



# Rotman Commerce UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

## Course Outline

### RSM419H1S

Designing for Equality

Winter 2019

Course Meets: **Thursdays 9:00 to 11:00 AM, Room WO 30**

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Instructor: **Nika Stelman** (*Off Campus*)  
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## LEARNING OUTCOMES & GOALS

By participating in this course, you will:

1. Develop a deeper understanding of Rotman business design principles and application;
2. Gain practical experience in applying the business design framework, inclusive of interviewing, reframing, & brainstorming techniques, to complex challenges;
3. Gain deeper understanding of gender-based economic challenges;
4. Utilize relevant and engaging business cases to model innovative solutions for real-world problems related to gender equality, and;
5. Become comfortable advocating for controversial points of view and preparing to manage opposition and conflict.

## COURSE SCOPE AND MISSION

In this experiential course, you will have a unique opportunity to make a lasting social and economic impact by applying Rotman's Business Design framework to address complex challenges relating to gender and the economy. As part of your course experience, you will be exposed to leading research on the 'root causes' of notoriously complex gender-based challenges, conduct fieldwork to deeply understand such challenges from a 'human perspective', refine challenges into tangible problem statements and build & test prototype solutions.

## Background

Despite significant economic progress in achieving gender equality in the developed world during the last half-century, gender still creates many economic disadvantages, for both men and women. These challenges are most often expressed and studied at a superficial level, independent of each other, as follows:

- Earning power: *Men still out-earn women by a notable margin.*
- Savings & investing: *Women are not as successful saving & investing wealth, as compared to men.*
- Executive & corporate board roles: *Women are still under-represented, compared to men, in executive and corporate boards roles.*
- Access to venture & growth capital for entrepreneurship: *Women are less likely than men to access venture and growth capital to support businesses.*

## DESIGNING FOR LASTING CHANGE: LEVERAGING BUSINESS DESIGN TO GENERATE DEEP INSIGHTS & INNOVATION

The Rotman Business Design framework will be leveraged as follows:

### 1) Understand the Challenge

Empathy is the capacity to step into other people's shoes, to understand their lives, and start to solve problems from their perspectives. During the first half of this course, you will gain insight into critical economic challenges, and the relationships between each, by deeply exploring research and causation from a human-centric perspective. You will have the opportunity to access ground-breaking research from Rotman's Institute for Gender and the Economy, a first-of-its kind center of research excellence, as well as a curated selection of academic readings designed to promote a deeper, fact-based understanding of issues that are often 'overly simplified' and misunderstood by mainstream media. Given that human-centered design is premised on empathy, the first half of this course is dedicated to developing empathetic insights, together, as a class. As part of the project that commences in class 6, students will also conduct interviews, observations, and immerse themselves in the field to provide an additional layer of richness to insights.

### 2) Emphasize with Users

As part of a team project, with individual report components, you will formally 'reframe problems', based on data & research discussed in class, as well as field experience. Getting the right frame on a design challenge will help you to organize your thinking and, at moments of ambiguity, help clarify where design should be pushed. You will be supported and guided to process, map, discuss, categorize, reflect on, and make sense of the data you accumulate.

Example:

*Traditional Problem Statement:* Women are not successfully investing to accumulate wealth, as compared to men.

*Insights:* Research proves that women are not 'disengaged in financial planning' or 'too risk-averse' as popular media may suggest. Instead, research, interview, and observations point to the inadequacies of current investment-planning models and products in addressing women's longer lifespans, often 'lumpy earnings' patterns and preferences for goals-based communications.

*Reframed Challenge:* How might we create investment solutions that address women's longevity, earnings and life-style patterns to successfully support women's accumulation of wealth?

### 3) Prototype the Ideal Experience

During this phase, you will work with your team to leverage a variety of creative brainstorming methods to generate possible solutions to your 'reframed challenge.' At this stage, ideation encourages your team to generate quantity and diversity of ideas. Exploring options and generating a wide variety of ideas will help your teams to arrive at novel solutions for notoriously complex gender-based economic challenges.

Prototyping will involve teams making fast, low-fidelity representations of their solution to communicate your ideas to users for the purposes of getting 'fast feedback'. Prototype formats will be dictated by the type of solution proposed and may be wire-frame sketches, construction paper products or storyboards. Rudimentary prototypes enable much more human-centered feedback.

