



## U.LAB: TRANSFORMING BUSINESS, SOCIETY, AND SELF COURSE SYLLABUS

### WELCOME!

Welcome to u.lab 1x. From 2015-2017, over 90,000 people from 183 countries have taken part in this course. Some u.lab participants have 30 years of work experience; others are in high school or college. Some are from the business sector; others work in government, civil society, education, healthcare, the arts, media, as social entrepreneurs – and much more. We're thrilled that you have decided to join us in this journey through u.lab!

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**U.LAB FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE**      **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

THE U.LAB SERIES ON EDX      **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

## THE BASICS

### INTRODUCTION

We will offer a number of new features in this course. We created this syllabus to explain how they work, how they are related to each other, how much time you should plan to complete them and how you can make the best use of them in the weeks ahead.

### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

This is a course for active, experiential learners. The ideas and practices in u.lab 1x are best understood by trying them. While it's possible to benefit from this course by only watching the videos, the real learning happens when you apply these methods to a question or challenge in your work or life. This will mean that you spend a significant amount of your time in u.lab away from your computer. **We suggest you apply the u.lab ideas, methods and tools an issue that matters to you, and for which the way forward is not currently clear.** To give you an idea of how this might work, here are a few examples of how u.lab is being used around the world.

### WAYS TO USE U.LAB

This is the third time u.lab has been offered on edX. Previous versions were offered in January and September 2015, and September 2016. In that time, numerous individuals, groups, and organizations have used u.lab in exciting and creative ways to create change around an issue or challenge that matters to them. Below are a few examples:

- **u.lab in government:** In Scotland, u.lab is being used as a tool to reinvent government—from service delivery to asset-based community development. More than 80 Hubs formed across Scotland, with more than 1,000 participants. [Read more here.](#)
- **u.lab in business:** in India, a team of 18 people from [Jaipur Rugs](#) will take the course together to develop their own leadership capacities, and apply the methods and frameworks to current organizational challenges. [Read more about the Jaipur Rugs u.lab initiative here.](#)
- **u.lab in cities:** The Impact Hub network is using u.lab to explore the future of cities. Last year, 44 Impact Hubs participated in u.lab. For example, in the U.K, the Brixton Impact Hub brought people together to explore how the community could find new approaches to the challenges and tensions brought on by gentrification.
- **u.lab for entrepreneurs:** In China, over 10,000 people have participated in u.lab. Many choose to form hubs and take the course together. [Here is an example](#) of how this works in the city of Xi'an.
- **u.lab for personal change and renewal:** Many people use u.lab to reconnect to their own sources of inspiration, creativity and energy for leading change. In 2015, 60% of u.lab exit

survey respondents said the course was “eye-opening” and another 33% called it “life-changing”. Read on to find out more about some of the practices and tools that make u.lab 1x a transformative experience.

## COURSE TEAM

u.lab 1x builds on the work of many practitioners across cultures who, over the past two decades have co-created the knowledge, methods, and tools – and pioneered the change efforts – that are taught and referenced in the course. The u.lab team listed below includes those who are most visible in the videos and online platforms – but many more contributed greatly to make the u.lab what it is today.

### **Instructor:**

Otto Scharmer, MIT Sloan School of Management, Presencing Institute

### **Co-facilitators:**

Adam Yukelson, Presencing Institute  
Julie Arts, Presencing Institute  
Kelvy Bird, Presencing Institute  
Angela Baldini, Presencing Institute  
Dayna Cunningham, MIT CoLab  
Lili Xu Brandt, Presencing Institute  
Martin Kalungu-Banda, Presencing Institute  
Ela Ben-Ur, i2i experience  
Simoon Fransen, u.lab global support team

## CONTACT

You can reach us in different ways: You can post questions or problems to the course discussion board on the u.lab community site and team members or students of the course will respond. You can also post questions and responses to twitter using the hashtag #ulab. Or you can email questions or problems to (u.lab@presencing.com) and a member of the course team will make every effort to assist you. Due to the high number of students registered for this course, the course team will have very limited capacity to reply, but we will try our best. In addition, during the course we will film “office hours” videos to address some of the most common questions and ideas that emerged during the previous week.

## COURSE FEATURES

### LIVE SESSIONS

Pre-recorded videos are a great teaching tool and we've been working hard to create a set of videos specifically designed for this course. However, live events have a different and unique energy. When large groups of people turn their attention to an event in real time, a powerful felt sense of global connectedness begins to emerge.

