

**MBA 717-01 (CRN 10278): INNOVATION**  
**Spring 2024, Thursday, 6:30 – 9:20pm, Bryan 204**  
**University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

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Office Hours: By appointment

### **Course Description**

Fundamentals and strategies of developing and managing innovations in organizations, with emphasis on group and individual processes, mindsets and skills.

### **Detailed Course Description**

MBA 717 provides understanding about the fundamentals and strategies of innovation in organizations. Mindsets, methods, skills, and tools to innovate in organizations are emphasized. The course is designed to provide both knowledge and practice in innovating, so that students are prepared to carry out this process in an organization, whether a for or not for profit. Innovation at its core is inventive and effective problem solving, and best implemented through generative, collaborative, and creative mind- and skill-sets. Consequently, the course will cultivate these capacities at individual and group levels to support the innovation process and outcomes. There are no prerequisites or corequisites for this course beyond admission to the MBA program.

### **Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)**

The goals for students of this course are as follows:

1. Explain the nature, variety, and strategies of innovations by organizations
2. Formulate mindsets and generative human capacities for awareness, insight, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving for innovation
3. Apply innovation knowledge and fundamentals to address an organizational opportunity, challenge, or need
4. Propose an innovation by framing, conceiving, researching (primary and secondary), designing, prototyping, testing, refining, and planning implementation of a solution to a complex problem

### **Attendance & Participation**

Class attendance is in-person, not virtual. All class sessions are designed for in-person attendance, and no remote attendance or recorded lectures will be available. For students anticipating difficulties with in-person attendance, MBA 717 is offered and can be taken as an online course.

Three (3) absences, which include illnesses, infections, out-of-town business trips, and other excuses, are permitted. Each additional absence without prior notification and consent of the instructor will result in a 10-point deduction from the total course score at the end of the term. Students should be in class at the start time and remain throughout the class period. Late arrival or early departure constitutes an absence. Absences lower the participation grade.

Considerable team work will be done during class, such that absences are detrimental to timely and effective progress of the team innovation project. Teams are expected to use the class time provided to work on their projects. Significant time is required outside of class, so plan accordingly. If you anticipate that the required assignments for this course, including team meetings, conflict with work or other obligations, please plan on

taking the course another semester. Due dates, exams, and absence policy are not individually negotiated in fairness to all students.

Participation in class discussions is expected and a grade given. Participation does not mean mere presence, but refers to active and thoughtful contributions to all class exercises and discussions. Both quality and quantity of comments and insights determine that grade.

### **Campus Closure**

In the event of inclement weather or other conditions leading to campus closure, class will be held over Teams instead. Students will be notified through Canvas.

### **Absences for University-Sponsored Events**

The University recognizes the importance of certain extra-curricular and co-curricular activities (including travel days) that enhance student learning, personal development, and professional growth. Instructors will excuse absences of students for participation in University-sponsored events under the following conditions:

Students who expect to miss one or more class meetings due to participation in University-sponsored activities should:

1. Notify the instructor(s) at least five class days in advance;
2. Arrange to complete all missed work *in advance* of the absence whenever practicable as judged by the instructor(s). When missed work cannot be completed in advance, the instructor(s) should provide students with the opportunity to make up the work. Students should be aware, however, that not all kinds of work can be made up. The instructor(s) have the discretion to deny make-up work if (i) alternative assignments place an unreasonable demand on the instructor, (ii) the original assignment is such that not completing it at the originally assigned time impedes student learning
3. Present relevant documentation of participation in a relevant University-sponsored activity to the instructor(s) upon request.

Students who expect to miss more than three class periods of any single course of any kind in a term or more than two consecutive meetings of a laboratory course in order to participate in University-sponsored activities should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. In the case that the faculty member cannot make reasonable accommodations for make-up work, the student may appropriately be advised to drop the course.

### **Grading**

#### Individual (70%)

-Discussion Board Assignment	10%
-Writing Assignment 1	15%
-Writing Assignment 2	15%
-Class Participation	10%
-Final Exam	20%

#### Team (30%)

- Portfolio
- Prototype

Total 100%

The course grading scale is below:

A = 94-100%, A- = 90-93%, B+ = 87-89%, B = 84-86%, B- = 80- 83%, C+ = 77-79%, C = 74-76%,  
F = 73% or below

Grades, points, assignments, and due dates are not negotiable under any circumstances. Any feedback provided on your work—from your team and the instructor—is intended to be constructively used for improvement.

