

SYSTEMPRENEURSHIP: INNOVATE FOR IMPACT EMBA ELECTIVE 2020

Co-conveners: Professor Alex Nicholls and Charmian Love

Rationale

Today the world faces a series of large scale, systemic, ‘wicked’ problems. The most obvious is the Climate Crisis, but many others offer large-scale challenges such as endemic poverty, growing inequality and the rise of extreme politics and an attendant increase in violence, civil disorder and war. This course aims to explore the cutting edge of innovation across sectors and regions that focusses on diagnosing and addressing systemic challenges with a specific focus on how measurable change and impact can be achieved. We will spend time specifically looking at the role of systempreneurs’ – those who use innovate for impact with a focus on changing systems. This course cannot solve the world’s problems, but, rather, it aims to equip leaders and senior managers across sectors with tools, frameworks, insights and case studies to support their journey into the world of system change and uncover the opportunities to innovate for impact.

Overview

The course will be practice-focused with a strong underpinning of research and established knowledge. The aim is to analyze a set of systemic issues across individual sectors and then to explore how innovation and cross-sector hybridity can offer solution sets and pathways to impact at multiple levels of action. A key element of this learning journey will involve a review of key actors in the world today who are actively engaging in system change. The course structure will focus both on individual student learning plans and class-level discussions and activities. There will be expert guest speakers, cases and interactive exercises. There may also be a site visit (tbc).

Content

At this stage, the plan is for the course will be divided into four parts to align with four key levers that are driving change in terms of global systems issues. NB Course content – though not the overall structure - may change nearer the time of delivery to reflect the cutting edge of issues in 2020.

Lever 1: Innovate for Impact in Business

- innovation in markets and accounting
- innovation in business models and governance

Lever 2: Innovate for Impact in Investment

- innovation in (impact) investment
- innovation in tools for measuring and managing impact
- innovation in corporate venturing

Lever 3: Innovate for Impact in Policy

- innovation in policy agendas and practices at different levels of action (local, regional, national, trans-national)

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Level 4: Innovate for Impact in Public Mobilisation

- innovation in social movements, activism, self-organizing and the use of technology
- innovation in 'movement of movements' when groups come together to drive large scale system change

The course will also have an introductory session to establish key issues and learning objectives and a wrap up session covering the 'darker side' of system change and the levers used to promote negative rather than positive impact in the world. We will also summarise key learnings and leave participants with their own innovation or impact plan.

Assessment

The full details of the course assessment will be finalized nearer the time of delivery, but will have two components:

- A group project focussed on developing a video submission and a short report from each group role playing how one of the four levers could be used to drive systems change and measurable impact.
- An individual paper focussed on an analysis of the media coverage of a systemic issue to reflect on how the levers explored in the course offer opportunities for impact and system change and where the obstacles lie.

This course is designed to complement the EMBA GOTO course through a focus on specific interventions and practices being used by practitioners who are working to activate system-level change across a range of topic areas.

Profiles:



Alex Nicholls, Professor of Social Entrepreneurship, Saïd Business School, University of Oxford

Alex is the first tenured professor in social entrepreneurship appointed at the University of Oxford.

He is also a Tutorial Fellow and Member of the Governing Body at Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford, and in 2004, he was the first staff member of the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship for which he helped raise the funding.

Alex's research interests range across several key areas within social entrepreneurship and social innovation, including: social and impact investment; the nexus of relationships between accounting, accountability, and governance; public and social policy contexts including impact bonds; and Fair Trade.

To date, Nicholls has published over a hundred papers, working papers, book chapters and articles, and six books. Most appear in a wide range of peer reviewed journals and books, including seven papers in Financial Times Top 30 journals. His 2009 paper on social investment won the Best Paper Award (Entrepreneurship) at the British Academy of Management. In 2010,

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Nicholls edited a Special Edition of Entrepreneurship, Theory and Practice on social entrepreneurship – the first time a top tier management journal had recognised the topic in this way. He is the Editor in Chief of the Journal of Social Entrepreneurship.

Nicholls is the co-author of a major research book on Fair Trade (with Charlotte Opal, Sage, 2005) and the editor of the first scholarly collection of papers on social entrepreneurship (Oxford University Press, 2006, 2008). Both represent the best selling and most cited academic books on their subjects in the world. In 2011, Nicholls published a co-edited volume on social innovation – again, the first scholarly book on the subject. In 2015, he published a further co-edited volume on social finance and a new book on social innovation with NESTA. In 2019, Nicholls will publish a book examining the economic underpinnings of social innovation in the European Union (based upon a four year, 4 million Euro, EU funded research project for which he was the Principle Investigator: CRESSI). Nicholl's next book project will be a monograph on the politics of social entrepreneurship and innovation globally. His books have been translated into several languages and are the most cited works on each of their subjects.

Nicholls has held lectureships at a wide variety of academic institutions including: University of Toronto, Canada; Leeds Metropolitan University; University of Surrey; Aston Business School and the University of Oxford. He has been a Fellow of the Academy of Marketing Science and a Member of the Institute of Learning and Teaching. Nicholls also sat on the regional social enterprise expert group for the South East of England and is a member of the Advisory Group for the ESRC Social Enterprise Capacity Building Cluster. He has been an Honorary Fellow at the Third Sector Research Centre at the University of Birmingham and a Research Fellow at the Centre for Social Impact, University of New South Wales. Prior to returning to academic life, Nicholls held senior management positions at the John Lewis Partnership, the largest mutual retailer in Europe, and he currently sits of the Board of several social enterprises.

Alex earned a BA (Hons), MA and PhD in English Language and Literature from King's College, London and an MBA from Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford.



Charmian Love, Entrepreneur in Residence, Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, Saïd Business School, University of Oxford

Charmian believes in the power of business as a force for good and has first-hand experience in what it is like to be an entrepreneur, an intrapreneur and a systempreneur.

Charmian is the Co-Founder and Chair of B Lab UK, where she supports the growth of B Corps across the UK (and beyond) and has recently joined as Co-Chair of B Lab's Global Climate Taskforce.

Charmian is deeply engaged in helping accelerate the transition to a more regenerative, circular and inclusive economy. In her role as Entrepreneur in Residence at the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at Oxford University's Saïd Business School, Charmian is guiding the development of the Circular Economy Lab and designed and teaches MBA and Executive MBA courses on this subject. Charmian is also involved in the shaping the adoption of the circular economy in London and sits on the Investment Committee of the London Waste and Recycling

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Board (LWARB).

In addition to her work on the circular economy, Charmian is actively engaged in how we might mobilise a 'Movement of Movements' – connecting people and organisations who share a goal relating to the need for deep and systemic levels of change in our economy.

Charmian is also a member of the Sustainability Advisory Council at the ICAEW (because she truly believes that accountants will save the world).

Charmian's journey as an entrepreneur began with the creation of Volans, a change agency, co-founded in 2008 with John Elkington and Pamela Hartigan (and the second UK company to certify as a B Corp) where her clients included senior leadership teams from Nike, HP and Allianz. Prior to starting her adventure with the Volans team, Charmian was a consultant at BCG and Chair of the Flavelle Foundation.

You can get a feel for some of Charmian's thinking in pieces she has contributed to publications including HBR, Wired, Fast Company, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Pioneers Post and The Guardian.

A proud Canadian, Charmian received her MBA from Harvard Business School and holds a degree in Art History from Queen's University.

Contact:

Bryony Murdoch, Senior Programme Manager, EMBA
Saïd Business School, University of Oxford

T: +44 (0)1865 288715

E: Bryony.Murdoch@sbs.ox.ac.uk