For this reason, the u.lab team will facilitate live, interactive, hour-long sessions that will bring together participants from all over the world. The dates and times for the sessions are as follows:

- Live session #1 - September 21st, 2017 from 10am-11am Eastern US Time
- Live session #2 - October 19th, 2017 from 10am-11am Eastern US Time
- Live session #3 - November 9th, 2017 from 10am-11am Eastern US Time
- Live session #4 - December 14th, 2017 from 10am-11am Eastern US Time

We post the links to the live broadcast on edX a few days before each session. Live sessions will be recorded and made available immediately following the conclusion of the live broadcast.

### HUBS

u.lab invites you to create a place to learn together with other people. We call these places hubs.

A hub is any space where some u.lab participants gather together (in person) to watch the live sessions and, if you choose, engage in dialogue and reflective exercises in small groups before and afterward. Creating a hub is actually quite simple. It starts by having a conversation after each of the three live-sessions – something that anyone can organize. In fact, in 2015 over 600 hubs formed worldwide! From these experiences, hub hosts have collaborated to create a Hub Hosting Guide – [which you can access here](#).

### COACHING CIRCLES

Coaching circles are probably the single most effective method in the u.lab for experiencing the entire U process in weekly 75-minute sessions. By “experience the U process” we mean a shift in the social field from normal discussion to collective presence and generative dialogue. The backbone of the coaching circles is a process we call case clinics. In Week 1, you will learn the case clinic method and beginning in Week 2 you will have a chance to practice it on a weekly basis. Here are some Frequently Asked Questions about coaching circles:

**What is a coaching circle?** A coaching circle is a group of five or six u.lab participants who meet virtually (or in person, if possible) for 75 minutes each week to practice the leadership skills taught in this course and support each other in developing new ways of thinking about and dealing with their current leadership challenges.

**A group? But I don't know anyone else in this course...** Perfect! There are thousands of other people thinking the same thing. In Module 1, there will be a tutorial that shows you how to meet other participants through the u.lab community site (which launches in September) and create or join a coaching circle. All coaching circle groups will be self-selected. You can start a new group, or browse groups that are still in need of members. When browsing groups, you'll be able to search by preferred meeting time, preferred language, other group members' interests, and more.

**I'm not sure if I want to join a coaching circle. How do I know if I should really join?** For a coaching circle to be effective, each member needs to be committed to meet each week for about 75 minutes. See if one of the following applies to you:

1. If you're definitely interested in participating in a coaching circle on a weekly basis, sign up after the first live session concludes.
2. If you've joined the u.lab and only intend to browse the course material - that's great and we're happy that you're here - but you should not join a coaching circle.
3. If you're not sure whether you want to join a coaching circle, it's better to wait and create or join a group later in the course than to join a group and not participate or to join and then drop out.
4. If you're definitely interested but know in advance that you won't be available to join a coaching circle during a particular week, you should still join, but we recommend you bring this up in advance in your circle. Make sure that you can fully join all other sessions.

**I'm not going to join a coaching circle. Can I still participate in u.lab?** Yes, absolutely. It won't be the full experience, but you can still participate, learn a lot and earn a certificate.

**I'm participating in a hub. Can I form a coaching circle with people in my hub instead of joining one virtually?** Yes. If you choose to do this, we encourage you to ALSO create an online space on the u.lab community site where members of your coaching circle can share written assignments with each other.

**When does my coaching circle meet?** That is entirely up to your group to decide! If you join a group using the mechanism on the u.lab community site, pay close attention to the time associated with each group. Your coaching circle should always meet before the next week of the course goes live. New weeks go live on Thursdays.

## 1X SYLLABUS

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This interactive and experiential course is about leading profound innovation in times of disruptive change. You can think of it as a 13-week innovation period in which you will apply a framework and method developed at MIT and practiced by individuals, organizations and larger communities around the world in order to learn how to co-sense and co-shape emerging future possibilities.

2017 has been a year of disruptive change on a global scale. The simultaneous rise of global terrorism, authoritarian strongmen and the far-right are the twin faces of our current moment. In

these times, how do we access and act from our deeper sources of curiosity, compassion and courage rather than reacting out of prejudice, anger and fear? What kind of leadership is required to create profound innovation at the scale of a whole eco-system of stakeholders and partners?

u.lab 1x is a platform that supports you to explore these questions through action, reflection, and engagement with other change makers around the world. In order to “explore the future by doing,” you will be invited to develop a prototype initiative that connects the three threads — the personal, relational, and systemic dimensions.

