

5th edition

# INNOVATION AND FUTURE THINKING: Barcelona Futures Lab

Summer Courses 2018  
Professional Level

## **Two-week course**

**Calendar:** from July 16<sup>th</sup> to July 27<sup>th</sup> of 2018

**Timetable:** Monday to Friday July 16<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>, from 4.40 pm to 9.40 pm  
July 27<sup>th</sup> from 9.30 am to 2.30 pm.

July 27<sup>th</sup> afternoon: Diploma award ceremony

**Language:** English

Some of the supplementary activities can be organized out of the regular course timetable, previously agreed with the students.

*For courses taught in English, an intermediate level is required, corresponding to TOEFL 450 (PBT) or IELTS 5.0.*

## Introduction

As the pace of social, technological, economic and environmental change increases, designers, strategists and innovators find it harder and harder to anticipate, understand, plan for and create around this uncertainty. Social cultures evolve and change like bacteria, new processes, materials and connections emerge in technology, new business models spring to life overnight and the physical world around us adds to this instability as pressure to become sustainable grow.

This course will help students improve their ability to detect signals of change, organize insights into understandable models, synthesize new ways of mapping possible futures, identify the potential barriers and opportunities these futures present, and design innovative products, services or ideas that satisfy emerging needs. By learning the fundamentals of foresight and futures thinking, and how to tie these to innovation and creation, students will gain a toolset that doesn't tell them what will happen in the future, but gives them the capability to identify and assess alternative futures presented by the world around them. Whether designing a new business, forward-looking fashion, a future food product or the next decade's car, this course provides the tools for anticipation and action.

## Objectives

The objective of the course is to provide students and professionals from varied backgrounds a strong baseline understanding of foresight and how it ties to strategy, innovation, and creation. This is done not only by teaching essential data collection and modelling, but narrative development, strategic framing, prototyping and communication.

## Methodology

This course begins by asking the fundamental question: "Why think about the future?"

It will explore this through an overview of essential futuring skills (horizon scanning), trends identification and analysis, looking at weak signals (micro- and macro-trends) and how to use these to think about implications and unexpected outcomes. This will include observational analysis, searching Barcelona for indicators about the future, studying behaviours, messages and signs that point to emergent change.

We will visit scenario development, roadmapping, timelines and backcasting, and creative ideation to develop new future narratives as a way of writing stories about the future we can use strategically. We will also plan Skype talks from futurists, innovators and designers who employ these techniques in their own work.

From this basis, we will look at innovation practices and processes (traditional top-down), bottom-up and open innovation and how these are being used in both major companies and cutting edge startups. By learning how to tie foresight to innovation, we will look at future-proofing new design and product development.

Lastly, we will look at prototyping using the futures we have created and build toward a final project that presents solutions to the wicked problems we've uncovered—creating for the next decade.

## Learning Outcomes

- Development of primary and secondary research skills, tools and techniques for tracking change and developing insights that can be applied to future-focused innovation, strategy and design.
- A deeper understanding of dynamics of future trends and driving forces, and how they impact and shape innovation.
- Approaches to creating valuable narratives and future scenarios.
- Understanding of current and emerging innovation models.
- Techniques for rapid prototyping of future products, services and experiences, and supporting these with grounded research, business modeling and communication strategies.

## Skills Developed

Essential skills students will learn include:

- Horizon scanning and observational research.
- Trends observation and classification.
- Basic scenario development, timeline creation and roadmap development.
- Collaborative synthesis and sense making.
- Prototyping and strategy development.
- Communicating futures.

## Student Profile

As a transdisciplinary topic, this course is designed for students and professionals from different fields with wide interests, backgrounds and future paths. Because it blends the strategic business view with the insights and aesthetics of design and product development, it should be of interest to those interested in innovation or creation of new products, services and concepts.

It is designed for those who like to mix rigorous thinking with creativity.

## Admission requirements

The application for all IED Barcelona courses is made directly with the Orientation and Admissions Department Advisors or through an online Admissions Platform. Your Advisor will give you the credentials to access the platform once you want to start the Admission Process.

Documents required:

- ID (Spanish students) or Passport (international students) scanned
- University Diploma (Bachelor, Undergraduate Degree or equivalent) scanned
- Professional experience related to the course area/subject
- Motivation Letter in the course's language
- CV in the course's language specifying languages level and computer skills
- Advanced knowledge of Spanish or English as appropriate. For courses taught in English requires an intermediate level, corresponding to a paper TOEFL 550 or IELTS 6,5. For courses in Spanish requires a level B2. In case you don't have any qualification, it will be necessary to assess your level through an in-person or Skype interview
- Portfolio for creative courses

## **Course Program**

This course is broken into three parts: learning, connection, and creation.

### **Learning Phase**

The learning section will include an initial class day spent understanding perceptions and bases about the future, the recent history of futurism, and how the modern field has evolved and merged with innovation and strategy. They are also introduced to new methods for thinking and sensemaking that provide tools for later phases of the course.

Students will also receive preliminary team assignments for projects later in the course, to enable them to look at new techniques and data through the lens of their final goal.

### **Connection Phase**

We will then take the next few course days to learn and apply essential research and trend collection techniques, with time spent both on desk research and in the field. Taking data we've gathered, we will take several course days to look at different modelling processes—creating and assessing different possible futures. These activities will be both instructor-led and student-driven, with essential time built in for group discussion and review.

