



U.LAB: TRANSFORMING BUSINESS, SOCIETY, AND SELF

COURSE SYLLABUS

WELCOME!

Welcome to u.lab 1x. Since 2015, over 75,000 people from 183 countries have taken part in this course. As of this writing, the current cohort includes approximately 20,000 participants. Some of us 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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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 (and when) 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 pick 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. 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
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Sarina Bowhuis, u.lab global support team
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CONTACT

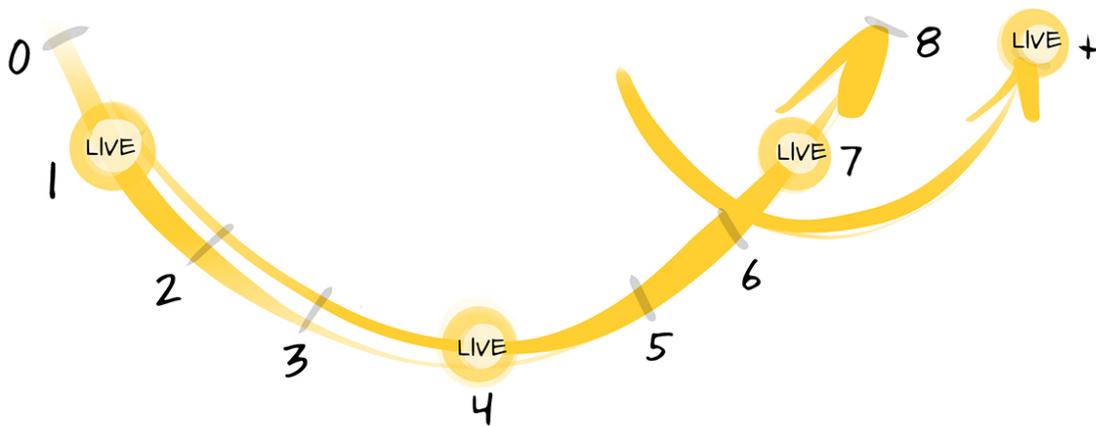
You can reach us in different ways: You can post questions or problems to the course discussion board on the u.lab community site and team members or students of the course will respond. You can also post questions and responses to twitter using the hashtag #ulab. Or you can email questions or problems 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, we all know that live events have a 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, during the first, fourth, and seventh week of the course (and again seven weeks after that in December), the u.lab team will facilitate a live, interactive, 75-minute session that will bring together participants from all over the world.



See the Course Schedule below for more detail. All 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 Week 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 seven-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.

2016 has been a year of disruptive change on a global scale. Dallas and police violence in America, Nice, Turkey, Trump, Brexit - 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. 2nd 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 go live every Thursday at 10:00 am Eastern US Time (UTC -5) in the **Course** tab on edX.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 0: GETTING STARTED

LAUNCHES THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH AT 10AM ET (UTC -5)

- **Complete u.lab 0x** (if you haven't already) – this is where you will find an introduction to the frameworks that will be used throughout u.lab 1x.
- **Tutorials:** watch the videos explaining the u.lab online and offline learning environments.
- **Create a profile:** you will be invited to create a profile on the u.lab community website. The link to this site (which is outside of edX) will be posted to edX on or before September 8th.
- How to prepare for Week 1
 - Pre-reading:
 - Preface and Intro to *Theory U*
 - [Introduction](#) to *Leading*
 - Otto's Huffington Post blog: "[One Earth. Two Social Fields](#)"
 - Schedule time to do your Empathy Walk (see Week 1)

WEEK 1: CO-INITIATING

LAUNCHES THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15TH AT 10AM ET (UTC -5)