## PRE-REQUISITES

No specific knowledge, background or experience is required to take u.lab 1x. However, **before beginning the course, all participants should complete u.lab 0x** – a 90-minute introductory course that will help you understand how Theory U enables individuals, organizations, and communities to turn ideas into real world change. You can access u.lab 0x [here](#).

## RECOMMENDED READING

For each session we will be recommending specific chapters from these two books:

- Scharmer, C. Otto: [Theory U. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition](#). San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2007/2016.
- Scharmer, C. Otto, and K. Kaufer: [Leading From the Emerging Future: From Ego-system to Eco-system Economies](#). San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2013.

Although you can do the course without them, we highly recommend buying one or both of these books. Theory U focuses more on the introduction to the U process, the U theory, and includes examples, drawings, and tools. Leading focuses on applying the U Theory to transforming economics and capitalism.

## COURSE DELIVERY

New course material will be released in the **Course** tab on edX.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Orientation Module: Introduction to u.lab 1x

*Launches: September 14<sup>th</sup>*

- How to use and navigate the social and community elements of the course.
- Important: be sure to complete u.lab 0x on edX.org if you haven't already done so. It is a pre-requisite for 1x. You can complete it in less than two hours.

### Module 1: Co-Initiating

*Launches on September 21<sup>st</sup>. Complete by October 4<sup>th</sup>*

- Introduction to the deeper sources of our current global challenges.
- The art and practice of deep listening.
- Learn the case clinic methodology, join and practice your 1<sup>st</sup> coaching circle.
- Complete an “empathy walk” and begin tracking your listening with the listening assessment tool.

### **Module 2: Co-Sensing**

*Launches on October 5<sup>th</sup>. Complete by October 18<sup>th</sup>*

- Go on learning journeys and/or conduct stakeholder interviews.
- Make sense of the data you generate using Social Presencing Theater.
- Practice your 2<sup>nd</sup> coaching circle.

### **Module 3: Presencing**

*Launches on October 19<sup>th</sup>. Complete by November 1<sup>st</sup>*

- Introduction to presencing and its inverse, absencing.
- Retreat and reflect, allow deeper sources of knowledge to emerge.
- Practice your 3<sup>rd</sup> coaching circle.

### **Module 4: Crystallizing**

*Launches on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Complete by November 15<sup>th</sup>*

- Staying connected to your deeper sources of inspiration and knowing when and how to act from that place.
- Practice your 4<sup>th</sup> coaching circle.

### **Module 5: Prototyping (Pt. 1)**

*Launches on November 16<sup>th</sup>. Complete by November 29<sup>th</sup>*

- Engage in prototyping activities that generate feedback that will help you evolve your inspiration / idea.
- Principles to support the evolution from an idea, to prototype, to an initiative with the potential to scale.
- Practice your 5<sup>th</sup> coaching circle.

### **Module 6: Prototyping (Pt. 2)**

*Launches on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Complete by December 13<sup>th</sup>*

- Continuation of prototyping activities and application of principles.
- Practice your 6<sup>th</sup> and final coaching circle.

### **Module 7: Co-Evolving**

*Launches on December 14<sup>th</sup>.*

- Understanding the role of social fields in the evolution of prototypes.
- Continue prototyping as needed.

### **Module 8: The Journey Ahead**

*Launches December 21<sup>st</sup>. Final module of 1x.*

- The next steps in the u.lab journey.
- What is emerging globally from u.lab 1x, and what is needed to carry momentum forward?

## GRADING

In each module there will be four types of activities you can do to earn credit. Each will count toward 25% of your grade for the module.

1. Watch the videos (25%)
2. Participate in a coaching circle (25%)
3. Personal reflection exercises (25%)
4. Real world engagement (25%)

There are no tests, exams, or quizzes. You will be expected to complete a reflective journaling exercise each week, beginning in Module 1.

The u.lab is pass/fail. You will need a 60% overall grade to pass and earn a certificate. Additionally, our grading system is completely on the honor code. At the end of each graded week you will find a section called Action items. In this section you will indicate what work you completed during the week.

We look forward to beginning the 1x journey with you on September 14<sup>th</sup>!

-The u.lab team