By enrolling in this course, students accept the grading policy. Per university policy, “*simple disagreement about what constitutes fair grading is not grounds for an appeal.*” Department or school handbooks and/or the instructor’s syllabus define standards for grading in that course. When a student elects to remain enrolled in a course after reading these materials, the student is understood to have accepted the grading terms. The instructor is not obligated to deviate from grading standards outlined in these materials. Examples that do not merit a grade appeal include:

- The instructor’s grading policies differ from other instructors in the department, college or school, or university.
- The instructor’s Attendance Policy differs from other instructors in the department, college or school, or university.
- The instructor’s Late Work Policy differs from other instructors in the department, college or school, or university.
- The grade distribution in the class in question is lower than in other sections of the same course.
- The student’s grade in the course is significantly lower than grades the student earned in similar courses.
- The grade in question will trigger probation, suspension, or loss of financial aid.

### **Academic Integrity**

Consistent with UNCG policy, evidence of academic dishonesty can result in a failing grade in the course and disciplinary review by the University. Cheating on exams or assignments, including hiring a service to write your assignments, as well as plagiarism are forms of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism includes passing off someone else’s works or ideas as your own or paraphrasing material from a source (e.g. the Internet) without proper acknowledgement and citation. All sources in written work should be properly credited through formal citations. If unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask the instructor prior to submission of work. Details on expected student conduct can be found from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities: <https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity-faqs/>

### **Health and Wellness**

Your health impacts your learning. Throughout your time in college, you may experience a range of health issues that can cause barriers to your learning. These might include physical ailments, illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may be experiencing. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling 336-334-5874, visiting the website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/> or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. Help is always available.

## Technical Support

Technical support: Students with technical issues with the course and email should contact 6TECH for support either by email or phone or chat (<https://its.uncg.edu/Help/6TECH/>). Please also make your instructor aware of the issue.

## Academic & Religious Accommodations

UNCG respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. If you feel you will encounter any barriers to full participation in this course due to the impact of a disability, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS). The OARS staff can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can learn more about OARS by visiting their website at <https://ods.uncg.edu/> or by calling [336-334-544](tel:336-334-544) or visiting them in Suite 215, EUC. If requesting a religious accommodation, please see the instructor at least 3 weeks before the dates concerned to arrange the accommodation.

## Required Readings

The following three (3) books are required for this course, and may be obtained through various sources, including Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Books are not available through the UNCG bookstore. Please make sure to get the books specified rather than proxy materials, even by the same authors.

*Mindfulness for Creativity: Adapt, Create, and Thrive in a Frantic World* (2015) or *Mindfulness for a More Creative Life* (2021) by Dr. Danny Penman, Piatkus

*Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by Carol S. Dweck, Ballantine Books, 2006/2016

*Character Strengths Matter: How to Live a Full Life* by Shannon Polly and Kathryn H. Britton, Positive Psychology News, 2015

Additional required readings, videos, and websites will also be assigned and posted on Canvas.

## Other Required Materials

**Students are required to bring a laptop or tablet to class for ALL sessions.** Students are also required to bring other materials on specified dates to class for class exercises and the team project, such as post-it-notes and markers. Also students are to use Microsoft Whiteboard for some in-class discussions and team work.

Whiteboard is free as part of the Teams suite. See video on how to access:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snCI3aEATog>

## Discussion Board Assignment

Students will post their completed assignment on the Canvas discussion board and respond to other students' postings. The assignment must be posted by the due date and time noted on Canvas, along with at least one response to other students' submissions by the due date and time noted on Canvas. This assignment will open about a week before it is due to correspond with course content and to maximize learning.

Responses to other students' work cannot be made before submitting one's own work. Late submissions and postings will be accepted but with significant point deductions (see Late Submission Policy hereafter). Clear, concise, well structured, substantive and focused responses to the assignment questions are valued over long, vague, superficial, meandering comments or comments that merely affirm what other students have already

written.

## Individual and Team Written Assignments

All individual written assignments will be open about a week before due, and are not intended to be done in well in advance in order to correspond with in-class content delivery. They must be submitted to Canvas by the specified deadlines.

