

PHILOSOPHY OF INNOVATION

Course code	<i>MNG302</i>
Compulsory in the programs	<i>Elective</i>
Level of studies	<i>Undergraduate</i>
Number of credits	<i>6 ECTS (48 in-class hours + 2 consultation hours + 2 exam hours, 110 individual work hours)</i>
Course coordinator	<i>Lect. Dominykas Karpovic</i>
Prerequisites	<i>None</i>
Language of instruction	<i>English</i>

THE AIM OF THE COURSE:

The course aims to introduce students to the conceptual, ethical, and social dimensions of innovation. In the new millennium, innovation has propelled humanity toward unprecedented horizons, echoing ancient quests for progress amid technological leaps and evolving values. Yet, recent reflections reveal its shadow—questioning whether unchecked novelty erodes human flourishing, creativity's essence, or the moral fabric of society. In this course, students will familiarize themselves with various controllable and uncontrollable environments shaping innovation and will develop an understanding of managing it philosophically in such realms. Furthermore, students will learn to apply Socratic tools of inquiry and ethical frameworks available for individuals and organizations navigating innovation's existential challenges.

MAPPING OF COURSE LEVEL LEARNING OUTCOMES (OBJECTIVES) WITH DEGREE LEVEL LEARNING OBJECTIVES (See Annex), ASSESMENT AND TEACHING METHODS

Course level learning outcomes (objectives) <i>After completing the course learners will be able to...</i>	Degree level learning objectives	Assessment methods	Teaching methods
CLO1. Theoretical Foundations. Compare and contrast philosophical theories of innovation that elucidate its benefits and perils for human progress, creativity, and societal flourishing. Examine the role of ethical institutions and frameworks shaping innovation's trajectory across controllable and uncontrollable environments.	BLO1.1. BLO1.2. BLO2.1. BLO4.1. BLO4.2.	Essay	Lectures and seminars
CLO2. Theories of Technological Change. Compare technological determinism, social constructivism, and philosophy of technology to evaluate technology's autonomy, path dependence, co-evolution with society, and the politics of design. Assess human agency in shaping technological patterns and debates.	BLO1.2. BLO2.1. BLO4.1. BLO4.2.	Essay	Lectures, Seminars

CLO3. Innovation and Values. Examine whether innovations are value-neutral, identifying embedded values, power dynamics, and privilege via value-sensitive design. Apply ethical frameworks to case studies on AI bias, surveillance, and democratic participation.	BLO1.1. BLO1.2. BLO2.1. BLO4.1.	Essay	Lectures, Seminars
CLO4. Innovation and Human Nature. Critically evaluate how enhancement technologies, posthumanism, transhumanism, extended mind, digital identity, and AI challenge human autonomy, authenticity, and uniqueness.	BLO1.1. BLO1.2. BLO2.1.	Essay	Lectures, Seminars
CLO5. Ethics of Disruption. Debate disruption's justification using utilitarian, deontological ethics, justice, precautionary principle, and responsibility for economic displacement, inequality, and unintended consequences.	BLO1.2. BLO2.1.	Group work (presentation)	Lectures, Seminars
CLO6. Innovation and the Good Life. Assess innovation's role in human flourishing through Aristotelian virtue ethics, critiques of progress, sustainable/degrowth philosophies, and tensions between quality of life, environmental impact, and slow innovation.	BLO1.1. BLO1.2. BLO2.1.	Group work (presentation)	Lectures, Seminars
CLO7. Future-Oriented Ethics. Formulate ethical obligations to future generations via imperative of responsibility, longtermism, effective altruism, and governance of emerging technologies like AI and biotech amid radical uncertainty.	BLO1.1. BLO1.2. BLO2.1. BLO4.2.	Group work (presentation)	Lectures, Seminars
CLO8. Practical Philosophical Application. Analyze real-world cases—social media, CRISPR, geoengineering, blockchain, AI/automation—through module lenses to develop reflective strategies for ethical innovation.	BLO1.1. BLO1.2. BLO4.2	Group work (presentation)	Group work

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

The ISM University of Management and Economics Code of Ethics, including cheating and plagiarism are fully applicable and will be strictly enforced in the course. Academic dishonesty, and cheating can and will lead to a report to the ISM Committee of Ethics. With regard to remote learning, ISM remind students that they are expected to adhere and maintain the same academic honesty and integrity that they would in a classroom setting.

