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Abstracts
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Dexign the future: lessons learned from teaching a design studio course
on human-centered innovation for exponential times.

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Increasingly, corporations, governments and NGOs are faced with rapid change in core businesses and service offerings. New challenges, opportunities, and paradigms require thinking and acting anew. Increasingly, designers are designing content within larger contexts (e.g., technological, social, political, environmental, global). Long-range strategic scenarios highlight forces shaping such future oriented design spaces. Unfortunately, traditional design pedagogy ill prepares designers to integrate long-range strategic scenarios with human-centered design methods often used by communication designers, industrial designers, and interaction designers. In the Dexign the Future course taught at Carnegie Mellon University Fall 2013, students learned design methods and tools to operate within uncertain futures. Students explored forces that drive change (i.e., social, economic, political, environmental, technological), and learned to align design action strategically with the trajectories of those forces in mega-metropolitan regions where in 2050, 70% of global population will reside. In a semester long project, students created scenarios for Life in Pittsburgh 2050 designing within urban systems such as Sustainable Production & Consumption, Lifelong Learning, Human Development, and Sharing economy. Students were challenged by: (a) the 2050 timeframe, establishing benchmark goals, and articulating forces of change in decade-by-decade pathways; (b) interpreting early signs as future signals for 2050; (c) creating a three-generation persona family to articulate generational needs credibly grounded in 2050; (d) discovering and understanding the materials forms, emotional needs, values, and alternative worlds created for 2050; and (e) to deeply explore and present the connections between forces of change, three-generation persona families, and benchmark goals for 2050.

Sample of student team project:
http://invis.io/Q7JJRZJP

Course materials
http://ixdcourse.com/