### 4) Design the Solution

In the final design phase, your team will start to clarify if your solution is technically feasible to implement. A core tenant of design-based strategy is that solutions be practical and sustainable. Especially where matters of gender and economy are concerned, the ability to secure resources, political influence, or market support for a solution is critical to long-term success. You will be encouraged to leverage the Business Model Canvas and other similar testing frameworks to test if your solutions are desirable from a human perspective; viable from a business perspective; and feasible from a technology perspective.

## COURSE PREREQUISITES

RSM459H1 - Business Design is useful background but not a pre-requisite.

RSM419H1 - Designing for Equality

## REQUIRED READINGS

Course readings and materials, including the Designing for Equality Field-Guide and assignment templates will be posted on Quercus.

## EVALUATION AND GRADES

Grades are a measure of the performance of a student in individual courses. Each student shall be judged on the basis of how well they have command of the course materials.

You should expect the overall distribution of grades in this course to be similar to the average in Rotman Commerce as a whole.

Item	Weight %	Due Date	Delivery	Note
Class Participation	10%	Ongoing	N/A	Individual
Assignment 1: Frame Problem & Interview Prep	15%	March 7, 2019	Link in Quercus	Individual
Assignment 2: Research Synthesis & Problem Statement Reframing	15%	March 14, 2019	Link in Quercus	Individual
Assignment 3: Prototyping & Testing	20%	March 28, 2019	Link in Quercus	Group
Group Presentation & Final Report	40%	April 4, 2019	Link in Quercus	Group Presentation (20%); Individual Final Presentation (20%)

### Class Participation (10% - Individual)

Solving complex challenges is not accomplished through routine application of formulas, but rather through developing a deep and nuanced understanding of the challenge at hand and reframing the challenge based on new insights developed. One of my primary goals for this course is to help you move past the ‘superficial’ and dig deep into root causes of gender-based challenges, and then be able to clarify, articulate, and defend your position clearly.

You **must** be prepared for every class; this means you have done the assigned readings and thought about how to interpret them before arriving. Beyond your own learning, ensuring that you have done the readings is a sign of respect for your classmates.

It is my hope that all will feel comfortable contributing. This may be a different experience than you have had in previous classes but exploring your ideas out loud by participating in the discussions will serve you well in other classes and in your future careers. I know some of you may be shy or uncomfortable speaking publicly, and/or English may not be your first language. If you are particularly worried about your in-class contributions, please check-in with me within the first two weeks of the semester and I can work with you to develop creative ways to help you contribute. **There is, however, no alternative to participating in class discussions.**

### Assignment 1: Frame Problem & Interview Prep (15% - Individual)

In the first course assignment, you will create an individual report outlining your understanding of the assigned challenge and importance of empathizing with ‘users’ – the term we use to describe those who experience the gender challenge. The individual assignment includes framing the problem/challenge area into a clear and concise statement and developing a research/interview plan.

### Assignment 2: Research Synthesis & Problem Statement Reframing (15% - Individual)

For assignment two, you will synthesize information collected from the interviews conducted and produce a research summary, calling out any unique or interesting insights you identified as well as completing a persona template. Based on your new understanding of the challenge, you will also develop a new, reframed problem statement.

### Assignment 3: Prototyping & Testing (20% - Group)

In this assignment, you will work in your group to develop a low-fidelity ‘prototype’ solution for your group’s challenge and test and iterate this solution based on user feedback. Groups will be evaluated on whether they:

- Develop a clear concept anchored in research
- Create a compelling case as to why their prototype effectively solves their challenge

- Choose a medium for their prototype that is appropriate for the challenge (e.g. a new service vs. a new product vs. a new app vs. a new policy)
- Test their prototype with users to obtain feedback on their idea and incorporate feedback to improve their solution

### **Group Presentation (20% - Group) & Final Report (20% - Individual)**

You and your group will collectively present your challenge at hand (supported by research, insights, interviews) and your proposed solution. During the presentation, your classmates will critically and constructively challenge you on the appropriateness and effectiveness of your solution. Be prepared to defend and discuss your ideas.

You will also individually submit a report detailing your solution, the process you went through, and your personal reflections and learnings about the topic and process. A report outline will be provided in your field guide.

### **Team Contribution**

Groups are expected to harness the unique skills each member possesses. While each teammate's offering may be unique, all members should share the responsibility for the development and realization of the group project. At the end of the semester, team members will be asked to evaluate each individual's contribution to the group project. The instructor will take your evaluation of one another's contributions into close consideration when assigning the group assignment grades.

