an F grade on that assessment.

Students are expected to abide by the IES Abroad Code of Academic Integrity. All work submitted by a student for academic credit should constitute the student's own original work. Any work submitted for academic credit may be subject to review by a textual similarity detection service for the detection of plagiarism and AI usage.

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## CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b> Session 1 Feb. 11	<b>Course introduction and icebreaking session</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framing the main contents of the course and exploring the student's expectations</li> <li>Presentation of team members</li> </ul>	
Session 2 Feb. 13	<b>Fundamentals of social innovation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social innovation and different definitions</li> <li>Examples and areas of application</li> <li>Brainstorming and mapping of issues of interest</li> <li>Social innovation case studies lab</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read <i>Small, Local, Open, and Connected</i> by Ezio Manzini (Article)</li> <li>Read from <i>Change by Design</i> by Tim Brown (Pages 158 - 165)</li> <li>Read from <i>The Open Book of Social Innovation</i> by Robin Murray, Julie CaulierGrice, and Geoff Mulgan (Pages 2-13)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b> Session 1 Feb. 18	<b>Social innovation case studies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participatory discussion on readings at home</li> <li>Needs identification</li> <li>Requirements characterizing a Social Innovation case study (what defines a useful and relevant example)</li> <li>Analysis of case studies, are they references for social innovation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch: The Happy Planet Index, <b>Nic Marks</b> <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/nic_marks_the_happy_planet_index">https://www.ted.com/talks/nic_marks_the_happy_planet_index</a></li> <li>Complete your case study at home in miro</li> </ul>
Session 2 Feb. 20	<b>Social businesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participatory discussion on readings at home</li> <li>Definition of social business</li> <li>Typologies of social business</li> <li>Social innovation ecosystem and relationship: Key players</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read <i>Creating a World Without Poverty</i> by Muhammad Yunus (Part 1.2 Social Business: What it is and what it is not) (Pages 21-42)</li> <li>Watch the online video <i>Poverty, money and love</i> by Jessica Jackley</li> <li>Watch the online video <i>The way we think about charity is dead wrong</i> by Dan Pallotta</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b> Session 1 Feb. 25	<b>Creative communities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participatory discussion on readings at home</li> <li>Creative communities</li> <li>Different types of communities</li> <li>SOCIAL INNOVATION - collaboration and networking by Liat Rogel (flipped classroom)</li> <li>Lab: Select two case studies from '<a href="#">Creative Communities</a>', and prepare a synthesis of each to share, using miro. What happened to them? What is their current situation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read The introduction to "Creative_Communities" by Ezio Manzini and Anna Meroni (pages 9-15)</li> <li>Complete your case study at home in miro and please prepare to share it with us in class</li> <li>Think about the map of issues of interest and the selection of case studies, start thinking about the cause you would like to solve</li> </ul>