- **Live session:** September 15th from 10:00am – 11:30am Eastern Time (UTC -5). The link will be posted on edX a few days before the session.
- **What is co-initiating and how do you do it?** All deep innovation journeys begin with the process of co-initiating. After the live session, the first pre-recorded videos in Week 1 explain how you can practice co-initiating as an individual, team, organization, or community.
- **The art and practice of deep listening:** The key skill throughout all deep innovation journeys is the capacity to pay attention to our own attention. Simply put, how we listen matters. Pre-recorded videos will introduce the "four levels of listening" and how to shift the inner place from which we operate as individuals.
- **Introduction to u.lab coaching circles:** Each week in u.lab, you will meet with a group of 4 or 5 other u.lab participants and apply deep listening to a challenge one person is facing. This week we explain how that process works.
- **Join a coaching circle:** If you are willing to commit to meeting with a group for 75 minutes each week, you can sign up for a coaching circle this week – it's a great opportunity to

connect to other participants and experience the essence of Theory U in a short period of time.

- Actions to do this week:
 - **Empathy walk:** a method for developing empathy and honing your skill in establishing a relationship across a significant boundary. This week, you will find someone in your community who is very different from you and spend time meeting and getting to know them. *Plan to spend at least 1 hour with this person.*
 - **Listening assessment tool:** Begin using a new online, daily self-assessment tool that will help you to observe changes in your individual ability to engage in deep listening over time. This takes 5-10 minutes per day.
 - **Reflective journaling** on the intention that brings you to the u.lab journey and on your empathy walk experience.
- How to prepare for Week 2:
 - Pre-reading:
 - *Theory U:* Chapters 1 and 2.
 - *Leading:* Chapter 1:
http://www.ottoscharmer.com/sites/default/files/e2e_ulab.pdf
 - **Pre-planning:** Next week you will go on learning journeys and/or do stakeholder interviews. Each of these activities requires advanced preparation and coordination with potential hosts and interviewees. Read the Week 2 section below for more detail.

WEEK 2: CO-SENSING (PART 1)

LAUNCHES THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22ND AT 10AM ET (UTC -5)

- **What is co-sensing and how do you do it?** Pre-recorded videos give an overview of co-sensing, which is the practice of cultivating an open mind (listening) and open heart (empathy) then going to the “edges” of the system you want to change to experience it from the perspective of those who are most marginalized or disenfranchised by its current ways of operating.
- **The four levels of conversation** – last week we learned about the four levels of listening. This week, we extend the framework to conversation and explore how to shift the inner place from which we operate collectively (in groups)
- Actions to do this week:
 - **Learning journeys:** one of the most important practices you can do with a group, learning journeys pull participants out of their daily routine and allow them to experience an organization, challenge, or system through the lens of different stakeholders. Learning journeys bring participants to places, people, and experiences that are most relevant for the respective question they are working on. *Learning journeys require a half or full day to complete, so please plan accordingly.*

- OR
 - **Stakeholder interviews:** conducted by practitioners with their key stakeholders; this could include customers, bosses, subordinates, or peers both within and outside the organization. The interviews allow you to step into the shoes of your interviewees and see your role through the eyes of these stakeholders. *Plan at least 30 minutes for each interview. The number of interviews you do is your choice. Try to meet with one representative from each of your key stakeholder groups.*

**NOTE: you have until the end of WEEK 3 to complete learning journeys or stakeholder interviews.*
 - **Coaching circle #1:** Meet with your coaching circle and practice your first case clinic – a process for addressing the root issues of a current leadership challenge in your life or work.
 - Reflective journaling
- How to prepare for Week 3
 - Pre-reading:
 - *Theory U:* Chapters 9 and 10
 - *Leading:* Chapter 2:
http://www.ottoscharmer.com/sites/default/files/e2e_ulab.pdf
 - **Pre-planning:** Schedule and complete your learning journeys or dialogue interviews if you haven't already done so. Additionally, if you are working in a hub or group, schedule at least 2 hours for sense making activities.