The team written assignment, called a portfolio, is on the innovation project. Instructions will be given later in the semester in class on its format, length, contents and how to submit it on Canvas.

All written assignments should be impeccably written: thoughtful, clear, concise, concrete, specific, direct (on the topic required), substantive, logical, correctly formatted (including citations), and well structured, following rules of standard English and effective business writing. Poor spelling, grammar, syntax, and punctuation, and disorganized, vague, superficial or hard-to-comprehend writing or ignoring instructions will result in point deductions. Late submissions will be accepted but with significant loss of points (see Assignment Submissions Policy hereafter).

All written assignments, except Discussion Boards, will be scanned for plagiarism via Turnitin. Students are advised to submit assignments on Turnitin in advance of the deadline, determine if there is plagiarism, correct any issues, and then submit the corrected file by the deadline. Plagiarism on a final submission will result in an automatic zero, as well as non-submission to the final assignment folder.

If encountering difficulties with writing, the student or team is advised to make an online or in-person appointment at the Student Writing Center at <https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/>

### Assignment Submission Policy – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

It is important to complete and properly submit all assignments specified on time. Failure to submit assignments on Canvas per the deadline due to technical difficulties, not being aware of or having forgotten the deadline, or needing to address a plagiarism issue is the full and complete responsibility of the student. It is advised NOT to submit at the very last minute before the deadline in the event of a technical failure on Canvas, your computer, or the Internet. Always double check the correct file is submitted on time to the proper Canvas folder by the specified deadline. No email submissions to the instructor will be accepted as a substitute for Canvas submissions.

Late individual and team submissions will be accepted but with penalty. Each day late for an individual written assignment will result in an 11-point grade deduction. Non-submission or plagiarism in a written assignment will result in a zero. The assignment is considered a day late if it is submitted on the due date but after the time deadline. For example an assignment due by the time deadline of 6:30pm would be considered a day late if submitted at 6:45pm that day, two days late if submitted the following day after 6:30pm, and so on.

Late team submissions will be accepted but with significant point deductions. Each day late for the written portfolio will result in an 11-point deduction for all members of the team regardless of person responsible.

Under no circumstances will failure to submit the correct file by the deadline by the team member responsible result in a pass for the rest of the team. Again, it is advised not to wait to the very last minute before the deadline to submit in the event of a technical failure on Canvas, your computer, or the Internet. Always double check that you have submitted the correct file on time to the proper Canvas folder by the specified deadline.

The team written assignment or portfolio must be submitted TWICE to Canvas: first by **only one team member** to the Turnitin folder to check for plagiarism, and second by **the same team member** on the regular assignment folder after any plagiarism issues have been corrected. Both submissions must be made by the same person by the due date/time. Repeated submissions to the Turnitin folder are allowed but ONLY by the SAME team member who made the original submission. **Different students submitting from the same team will be flagged as plagiarized work, resulting in a zero, so please avoid this. Failure to submit the team assignment by the deadline in the Turnitin folder will result in a 10-point penalty. Failure to submit the team assignment to the regular folder, having assumed the Turnitin submission suffices, will result in a zero. These submissions are not substitutes for one another. Both must be done.**

## **Ethics Policies**

By enrolling in this course, students have agreed to abide by its ethics and grade policies, including but not limited to the following: cheating (copying or plagiarizing) on exams or assignments; conjuring false sources of information or improperly citing true sources (however these were generated); copying, screen capturing or taking photos of lecture or other course materials and sharing them with individuals, websites, or organizations; using aids, devices, technologies, notes, or prior exams when taking a test. Abiding by the policies also means accepting the consequences of any violation, which can lead to course failure, disciplinary procedures, and legal actions.

## **Team Innovation Project**

Students will form teams of their own choosing to carry out an assigned innovation project. At the end of the semester, students will present their innovation project in a written portfolio (report), presentation, and prototype.

The aim of the project is to develop an effective and appropriate innovation by learning and applying a specific method. Time will be devoted in class to work on projects, though more time will be spent outside of class.