<b>Session 2</b> <b>Feb. 27</b>	<b>Environmental sustainability: a sustainable future</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Consumer Culture</b></li> <li>• Lab: what is more sustainable? Debate and exercise about understanding consumer culture and its social and environmental consequences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Consumerism, Self-Creation, and Prospects for a New Ecological Consciousness by Clive Hamilton (Article, 5 Pages)</li> <li>• Read stuff <a href="http://www.withouthotair.com/c15/page_88.shtml">http://www.withouthotair.com/c15/page_88.shtml</a></li> <li>• Refer the article by <b>Clive Hamilton</b>, <a href="https://moodle.iesabroad.org/pluginfile.php/2350475/mod_resource/content/1/Consumerism_self-creation_and_prospects_for_a_new_ecological_consciousness.pdf">https://moodle.iesabroad.org/pluginfile.php/2350475/mod_resource/content/1/Consumerism_self-creation_and_prospects_for_a_new_ecological_consciousness.pdf</a> and please share with us your personal comment about it and your feeling regarding the content of the article. Write a personal comment to share in class (250 words). <b>It will be evaluated</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b> <b>Session 1</b> <b>Mar. 4 NO</b>	//	
<b>Session 2</b> <b>Mar. 6</b>	<b>Social innovation inclusive design</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inclusive design methodology</b></li> <li>• Case studies of social innovation related to healthcare, tribes and in jail system</li> <li>• Inclusive Microsoft design</li> <li>• Input session: empathy map</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read <i>Inclusive_toolkit_manual_final</i> by microsoft</li> <li>• Group exercise: empathy map try &amp; test</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b> <b>Session 1</b> <b>Mar. 11</b>	<b>Constructive feedback</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing session: empathy map</li> <li>• Exchange of feedback using the sandwich technique</li> </ul>	
<b>Session 2</b> <b>Mar. 13</b>	<b>Social Innovation in Housing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory discussion on field visit</li> <li>• Social innovation in public housing</li> <li>• Co-housing</li> <li>• Federcasa: manuale per l'abitare collaborativo di case, edifici e città</li> <li>• Lab: positive impact of collaborative housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the exercise: in a group of 2/3, demonstrate the positive impact of collaborative living on 3 levels, with at least two examples per level.</li> <li>• Prepare minimum 3 slides to share the results in class:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- social positive impact</li> <li>- economical positive impact</li> <li>- environmental positive impact</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Week 6</b> <i>Session 1</i> <i>Mar. 18</i>	<b>Social Innovation Impact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measuring and Scaling Up</li> <li>SROI (Social Return on Investment)</li> <li>Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for social projects</li> <li>Sharing session: positive impact of collaborative housing</li> </ul> <b>Review of contents for exam preparation</b>	
<i>Session 2</i> <i>Mar. 20</i>	<b>Midterm</b> Written exam	
<b>Week 7</b> <i>Session 1</i> <i>Mar. 25</i>	<b>Laboratory on causes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mapping issues and topic and voting session, personal choice of favourite topics</li> <li>Elaboration of personal HMW (3)</li> <li>Sharing and persuading others of one's cause</li> <li>Selecting the cause to work on</li> <li>Creation of working teams (3x3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refine and select the HMW of the team</li> <li>prepare a mind map of interesting sub-themes to explore, linked to the main theme of the group HMW.</li> <li>Identify case studies and references of solutions to your team project question</li> <li><b>Prepare few slides</b> to share the content in class: Final HMW, mind map, selected case studies</li> </ul>
<i>Session 2</i> <i>Mar. 27</i>	<b>Methodologies for social innovation: scenario and definition of the problem</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing group presentation</li> <li>Like &amp; wish session</li> <li><i>The Five Whys Technique</i></li> <li>Definition of the desired scenario</li> <li>Sharing session of scenarios</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read <i>The_Five_Whys_Technique.pdf</i></li> </ul>
<i>Session 3</i> <i>Mar. 28</i>	<b>COURSE-RELATED TRIPS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>STEP FuturAbility Disctirct, Garbage for the future Lab</li> <li>Dialogo nel buio</li> <li>Exploratory walk within social innovation projects in Milan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer the experience, share a personal comment in the forum about it and your feelings</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b> <i>Session 1</i> <i>Apr. 1</i>	<b>Methodologies for social innovation: secondary research</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation on methodologies of secondary research</li> <li>Project Work: Design of the strategy to investigate needs in relation to your team challenge, through a secondary research</li> <li>Project Work: define your secondary research to do list and the action plan (who does what?)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read <i>This is service design doing by</i> Marc Stickdorn, Adam Lawrence, J. Schneider, Markus Hormess (pages 6-9)</li> <li>Do the secondary research and complete the activities you have defined in the to do list.</li> <li>Prepare and upload on moodle 3 slides to share the results of the secondary research of the team.</li> </ul>