WEEK 3: CO-SENSING (PART 2)

LAUNCHES THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH AT 10AM ET (UTC -5)

- **Continue co-sensing and begin sense making:** In the pre-recorded videos this week, we invite you to continue your co-sensing activities - either learning journey or stakeholder interviews – and then use the remainder of this week to reflect on the deeper patterns and insights that have emerged from your experiences.
- **Introduction to Social Presencing Theater:** Week 3 contains a full separate module on Social Presencing Theater (SPT), a methodology for understanding current reality and exploring emerging future possibilities. SPT is one of the most effective methods in the Theory U body of work and has been used for over ten years in business, government, and civil society settings, in places including Brazil, Indonesia, China, Europe and the United States. We encourage you to try it out this week!
- Actions to do this week
 - Complete Learning journeys and/or stakeholder Interviews
 - **Sense making:** For those working in groups or hubs, have a meeting to make sense of what you've seen or done. Consider using Social Presencing Theater.

- **Coaching circle #2:** Meet with your coaching circle and practice your second case clinic
- Listening assessment
- Reflective journaling
- How to prepare for next week
 - Pre-reading:
 - Theory U: Chapter 11
 - *Leading*: Chapter 3
 - **Pre-planning:** For next week's live session, be sure to watch in a quiet, reflective space where you won't be interrupted or distracted.

WEEK 4: PRESENCING

LAUNCHES THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6TH AT 10AM ET (UTC -5)

- **Live Session:** October 6th from 10:00am – 11:30am Eastern Time (UTC -5). For this week's live session, be sure to watch in a quiet, reflective space where you won't be interrupted or distracted.
- **Presencing** – the blending of presence and sensing, presencing means to connect with the source of your highest future possibility and to bring it into the now.
- **Absencing** –the inverse of presencing, absencing is the process that unfolds when we face disruptive change and cling to the patterns of the past rather than opening ourselves to what's emerging
- Actions to do this week
 - **Coaching circle #3:** Meet with your coaching circle and practice your third case clinic
 - **Empathy walk at home:** You will do the same empathy walk exercise outlined above, but this time, with someone you know very well.
 - Listening assessment
 - Reflective journaling
- How to prepare for next week
 - Pre-reading:
 - *Theory U*: Chapter 12
 - *Leading*: Chapters 4-5
 - **Pre-planning:** Week 5 is a lighter, more spacious week, designed for you to stay connected to the intentions that formed in Week 4, and begin taking small actions to bring them into reality.

WEEK 5: CRYSTALLIZING

LAUNCHES THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13TH AT 10AM ET

- **What is crystallizing and how do you do it?** Crystallizing a larger intent is a process of focusing the energy and sense of purpose that comes from presencing into concrete images and visions that can guide action. Pre-recorded videos in Week 5 introduce the main principles of crystallizing
- Practices for crystallizing
- Actions to do this week
 - **Coaching circle** – take a week off from the case clinic process – instead use the time with your group for open dialogue.
 - Listening assessment
 - Reflective journaling
- How to prepare for next week
 - Pre-reading:
 - *Theory U*: Chapter 13
 - *Leading*: Chapter 6

WEEK 6: PROTOTYPING

LAUNCHES THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20TH AT 10AM EST

- **What is prototyping and how do you do it?** The pre-recorded videos introduce the principles and basic practices of prototyping, which is a process of learning by doing.
- Actions to do this week
 - **Explore the future by doing** – develop a prototype initiative that connects the three threads — the personal, relational, and systemic dimensions.
 - **Coaching circle #4**: Meet with your coaching circle and practice your fourth case clinic
 - Listening assessment
 - Reflective journaling
- How to prepare for next week
 - Pre-reading:
 - *Theory U*: Chapter 14
 - *Leading*: Chapter 7

WEEK 7: CO-EVOLVING

LAUNCHES THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27TH AT 10AM EST

- **Live Session**: October 27th, 10:00am – 11.30am Eastern Time: Sharing emerging results from u.lab participants' multi-local prototyping.