Leadership of the team will rotate so every member has a chance to lead. The leadership roles\*, indicated on your team contract, are below:

- Leader 1 (design brief, secondary research\*)
- Leader 2 (research plan, primary research\*)
- Leader 3 (concepts, napkin pitches)
- Leader 4 (prototypes and prototype feedback session)
- Leader 5 (portfolio)

\*EACH team member MUST do a part of the secondary research and a portion of the primary research.

To ensure equal contribution, team members will anonymously and confidentially evaluate one another on the project deliverables. The evaluations will be used by the instructor to determine the individual grades for the group project. No member of a team can earn more than the group grade, but can receive one or more letter grades below that of the team. Grades for the project will be released along with those for the final exam.

Team are self-managed. Teams should identify and try to address conflicts early in the project, including from a low-contributing, uncooperative, and/or domineering individual. If issues remain, the team may by unanimous vote remove the member. This does not require approval by the instructor. The instructor must be notified at the point of removal. Removal results in failure for that student on any remaining team

assignments to be submitted, with no substitute assignments provided.

### **Why Did I Get a Lower Grade than the Team?**

Students may receive lower grades than the team grade. This happens when the confidential team feedback indicates those individuals contributed less to the team assignment, such as by failing to fulfill commitments, turning in their work late, being a no-show for meetings, submitting poor work that had to be re-done by others, and/or having a negative or apathetic attitude towards the project or others in the team. The team contract, which is binding on all members, describes expectations of each member.

Note that if the arrangement is made that members will contribute less to certain parts of the project and more to others, with the understanding that contributions are equal for the project overall, then the confidential input should indicate that arrangement and how well each person fulfilled it.

The instructor will not share the confidential team input to any student in order to maintain anonymity of the feedback. The grades, as with all others in this course, are not subject to negotiation or change. It is best throughout the course to maintain cooperative, engaged, conscientious, and growth-minded attitude and actions on the project to better ensure a desired grade.

### **Why is the Human Process Emphasized?**

In this course, students will learn about innovation using a human-centric approach called Human Flourishing Innovation (HFI). The reason is that while there are available technologies and analytical procedures, innovation at its core is a *social and creative process* dependent on human skills and insights. To learn about this process and leverage the individual and group capacities involved, the course teaches the new method of HFI, which emphasize the powerfully human avenue to, rather than mechanical tasks of, invention.

Through the course content and team project, students will use direct sensory experiences (e.g. drawing, observing, interviewing, improvising, and material building) along with advanced research and design thinking tools, activities, and mindsets to generate new understandings of, and build prototype solutions for, complex or “wicked” problems facing organizations.

While algorithms can generate seeming solutions in minutes, these can be derivative, inappropriate, or violate intellectual property rights. The HFI method produces novel and thoughtful answers to wicked problems that are genuine, effective, and meaningful by respecting not only users of the innovations but also the unique, creative, and analytical abilities of innovators (e.g. student teams) to conceive and develop them for organizations. The HFI method is also adaptive to any problem (social, economic, financial, operational, technical, market-related, etc.), and therefore valuable to learn and practice for their current and future business career.

Student teams will produce a portfolio for their innovation project, which will be graded based on how well all activities were done and documented, along with outcomes along the way and at the end. Thus, the process matters most because that is what produces great innovations based on deep human learning, capacities, and transformation.

*Enrollment in this course means students have read and accepted the policies and terms specified in this syllabus, on Canvas, and any posted or distributed course materials.*

## COURSE SCHEDULE

(Effective 1/11/2024 Subject to Change with Canvas Notification)