### **OFFICE HOURS AND EMAIL POLICY**

If at any point you feel lost or are having a problem regarding a particular concept, please schedule an appointment to meet. There are no official office hours, but I will make every effort to accommodate student requests to discuss the course and how you can improve your understanding of the materials.

Generally, it is best to ask questions in class as other students may have similar questions. If you need to reach me outside of class, you can send me an email.

### **MISSED OR LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS**

Students who miss a test or assignment for reasons entirely beyond their control (e.g. illness) may submit a request for special consideration. The Request for Special Consideration Form and supporting documentation must be submitted in a timely manner in order for the request to be reviewed.

In such cases, students must notify the Rotman Commerce Program Office on the date of the course deliverable such as a missed test, or assignment missed class (in the case of participation marks), or due date. They must then complete a [Request for Special Consideration Form](#) and submit it along with supporting documentation (e.g. [Verification of Student Illness or Injury form](#)) to the Rotman Commerce Office within **2 business days** of the originally scheduled course deliverable. Students who do not provide appropriate or sufficient supporting documentation will be given a grade of 0 (zero) for the missed course deliverable.

Documentation submitted in support of petitions for missing tests and assignments must be original; no faxed or scanned copies will be accepted.

**Note that the physician's report must establish that the patient was examined and diagnosed at the time of illness, not after the fact. Rotman Commerce will not accept a statement that merely confirms a later report of illness made by the student to a physician.**

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified in the course outline. Late submissions will normally be penalized by 10% if the assignment is not received on the specified date, at the specified time. A further penalty of 10% will be applied to each subsequent day.

### **FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

Please note that clear, concise, and correct writing will be considered in the evaluation of your assignments. That is, you may lose points for writing that impedes communication: poor organization, weak paragraph development, excessive wordiness, hard-to-follow sentence structure, spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. Students who require additional support and/or tutoring with respect to their writing skills are encouraged to visit the Academic Success Centre (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc>) or one of the College Writing Centres ([www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres)). These centres are teaching facilities – not editing services, where trained staff can assist students in developing their academic writing skills. There is no charge for the instruction and support.

## **FOR GROUP WORK**

Learning to work together in teams is an important aspect of your education and preparation for your future careers. That said, project-based teamwork is often new to students; to work well in teams, it helps to follow a set of core expectations to best succeed at your team projects.

1. When working in a team, Rotman Commerce students are expected to:

- Treat other members with courtesy and respect;
- Honour the ground rules established by the team;
- Contribute substantially and proportionally to the final project;
- Ensure enough familiarity with the entire contents of the group project/assignment so as to be able to sign off on it as original work;
- Meet the project timeline as established by the team.

2. Resolving conflicts:

Conflicts are part of the team's process of learning how to work together. When handled well, it can generate creativity and bring-multiple perspectives to the solution.

Student teams are expected to work through their misunderstandings as soon as they arise (and prior to submission of the final project). When teams are unable to arrive at a solution that works for all members, the team must meet with the Rotman Commerce Team Coach\*\* as soon as possible. The Coach will listen to the team and help develop options for improving the team process. All members of the project team must commit to, and, utilize their action plans.

\*\*For an appointment with a Rotman Commerce Team Coach, please contact Nouman Ashraf at [nouman.ashraf@rotman.utoronto.ca](mailto:nouman.ashraf@rotman.utoronto.ca). Nouman is highly skilled at facilitating team dynamics and collaboration. Note that the Team Coach's role is to provide guidance, support and advice on team matters – not to formally evaluate or assess teamwork for academic purposes.

## **FOR ASSIGNMENTS THAT REQUIRE RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS**

This course requires that you undertake research with human participants. Please note that research of this nature requires treating participants ethically, according to established standards and practices. Please consult with your instructor before commencing your research to ensure that your research activities comply with the applicable policy and procedure.

## **ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS**

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: [accessibility.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca) or <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic Integrity is a fundamental value essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarships at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the UofT degree that you earn will continue to be valued and respected as a true signifier of a student's individual work and academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously.

## **QUERCUS AND THE COURSE PAGE**

The online course page for this course is accessed through Quercus. To access the course page, go to [q.utoronto.ca](http://q.utoronto.ca) and log in using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in, you will be at the Quercus Dashboard. On this page you will see all of the courses you are presently enrolled in. If you don't see the course listed here but you are properly registered for the course in ROSI, wait 48 hours.


## **RECORDING LECTURES**

Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an instructor's intellectual property covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. Please request the instructor's explicit permission if you wish to record a lecture (note: students who have been previously granted permission to record lectures as an accommodation for a disability are, of course, excepted). This includes tape recording, filming, photographing PowerPoint slides, Blackboard materials, etc.