COURSE OUTLINE

Topic	In-class hours	Readings
Introduction to the Philosophy of Innovation Course <i>Overview of the course aims, structure, assessment, and key conceptual foundations. Introduction to innovation as an interdisciplinary field bridging philosophy, technology studies, and social theory. Formation of student groups for discussion and case engagement.</i>	2	
Module 1 – Foundations: What Is Innovation? <i>Conceptual analysis of innovation, invention, creativity, and change. Historical and contemporary frameworks for understanding novelty. Discussion on whether innovation constitutes progress and what counts as “new.”</i>	4	Schumpeter – Creative Destruction; Kuhn – Scientific Revolutions; Contemporary Innovation Studies (TBA)
Module 2 – Theories of Technological Change. <i>Philosophical and sociological theories of how technology evolves. Technological determinism vs. social constructivism. Actor-Network Theory. Human agency, path dependence, and political dimensions of design.</i>	4	Latour – Actor-Network Theory; Feenberg – Philosophy of Technology; Ellul – Technological Society (excerpts)
Module 3 – Innovation and Values <i>Examination of values embedded in technologies. Critical analysis of whether innovations are value-neutral.</i>	4	Winner – Do Artifacts Have Politics?; Value-Sensitive Design (TBA)
Module 4 – Innovation and Human Nature <i>Philosophical inquiry into how innovation affects autonomy, authenticity, identity, and human uniqueness. Human enhancement, posthumanism, transhumanism, digital identity, and the extended mind thesis.</i>	4	Sandel – Enhancement; Habermas – The Future of Human Nature; Posthumanism (TBA)
Module 5 – Ethics of Disruption <i>Evaluation of ethical frameworks governing innovation. Justice, risk, responsibility, and unintended consequences. Inequality, economic displacement, and the precautionary principle.</i>	4	Rawls – Justice (excerpts); Utilitarian & Deontological Approaches to Tech Ethics; Contemporary Tech Ethics (TBA)
Essay session class (exam)	2	Open presentations
Module 6 – Innovation and the Good Life <i>Philosophical theories of human flourishing and the role of innovation. Critiques of technological society. Sustainable and responsible innovation, degrowth, quality-of-life metrics.</i>	4	Aristotelian Ethics & Technology; Marcuse – One-Dimensional Man; Postman –

		Technopoly (excerpts)
Module 7 – Future-Oriented Ethics <i>Longtermism, existential risk, responsibility toward future generations, and governance of emerging technologies. Approaches to uncertainty and foresight.</i>	4	Jonas – Imperative of Responsibility; Longtermism (TBA); Technology Assessment Literature
Module 8 – Innovation in Practice: Case Studies <i>Applied philosophical analysis of real-world innovation cases. Technology assessment methods, scenario analysis, and ethical critique. Focus areas include AI, biotechnology, social media, geoengineering, and blockchain.</i>	4	Case Study Packet (TBA); Supplemental readings depending on case selection
Workshop – Innovation Ethics Debate Preparation <i>Guided preparation for formal dialogue: argument construction, stakeholder analysis, philosophical grounding, normative frameworks, and dialogue methodology.</i>	4	Selected philosophical essays (TBA)
Project Development Session <i>In-class support for the final project: conceptual framing, methodological choices, philosophical argumentation, and structure.</i>	4	Bring draft outlines or project concepts
Presentations – Philosophical Analysis of Innovation <i>Student presentations on selected innovation cases or conceptual analyses. Peer feedback and synthesis of course learnings.</i>	4	Student presentation materials
	Total: 48 hours	
CONSULTATIONS	2	
Guided Contemplation Session <i>Facilitated session where the main learning are acknowledgement and embodied.</i>	2	