**Bring items noted in bold for in-class work.**

**ALWAYS bring a laptop, paper or pencil, notebook, and printed lecture handout (posted by 10am Thurs) to every class**

Week (Unit)	Topics	Assignments (Post on Canvas)	Prepare for Class or Assignments (Bring additional items in bold to class)
1/11 Unit 1	<b>Innovation</b> *Course Overview *Innovation Key Questions (O1)	-Student Info document (1/11, Thurs, during class) -Ethics Acknowledgement (1/11, Thurs, 11:59pm)	-Read, sign, and upload Ethics Acknowledgment
1/18 Unit 2	<b>Innovation Strategies</b> *Business & Innovation Strategies (O1) *Creating an Innovation Strategy (O1)		-Read Pisano (2015) and Rattalino (2018)
1/25 Unit 3	<b>Innovation Methods</b> *Stage-Gate (O1) *Design Thinking (O1)	-Individual Survey (1/25, Thurs, 6:30pm)	-Read Cooper (1990), Liedtka (2018), Nakata (2020a) <b>Bring coffee filters</b>
2/1 Unit 4	<b>Human Flourishing Innovation (HFI)</b> *The Approach (O1) *Design Thinking (O1) *Character Strengths & Innovation (O2)	-DB Submission (2/1, Thurs, 6:30pm) -VIA Strengths Survey (2/1, Thurs, 6:30pm) -Team Form Submission (2/1, Thurs, 6:30pm)	-Watch Liedtka video and take notes ( <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxBBVDzOO8&amp;t=1s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxBBVDzOO8&amp;t=1s</a> ) <b>Bring your VIA results and Liedtka video notes</b> <b>Bring materials e.g. plastic cups, foil, markers, playdoh, legos, cardboard, etc.</b>
2/8 Unit 5	<b>HFI Application: Project &amp; Discover Phase</b> *Project, Deliverables, and Teams *Discover through Research (O2,3,4)	-DB Response (2/5, Mon, 6:30pm) -WA1 Submission (2/8, Thurs, 6:30pm)	-Read Polly book, pp.5-14, 192-215, and respective chapters on your signature (top 5) strengths -Watch Ethnography video and take notes <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nV0jY5VgymI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nV0jY5VgymI</a> <b>Bring Ethnography video notes</b>
2/15 Unit 6	<b>HFI Application: Mindsets &amp; Design Aids</b> *Mindsets (O2) *Design Brief, Tools, & Maps (O3,4)	-Team Contract Submission (2/15, Thurs, 6:30pm) -Team Research Plan Submission (2/15, Thurs, 6:30pm)	-Read innovation project documents -Read Dweck book, ch. 1- 5, 8 (other chapters optional) -Organize team Jamboard <b>Bring secondary research and MS Whiteboard</b>
2/22 Unit 7	<b>HFI Application: Design Phase</b> *Innovation Case (O1,3) *Ideating-Divergence (O3,4)		-Read and prepare Innovation Case -Read Nakata & Hwang (2020) <b>Bring primary research, innovation case answers, and MS Whiteboard</b>
2/29 Unit 8	<b>HFI Application: Mindfulness &amp; Design Phase</b> *Mindfulness (O2) *Ideating-Convergence (O3,4)		<b>Bring ideated-divergence concepts, piece of chocolate or candy, and MS Whiteboard</b>
3/7	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
3/14 Unit 9	<b>HFI Application: Design Phase &amp; Prototyping</b> *Design: Prototyping (O3,4)		-Read Penman book, ch. 1-5 required, with ch. 6-8 optional <b>Bring prototyping materials</b>
3/21 Unit 10	<b>HFI Application: Deliver Phase &amp; Testing</b> *Deliver: Testing & Iterating (O3,4) *Project Synthesizing	-WA2 Submission (3/21, Thurs, 6:30pm) -Confirmed Guests Info (3/21, Thurs, 6:30pm)	<b>Bring prototype feedback and materials</b>
3/28 Unit 11	<b>Work on Prototype-Presentation</b>		
4/4 Unit 12	<b>Prototype Feedback Session (via MS Teams, not in person)</b>		-Prepare a brief presentation of working prototype and project for feedback
4/11 Unit 13	<b>Portfolio-Prototype Finalization</b>		
4/18 Unit 14	<b>PORTFOLIO &amp; PROTOTYPE DUE THURSDAY, 4/18, 11:59PM#</b>	-Turnitin Portfolio-Prototype Submission (4/18, Thurs 11:59pm) -Final Portfolio-Prototype Submission (4/18, Thurs 11:59pm) -Portfolio- Prototype Grade Input Submission (4/20, Sat, 11:59pm)	
4/25	<b>READING DAY (NO CLASS)</b>		
5/2	<b>FINAL EXAM (TBA)**#</b>		

O1, O2, O3, O4 = Student learning objectives 1, 2, 3, 4. DB= Discussion Board Assignment. WA1, WA2 = Written Assignment 1, 2.

\*\*Final Exam time/date later announced based on MBA office schedule of final exams. #Project and exam grades released concurrently first week of May