

SOI-172 Cluster: Soft Skills

Clusters are courses worth 6 ECTS and are composed of a number of different Micromodules, each taught by a different instructor.

Full attendance is required. In well justified cases to be discussed in advance with the Micromodule instructor, absence is accepted, provided that 80% of the Cluster AND 80% of each Micromodule are attended.

Period	First semester
ECTS	5
Duration	30 hours

	Micromodule	Hours	Instructor	Email
1	Challenge Basics	6	Roberto Napoli	roberto.napoli@unitn.it
2	Fundamentals of Design Thinking	6	Lorenzo Costanzo	lor.costanzo@gmail.com
3	Pitch Yourself	12	Vittorino Filippas	vittorino.filippas@gmail.com
4	Teams and Team Working in Organizations	6	Stefano Cirella	stefano.cirella@unitn.it

In-person classes, [School of Innovation](#)

Day	Date	Hours	Micromodule
Friday	9/10	16.00 - 18.00	Fundamentals of Design Thinking
Friday	16/10	14.00 - 18.00	Fundamentals of Design Thinking
Friday	30/10	14.00 - 18.00	Challenge Basics
Friday	6/11	14.00 - 16.00	Challenge Basics
Friday	13/11	14.00 - 18.00	Pitch Yourself
Tuesday	17/11	17.30 - 20.30	Teams and Team Working in Organizations
Wednesday	18/11	17.30 - 20.30	Teams and Team Working in Organizations
Friday	20/11	14.00 - 18.00	Pitch Yourself
Friday	27/11	14.00 - 18.00	Pitch Yourself

Syllabus 1

	Micromodule	Hours	Instructor	Email
1	Challenge Basics	6	Roberto Napoli	roberto.napoli@unitn.it

Course objectives

This course defines challenges and analyzes the major actors involved, including companies and institutions, along with the crucial role of students (their creativity and ability to turn good ideas into sound projects) in finding meaningful innovative solutions to real problems.

Specifically, two different challenge categories will be described and exemplified: market challenges and social challenges, thereby also illustrating the most successful approaches that students can take while addressing them.

Students will be guided into appropriate analysis of real company problems, and mentored for a successful generation of meaningful ideas.

Throughout the course, students will apply the concepts learned by interacting with the instructor, working in teams, addressing one specific challenge, and delivering solutions to the selected challenge.

Content summary

- Defining challenges
- Creativity and collaboration, teamwork
- The helicopter view and the actionable final project
- How to develop meaningful solutions

Learning Objectives

- Understand how to approach a new challenge and participate with greater confidence
- Learn two kinds of challenges and all possible combinations thereof
- Work on a challenge within a mixed and heterogeneous student team
- Deliver an actionable project

Texts

Slides and materials will be used during the course.

Syllabus 2

	Micromodule	Hours	Instructor	Email
2	Fundamentals of Design Thinking	6	Lorenzo Costanzo	lor.costanzo@gmail.com

Course objectives

Organizations increasingly operate in contexts characterized by uncertainty, complexity, and interconnected social, technological, and environmental challenges. In these situations, innovation requires approaches that combine observation, experimentation, collaboration, and continuous learning.

This course introduces the fundamentals of Design Thinking as a practical approach to understanding needs, framing opportunities, generating ideas, and testing solutions. Through a combination of concise theoretical inputs and hands-on activities, students will experience the



core phases of a Design Thinking process and apply key tools commonly used in innovation projects.

Beyond traditional human-centered approaches, the course also introduces emerging perspectives such as Biomimicry and Life-Centered Design. Students will explore how innovation can move from focusing exclusively on human needs toward considering the broader living systems in which organizations, products, services, and communities are embedded.

The course combines perspectives from design practice, innovation management, and organizational development, encouraging participants to critically reflect on both the opportunities and limitations of Design Thinking in contemporary innovation contexts.

Content summary

- Understanding People, Systems, and Opportunities
- From Insights to Ideas and Experiments
- Beyond Human-Centered Design

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the principles and mindset underlying Design Thinking
- Explore user and stakeholder needs through observation and inquiry
- Frame and reframe innovation challenges from multiple perspectives
- Generate ideas using collaborative ideation techniques
- Develop and test low-fidelity prototypes
- Use feedback as a mechanism for learning and iterative improvement
- Recognize the strengths and limitations of human-centered innovation approaches
- Understand the basic principles of Biomimicry and Life-Centered Design
- Reflect on how innovation processes can create value for both human and non-human stakeholders
- Connect Design Thinking practices with broader innovation, sustainability, and organizational development challenges

Bibliography

- Dorst, K. (2015). *Frame Innovation: Create New Thinking by Design*. MIT Press
- Meadows, D. (2008). *Thinking in Systems*. Chelsea Green
- Senge, P. (2006). *The Fifth Discipline*. Doubleday
- Benyus, J. M. (1997). *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature*. HarperCollins
- Biomimicry Institute. (2024). *Biomimicry Resource Handbook*. Selected excerpts
- Wataya, H. (2021). *Designing for Change through a Life-Centered Approach*. Medium Article
- IDEO. (2023). *The Little Book of Design Research Ethics* (selected sections on emerging responsible design practices)
- Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st Century Economist*. Chelsea Green Publishing

Syllabus 3

Micromodule		Hours	Instructor	Email
3	Pitch Yourself	12	Vittorino Filippas	vittorino.filippas@gmail.com

Course objectives



Give students the ability to optimize their introduction into the business environment. Practicing the basics of a video CV in both cases of generic and dedicated VCV. The essence of a motivation letter. Improving performances during a recruiting live interview.

Content summary

- Principles of public speaking functional to pitching yourself
- Being in the shoes of a recruiter
- What a recruiter is interested in Why a Video CV. Complementarities with a paper CV
- Creating and improving a Video CV
- Different approach to a generic (addressed to a head hunter) vs a specific (replying to a company request) VCV
- How to manage a recruiting interview. The backbone of an interview split in phases
- Essence of public speaking to better perform under stress. The art of listening

Syllabus 4

	Micromodule	Hours	Instructor	Email
4	Teams and Team Working in Organizations	6	Stefano Cirella	stefano.cirella@unitn.it

Course objectives

The course is designed to encourage students to reflect on the nature of teams and teamwork. In particular, the module invites students to consider the various aspects and dynamics of teamwork that are all too often taken for granted, thereby providing them with an understanding of the key factors that determine its effectiveness.

Content summary

- Definitions and types of groups and teams
- The team life cycle in terms of relationships and tasks
- Group problem-solving and reaching consensus