- **What is co-evolving and how do you do it?** The pre-recorded videos introduce the principles and basic practices of co-evolving your prototype idea.
- Actions to do this week
 - **Coaching circle #5:** Meet with your coaching circle and practice your fifth case clinic
 - Listening assessment
 - Reflective journaling
- How to prepare for next week
 - Pre-reading:
 - *Theory U*: Epilogue
 - *Leading*: Chapter 8

WEEK 8: GLOBAL MOVEMENT BUILDING LAUNCHES THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD.

- **What would it take to build a global movement of inspired, awareness-based change makers?** The content for this week will be developed during September and October, in order to tie it directly to the experience of this year's u.lab 1x cohort.
- What's already happening?
- Actions to do this week
 - **Coaching circle #6:** Meet with your coaching circle and practice your sixth case clinic
- Next steps

Week 8 is the closing session for the course. However, there is a FINAL LIVE SESSION on December 15th. Use the 7 weeks until that live session to work on evolving your prototype.

GRADING

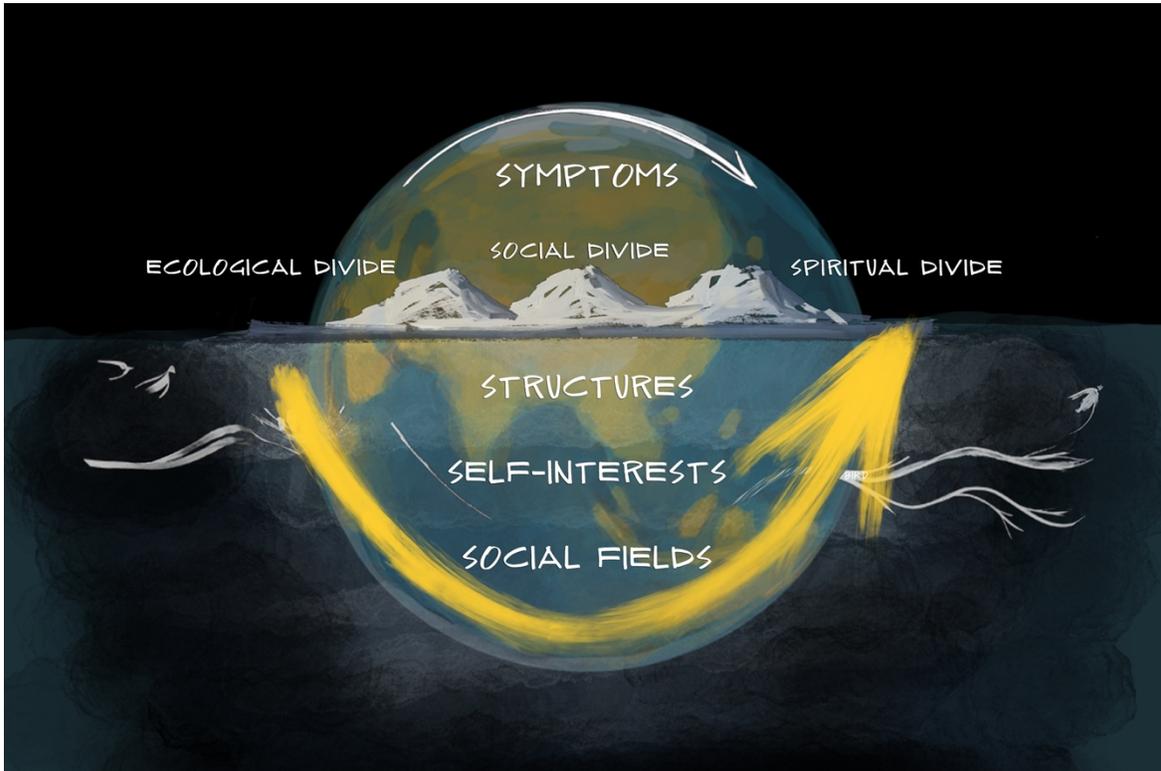
Each week, there will be four types of activities you can do to earn credit. Each will count toward 25% of your grade for the week.