FINAL GRADE COMPOSITION

Type of assignment	%
<i>Individual Components 100%</i>	
Essay	60
Group work (keynote)	40
Total:	100

DESCRIPTION AND GRADING CRITERIA OF EACH ASSIGNMENT

The individual **essay** will contribute 60% to the final evaluation. Students are required to complete a written analysis on a selected innovation topic, applying the philosophical frameworks discussed in the course. Essays must be submitted via the eLearning system by the specified deadline. The evaluation of the essay will be based on clarity of argumentation, application of course concepts, quality of analysis, and adherence to academic standards. Late submissions without an approved extension may receive a reduced grade.

The **group presentation** will contribute 40% to the final evaluation. Students are required to work in assigned groups to prepare and deliver a presentation analyzing a real-world innovation case from philosophical and ethical perspectives. Presentations will be conducted during designated class sessions, and all group members are expected to actively participate. The evaluation of the group presentation will be based on the quality of the content, critical analysis, clarity of delivery, teamwork, and engagement with audience questions. The grade may be reduced if a student fails to participate fully in the preparation or delivery of the presentation.

Assessment requirements, procedures, and other important regulations may be communicated verbally during lectures. Failure to attend a lecture where such information is provided does not exempt the student from the responsibility of complying with these requirements.

RETAKE POLICY

If the final (cumulative) grade for the course is insufficient, students will be entitled to take a retake assessment. The retake will take the form of an extended essay covering the entire course content, including all lectures and case discussions. The requirements and guidelines for the retake essay will be provided on the last day of the course. The retake essay will replace 60% of the essay component. All previously acquired scores from other group work course assignment will be added to the retake result, and a new final (cumulative) grade will be calculated accordingly. The lecturer reserves the right to determine the exact format and assessment criteria of the retake.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

Attendance and participation in the lectures and seminars are not obligatory, however strongly recommended. Studying solely from slides/ course book is not considered to be a sufficient preparation for the exam.

Due to the dynamic nature of the content of the course additional material can be assigned during the course. In case of unforeseen events the schedule will be adapted. The lecturer is trying to include actual and relevant materials – therefore the reading list may differ. Slide handouts and readings will be prepared for each class and available for download. The slides are the intellectual property of teaching instructor and students may not distribute or duplicate these notes without express *ad hoc* written consent.

REQUIRED READINGS

Madsbjerg, Christian, and Mikkel B. Rasmussen. Sensemaking: The Power of the Humanities in the Age of the Algorithm
Heidegger, M. (1977). "The Question Concerning Technology" (essay).

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Millman, Dan. Way of the Peaceful Warrior: A Book That Changes Lives

Christensen, Clayton M. The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail

Dyer, Jeff, Hal Gregersen, and Clayton M. Christensen. The Innovator's DNA: Mastering the Five Skills of Disruptive Innovators

Schumpeter, Joseph A. Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (selected chapters on creative destruction)

Brown, Tim. Change by Design: How Design Thinking Creates New Alternatives for Business and Society

Johnson, Steven. Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation

Floridi, Luciano. The Ethics of Information

Kahneman, Daniel. Thinking, Fast and Slow

Susskind, Richard and Daniel Susskind. The Future of the Professions

ANNEX

DEGREE LEVEL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objectives for the Bachelor of Business Management

Programs: International Business and Communication, & Business Management and Marketing

Learning Goals	Learning Objectives
Students will be critical thinkers	BLO1.1. Students will be able to understand core concepts and methods in the business disciplines
	BLO1.2. Students will be able to conduct a contextual analysis to identify a problem associated with their discipline, to generate managerial options and propose viable solutions
Students will be socially responsible in their related discipline	BLO2.1. Students will be knowledgeable about ethics and social responsibility
Students will be technology agile	BLO3.1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in common business software packages
	BLO3.2. Students will be able to make decisions using appropriate IT tools
Students will be effective communicators	BLO4.1. Students will be able to communicate reasonably in different settings according to target audience tasks and situations
	BLO4.2. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively through an oral presentation
	BLO4.3. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively in a written paper