

THINK 66 | *Design that Understands Us* (Winter 2022)

Lecture meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11am-12pm (Pacific)

Section meetings: Two per week

Course websites: [Canvas site](#) and <https://artful.design/think66/>

WAY- A-II (Aesthetic and Interpretive Inquiry), and WAY-CE (Creative Expression)

Faculty

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(also Computer Science, by Courtesy)

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Section Instructors

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Office hours for Ge, Chloe, Lakmali, Alison, Mejgan, and Stephanie:

By appointment (please email the instructor to set a time)

Course Overview

At Stanford, you will find many courses that ask you to make things—everything from algorithms, products, policies, to artworks. What is rarer is to be given the space to stop and really think about *why* we design these things, and whether we should continue to design in ways demanded by commercial and political actors. This critical thinking course examines the nature, purpose, and meaning of *design* in human life, and asks the fundamental questions of “what is design?”, “why do we do it?”, “how do design, technology, and society shape one another?”, and “how can we design to resist, reform, and revolutionize?”. We will consider two main models of design: need-based design (as we are often taught), and design that helps us flourish as human beings. As you learn about various aesthetic and ethical frameworks and a fundamental language of design, your critical tools for analyzing and conceptualizing design will sharpen and transform. From everyday objects such as media, tools, toys, games, and musical instruments, to aspirations for artificial intelligence and virtual reality, you will learn how to more clearly and critically view our technology-drenched human world—and to exercise your ethical and artful imagination to reimagine better worlds.

Course Learning Goals

Through active engagement and completion of course activities, you will be able to:

- 1) Compare and contrast two approaches to design: human-centered, and artful.
- 2) Characterize social, cultural, and ethical contexts in which design decisions are made.
- 3) Evaluate design along functional, ethical, and aesthetic dimensions.
- 4) Conceptualize the design of products aimed to promote flourishing.
- 5) Adapt the course to your personal experiences, interests, and circumstances.
- 6) Acquire “tools with which to think” that will stay and grow with you for years to come.

Covid Safety

- In line with university policies, the first 2 weeks of instruction will be online (both lecture, sections, and any other meetings with instructors). Please monitor your emails carefully to keep up-to-date on any changes regarding zoom versus in-person teaching as the situation develops. We expect to be in-person starting Tuesday, January 18, 2022. [Lecture Zoom Link](#)
- Once we are in-person, you must wear a well-fitted **face mask** for lecture and section that remains over **both your nose and mouth** for the entirety of the class. **No eating or drinking is permitted. If you must eat or drink, please step outside the classroom to do so, and return to the classroom only once your face mask is firmly back on your nose and mouth.**
- Make sure your Health Check certificate is up to date every day you attend class. Most importantly, **do not come to class if you have Covid symptoms or have been exposed to Covid.** Just send us an email, and we will send you audio recordings of class or provide a way for you to join remotely. We will do everything we can to help you keep up with class so that you can quarantine safely as needed. You will not be penalized for absences related to health and/or covid.

Course Structure

This course will be facilitated online through Canvas. Our Canvas website is:

<https://canvas.stanford.edu/courses/146060>. All course materials - readings, videos, and assignment descriptions - will be posted on Canvas. Announcements will also be made through the Canvas site, and you can post questions in the Q&A Discussion Forum. All assignments should be submitted via the Canvas Assignments tab, unless otherwise noted.

- **Whole-class meetings:** Our class will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11am-12pm Pacific in-person or over Zoom. These will be a combination of short lectures and small group breakout sessions where you will discuss and complete activities with your peers.
- **Section meetings:** You will attend two sections per week at assigned times in-person. Discussion sections allow you to work more closely with your peers and section instructor.
- **Tutorials:** Three tutorials are required during the quarter. Tutorials are one-on-one or small group meetings with your instructor. Tutorials are an opportunity to discuss

and strategize learning goals, fine-tune skills, and conduct quiet and focused group work like peer-reviews. Attendance is required and rescheduling very difficult. Choose your meeting time carefully and note it in your calendar. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to reschedule a missed meeting.

- Tutorial One (one-on-one with instructor during **weeks 1 & 2**): This is an opportunity for us to get to know one another. Please bring in any questions or concerns. In addition, we may discuss early assignments.
- Tutorial Two (small group, **week 5**): Peer-review of the Midterm Paper.
- Tutorial Three (small group, **week 9**): Draft poster session for your final project.