1. Watch the videos (25%)
 2. Participate in a coaching circle (25%)
 3. Personal reflection exercises (25%)
 4. Real world engagement (25%)
-
- Week 0 is orientation and will not be graded.
 - Week 1 will be worth 20% of your overall grade.
 - Week 2 will be worth 15% of your overall grade.
 - Week 3 will be worth 10% of your overall grade.
 - The Social Presencing Theater Module will not be graded.
 - Week 4 will be worth 15% of your overall grade.
 - Week 5 will be worth 15% of your overall grade.
 - Week 6 will be worth 15% of your overall grade.
 - Week 7 will be worth 10% of your overall grade.
 - Week 8 is the closing session and will not be graded.

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

U.LAB FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE



u.lab 1x is part of a broader set of u.lab offerings that we call the **u.lab for systems change**. Co-initiated over the past two decades by action researchers at MIT and the Presencing Institute, the u.lab for systems leadership enables leaders to address the deeper sources of today's complex societal challenges. Today's global challenges require new *structures*, and new *mindsets*, new *sources of awareness and creativity* across social systems. The u.lab supports leaders to operate from these deeper levels by:

1. Co-convening cross-sector innovation labs for leaders in business, government, and civil society
2. Supporting place-based hubs, where change makers from diverse backgrounds come together to prototype solutions to challenges that they need each other to solve
3. Developing massive capacity building mechanisms that leverage emerging educational technologies (like MOOCs!) and use them in novel ways to scale change
4. Inventing and openly sharing new social technologies that catalyze massive positive change towards addressing the ecological, social, and spiritual challenges of our time.

The u.lab for systems leadership aims to strengthen the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions and systems to respond to the increasing flow of disruptive challenges – not through a single intervention, but through an innovation ecosystem that activates the dormant potential of aspiring social entrepreneurs, change makers within organizations, and communities around the world.

For this growing network, we offer change labs focused on key “acupuncture points” for economic transformation, support a network of hubs, create and freely distribute social technologies for profound innovation and offer capacity building mechanisms. ***The u.lab 0x course, which is a pre-requisite to u.lab 1x, is the first step along this journey. The second is the 1x course you are about to begin.***

THE U.LAB SERIES ON EDX

The capacity building mechanisms mentioned above are offered through edX. Currently, we offer two courses (and are in the process of developing more). Here is an overview of how they work.

- **u.lab 0x** is a self-paced course which means the entire course is always available and anyone can take it at any time, completing it at any pace. u.lab 0x introduces the basic framework of Theory U, while u.lab 1x gives you the methods, practices, and support of a community that will enable you to apply it to an issue or challenge in your work or life.
- **u.lab 1x** – the course you are about to begin – runs annually in September. All u.lab 1x participants must complete 0x as a pre-requisite. Unlike 0x, u.lab 1x is a globally facilitated eight-week course in which enrolled participants go through the course together, one week at a time. U.lab 1x is a significantly different course than 0x – it is far more experiential, dialogue-based, and action oriented. During 1x, participants form hubs and peer coaching circles, go on learning journeys and empathy walks in their local communities, and participate in live sessions facilitated by the course team from MIT and around the world. In 2015, over 75,000 people from 183 countries enrolled in u.lab 1x, making it a truly global community of change makers.
- **u.lab 2x (in development)** a seven-week course for people who have been inspired by u.lab 1x and want to take the seeds that emerge from that experience and move them to scale. u.lab 2x will showcase examples of awareness-based social change in the social systems of many countries and cultures. The course will illuminate the conditions, principles, and practices that enable collective shifts from ego-system to eco-system awareness. Each week, we will share examples from one of the key “acupuncture points” for societal transformation: eco-systems, business, finance, technology, wellbeing, health, education, and governance.
- **u.lab 3x (in development)** u.lab x3 offers participants a five-week opportunity to take a deep dive into one of the systems / acupuncture points covered in u.lab x2, learn more about that issue area, meet a community of fellow practitioners, and advance a self-initiated project in their chosen area.

We look forward to working together with you in u.lab 1x!

- Adam, Julie, Otto