Several days will also be set aside to explore individual topics, such as social change new technology, the role of economics and business environments, and issues such as sustainability in shaping future trends. This is also when guest speakers may dive into specific topics for exploration first hand.

We will then look at how foresight connects to innovation practices and processes, and how new products and services are shaped with the future in mind.

### **Creation Phase**

The last few days of class will be spent in lab mode, with teams connecting their futures research to concept development and prototyping. The final product of these efforts will be delivered on the last day, with a group presentation and critique. These will be highly visual projects, backed by sound research and business strategy, delivered to the class in “pitch” mode, where teams will be required to meet detailed criteria and explain their thinking and planning processes.

### **Required supplemental materials:**

Students will need a laptop or tablet for research and simple concept development and a camera for observational research.

## **Course Coordinator**

Each Summer course program content and syllabus have been designed by the appointed course coordinator, a specialist in the subject, together with the Master Area Academic Department. The Course Coordinator also plays an active role in assisting to incorporate professors and developing relationships between companies and institutions in order to create links to the course program.

### **John V Willshire**

John is the founder of Smithery, a strategic design unit based in London. Since forming in 2011 they have been on mission to help companies make things people want, rather than make people want things.

This is his third year teaching on the IED Innovation and Future Thinking course, and his first as overall course coordinator. The work at Smithery spans many disciplines, but is formed around a broad territory of strategy, design, culture change, and prototyping. Central to this work has been establishing a new form of 'appropriate design'. Based on the concept of developing a metastrategy (a strategy of strategies), this means that rather than attempting to seek out and implement the one 'right', organisations must instead be versed in many different approaches. Helping organisations learn to adopt the most appropriate stance, through a system of movement, layers and loops, means creating compelling innovation projects where the experience takes hold within the organisation.

One of the tools designed for this approach, Artefact Cards, have grown to become a successful range of different creative tools for ideas practitioners and companies across the globe.

The beneficiaries of this approach include LEGO, BBC, Konica Minolta, Experian, the British Council, The Science Museum, Vodafone, Lloyds Bank, Google, Carlsberg, University of Glasgow, University of Stirling, the FSA and the V&A. John also teaches these methods at further education establishments such IED in Barcelona and the Saïd Business School, Oxford, as well as delivering keynotes at various conferences around Europe like dConstruct, Webdagene, The Conference and more. Previously, John was Chief Innovation Officer at PHD Media in London.

## **Teachers of the previous edition**

### **Natalie D. Kane**

Writer, researcher in critical futures, and curator of digital art working at the intersection of culture, technology, design and futures.

She manages her research and expertise in Critical Futures, Narrative Futures, Algorithmic Culture, technohauntology, magical analogies and narratives, future uses and abuses of data, curated and ephemeral spaces, engineering ethics and culture, future of connected objects.

She is programme & Communications Officer at Future Everything (UK). She is working with the Curator to deliver FutureEverything's programme, leading on specific strands including festival curation, artistic commissions and exhibitions. She is also Designer for Innovation Workshops and leads on coordination of written communications and research, copywriting and article production.

### **Andrés Colmenares**

Andres is a trend researcher and strategist born in Bogotá, Colombia (1982). He is co-founder of wabi-sabi lab and Internet Age Media, exploring the imperfect future and the evolution of internet as culture. In the last 7 years we have worked with global brands (Absolut, Red Bull, Ableton), institutions (Ministry of Education-Colombia) startups (AirBnB, Blipe) and schools (Kaospilots, LCI, IED) between Latin America and Europe. Guest speaker at different international events: Lift Conference (Geneva), Calvert Forum (Kazan), MAPIC Future of Retail (Cannes), Youth Marketing Day (Helsinki).

### **Fraser Hamilton**

Fraser is a designer and strategist based in London as part of the Smithery team. Having studied Industrial Design, he left University deciding he wanted to tackle larger systemic and wicked problems. This has led to him working with companies such as Coca Cola, Oxford Said Business School, Carlsberg and LEGO across prototyping, design, culture and strategy.

Interested in the future of food and the human race's growing consumption of produce, in 2017 he is undertaking a 3 months of training in a Michelin starred restaurant in Copenhagen to better understand the principles of Nordic cuisine. On the weekends he also runs a London based street food business.

### **Christina Bifano**

Design and trends researcher, educator, textile designer and fashion historian with a passion for combining all interests into one. Christina has been coordinating and teaching trends investigation and textile/fashion related courses in Barcelona for the past 10 years.

During her 11 years in Barcelona she has provided insight and inspiration reports ranging from fashion to food to international and local clients. She focuses on both online and offline research techniques, and currently enjoys collaborating with Antique & Boutiques as a local trend tour guide.

Her background is in textile/surface design, fashion and interior design research and vintage curation. She has worked for large brands and small design studios alike including: JB Martin, Co. Inc., Nautica Int'l. Inc., Milkprint Studios (NYC), Colette&Blue (PA), Cahier and Coloroom/Double G (BCN).

She is proud editor of Roadtrip to Innovation and Digital Natives/Get Ready! both by Delia Dumitrescu. Christina holds degrees in Textile/Surface Design from FIT in New York and Accademia Italiana Moda in Florence, Italy.

<http://about.me/christinabifano/#>

*The Management of the Istituto Europeo di Design reserves the right to change the Course Program according to the didactic aims requested.*