<b>Week 9</b> <i>Session 1</i> <i>Apr. 8</i>	<b>Methodologies for social innovation: primary research</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation on methodologies of primary research</li> <li>• Project Work: Design of the strategy to investigate needs in relation to your team challenge, through a primary research</li> <li>• Project Work: define your primary research to do list and the action plan (who does what? When?)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read <i>This is service design doing</i> by Marc Stickdorn, Adam Lawrence, J. Schneider, Markus Hormess (pages 10-32)</li> <li>• Refine your planned strategy</li> <li>• Prepare a focus group to conduct in class, next lesson you will have the opportunity to take advantage of your colleagues to solve your doubts or discover interesting insights (15 minutes per group)</li> </ul>
<i>Session 2</i> <i>Apr. 10</i>	<b>Workshop: focus group</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom activity: Focus group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and upload on moodle 3/5 slides to summarise everything you found out from the different phases of the research: What are the most interesting insights? What are the critical issues that emerged? What are the needs you have to solve?</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b> <i>Session 1</i> <i>Apr. 15</i>	<b>Workshop: brainstorming and idea generation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share the group presentation with the results of your team's research</li> <li>• Project work: Brainstorming and idea generation</li> <li>• Project work: defining the idea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on your group's idea and finalise it</li> </ul>
<i>Session 2</i> <i>Apr. 17</i>	<b>Workshop: idea definition and prototype</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise: Tell me, show me, let me try it</li> <li>• Project Work: storyboard, touchpoint and roleplay</li> </ul>	Finalise your idea
<b>Week 11</b> <i>Session 1</i> <i>Apr. 22</i>	<b>Working on final presentation</b> Prepare a presentation that allows the audience to understand the journey you have made and the final result, work on storytelling, but also on the visualisation of the slides, use pictures, diagrams, photos... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• project process</li> <li>• challenge (HMW)</li> <li>• emerging needs</li> <li>• concept idea</li> </ul>	Finalise your group presentation
<i>Session 2</i> <i>Apr. 24</i>	<b>Group Final Presentation</b> and discussion on exam preparation	
<b>Week 12</b> <i>Session 1</i> <i>Apr. 29</i> NO	//	

<b>Week 13</b> <i>Session 1</i> <i>May 6/8</i>	<b>Final Exam</b>	
<b>TBD</b>	<b>COURSE-RELATED TRIPS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>STEP FuturAbility District, Garbage for the future Lab</li> <li>Dialogo nel buio</li> <li>Exploratory walk within social innovation projects in Milan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer the experience, share a personal comment in the forum about it and your feelings</li> </ul>

#### COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

\*Please note that guest lectures and course-related trips can change based on availability of lecturers or guides

Two of the following three course-related trips will be organized, depending on the number of participants and availability.

- STEP FuturAbility District, Garbage for the future:** Interpreting digital as a key to sustainable behaviour through gamification
- Dialogo nel buio:** Immersive experience to explore everyday environments and activities without using their sight, fostering a greater understanding of the challenges faced by visually impaired individuals.
- Exploratory walk** within social innovation projects in Milan (Dergano):  
 Nuovo Armenia  
 Bottegaio NoStrano  
 Rob de Matt

#### REQUIRED READINGS:

- Small, Local, Open, and Connected* by Ezio Manzini
- Change by Design* by Tim Brown
- 6 ways social innovators are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic* by François Bonnici and Pavitra Raja
- Consumerism, Self-Creation, and Prospects for a New Ecological Consciousness* by Clive Hamilton
- The Open Book of Social Innovation* by Robin Murray, Julie Caulier-Grice, and Geoff Mulgan
- Creative Communities* by Anna Meroni and Ezio Manzini, Edizioni POLIdesign 2007
- The\_Five\_Whys\_Technique.pdf*
- Prototype the Future of Your Business With This 4-Step Design Exercise*, by JOE GERBER
- This is service design doing* by Marc Stinkdorn, Markus Edgar Hormess, Adam Lawrence
- Creating a World Without Poverty* by Muhammad Yunus
- Inclusive\_toolkit\_manual\_final* by Microsoft

#### RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations* by Clay Shirky, Penguin (Non-Classics); Reprint edition (February 24, 2009)
- The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More*, by Chris Anderson, Hiperion e Book (2006)
- Good News for a Change: How Everyday People are Helping the Planet*, by David Suzuki and Holly Dressel, Greystone Books (August 7, 2003)
- Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, by E.F Schumacher, Harper & Row; First Thus edition (August 1975)
- The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*, by Yochai Benkler, Yale University Press (October 23, 2007)
- Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*, by Vandana Shiva, South End Press (January 1, 2000)