If permission is granted by the instructor (or via Accessibility Services), it is intended for the individual student’s own study purposes and does not include permission to “publish” them in anyway. It is absolutely forbidden for a student to publish an instructor’s notes to a website or sell them in any other form without formal permission.

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

You are expected to have read the assigned reading *before* class unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Session	Topic	Deliverables	Readings (to be completed <i>before</i> class)
#1 – January 10, 2019	<i>Introduction, Design Thinking Review &amp; Gender</i>	-	<p><a href="#">Brown, Wyatt, “Design Thinking for Social Innovation”, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2010</a></p> <p><a href="#">Deloitte, “Designing equality: How design thinking can help tackle gender bias in the workplace”</a></p> <p><a href="#">Rotman Magazine, “Q&amp;A: A Rotman Executive-in Residence talks about using Design Thinking to address gender issues,” Spring 2018</a></p> <p><a href="#">Beyond the Business Case: An series with MBA Fellow Vanessa Ko (interview with Sarah Kaplan)</a></p>
#2 – January 17, 2019	<i>Understanding the Challenge: Earnings Gaps</i>	-	<p><a href="#">Vincent, “Why Do Women Earn Less Than Men? A Synthesis of Findings from Canadian Microdata”, CRDCN Synthesis Series, September 2013</a></p> <p><a href="#">Institute for Gender and the Economy, “Gender, Equity and Prosperity: A panel discussion on Equal Pay Day” (4 short video clips)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Vox, “What people miss about the gender wage gap”</a></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><a href="#">(VIDEO)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Ely, Stone and Ammerman, “Rethink What You ‘Know’ About High-Achieving Women”, Harvard Business Review, December 2014</a></p>
#3 – January 24, 2019	<i>Understanding the Challenge: Savings &amp; Investing</i>	-	<p><a href="#">BCG Women &amp; Wealth Study - Part 1</a></p> <p><a href="#">BCG Women &amp; Wealth Study - Part 2</a></p> <p><a href="#">Kaplan, Walley, “The Risky Rhetoric of Female Risk Aversion”, Stanford Social Innovation Review,</a></p>

*Continued...*

			<a href="#">Spring 2016</a>
#4 – January 31, 2019	<i>Understanding the Challenge: Women on Corporate Boards – Discussion &amp; Debate</i>	-	<a href="#">Merchant, Nilofar, “Quotas for Boards are Wrong”, Harvard Business Review, September 1, 2011</a>  <a href="#">GATE Research Brief - Gender quotas do not thwart meritocracy</a>  <a href="#">GATE Research Brief - Quotas: Pros and Cons</a>
#5 – February 7, 2019	<i>Understanding the Challenge: Women as Entrepreneurs and access to Venture Capital</i>	-	<a href="#">Kaplan, “Tackling the Gender Gap in Entrepreneurship”, INSEAD Knowledge, February 2017</a>  <a href="#">Knowledge at Wharton, Why VC’s aren’t funding Women-Led Startups, May 2016</a>  <a href="#">Brooks, Huangb, Wood, Murray, “Investors prefer entrepreneurial ventures pitched by attractive men” National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, September 2013</a>  <a href="#">Khazan, “The Sexism of Startup Land”, The Atlantic, March 2015</a>
#6 – February 14, 2019	<i>Understanding the Challenge: Masculinity and Gender Equality</i>	-	<a href="#">GATE Research Brief: Masculine norms keep us from gender equality</a>  <a href="#">GATE Research Brief: How men pass as the “ideal worker”</a>
<b>February 20, 2019</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>	-	-
#7 – February 28, 2019	Project Kick Off	-	<a href="#">Harvard Business Review “Are You Solving the Right Problems?” <a href="https://hbr.org/2017/01/are-you-solving-the-right-problems">https://hbr.org/2017/01/are-you-solving-the-right-problems</a></a>
#8 – March 7, 2019	Interview & Observation	Assignment 1: Frame Problem & Interview Prep	-
#9 – March 14, 2019	Define & Ideate	Assignment 2: Research Synthesis & Problem Statement Reframing	-

#10 – March 21, 2019	Prototype & Testing (Part I)	-	-
#11 – March 28, 2019	Prototype & Testing (Part II)	Assignment 3: Prototyping & Testing	-
#12 – April 4, 2019	Final Pitch	Assignment 4: Group Presentation & Final Report	-