Course Materials

Readings: We will be reading portions of the following two texts, and having your own copies will enable you to mark key passages and add marginalia. They have been ordered to [the Stanford Bookstore](#) and are also available through Amazon and other retailers, so you may purchase new or used copies. In addition, you can find [a full-text version of the Aristotle can be accessed through Stanford University Libraries](#). All other course readings will be posted on Canvas.

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. 350 B.C.E.
- Ge Wang, *Artful Design: Technology in Search of the Sublime*. 2018.

All students should retain receipts for books and other course-related expenses, as these may be qualified educational expenses for tax purposes. If you are an undergraduate receiving financial aid, you may be eligible for additional financial aid for required books and course materials if these expenses exceed the aid amount in your award letter. For more information, review your award letter or visit the [Student Budget](#) website. (<https://financialaid.stanford.edu/undergrad/budget/index.html>)

Coursework, and Grading Scheme

This course is worth 4 units of credit, which means you may be asked to complete up to 12 hours of work per week, including class time. Between weekly participation in whole-class meetings and section meetings, this leaves approximately 8 hours of work outside of class that you may be asked to do. The class schedule in the last section of the syllabus highlights assignments and due dates so that you can plan your work for the quarter accordingly.

Your work in this course will be evaluated in two ways. The assignments asterisked below, namely the midterm and final project, will be graded according to guidelines to be provided. Attendance and participation, reading responses, and shorter assignments will be graded according to their completion, thoughtfulness, and effort—in short, the integrity with which you carry it out. Rubrics are provided below for attendance and participation and reading responses. These guidelines should give you a sense of what is expected of you in this and other discussion classes.

- **Attendance and participation:** Attendance to lecture and section is mandatory,

except if you have Covid symptoms (even mild symptoms) or have been exposed to Covid. Do not come to class if you have Covid symptoms or if you have been exposed to Covid.

- In class, you should be well prepared for both: readings and assignments should be completed in advance and you should be ready to participate actively in discussions. See rubric below.
- If you need to join lecture remotely due to covid exposure or quarantine, please email your teaching fellow to let them know ahead of lecture.
- **Reading or other responses:** These written responses should be 250-300 words, display understanding of the material, favor reflection and analysis over synopsis, and include well-framed questions of your own. Some will be prompted, and others will be open. Submit by no later than 5pm the evening before your first section meeting of the week.
- **Smaller assignments:** Students will explore important themes and prepare for the two major course assignments.
- **Mid-Term Analysis Paper*:** Students will choose an unconventional artifact of design (e.g., no smartphones or other modern inventions in pervasive use), and critically analyze its design, taking into account its functional as well as its historical, social, culture, and ethical contexts.
- **Speculative Design Project*:** The final project asks students to generate a new design aimed to promote flourishing, taking social, cultural, and ethical dimensions into account. Nothing needs to be built or prototyped in this speculative design project; students are expected to create 1) a design “blueprint” in the form of a product poster (in PDF format) as well as 2) a short-form fiction placing the design in the context of the world (present, future, or even past).

Category	% of course letter grade	Notes
Attendance and participation in class and sections	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arrival >15 mins late counts as an absence ● Rubric for assessment
Weekly responses	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rubric for assessment
Smaller assignments	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All components must be submitted on time
Mid-Term Analysis Paper*	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All components must be submitted on time
Speculative Design Project*	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All components must be submitted on time

Course Policies

Presence and Participation

Thinking through difficult issues is most productive and most fun when done out loud with others! This is why attendance and participation is a large part of your course grade (20%).

- Absences will only be excused in emergency situations (health and/or family). Please

inform your Teaching Fellow as soon as possible to discuss any possible make-up assignments, including, 500-word written responses.

- Being 15 minutes or more late to a class or section counts as an absence.
- Even if an absence is excused, any work due at that class/section is subject to the policies below.
- (when joining remotely) Keeping your video on during class and section helps build social rapport since we convey a lot through facial expressions and body language. However, we understand that there are many reasons why you might need to keep your video off, so please be aware that contributing productively via Zoom Chat counts as participation.
- Students who anticipate persistent challenges to participating in synchronous class sessions and sections should follow up with a course instructor as soon as possible.

Deadlines and late submissions

Assignment deadlines are listed in the course schedule below, along with estimated times of completion, to enable you to effectively plan and balance your academic work and other commitments. Despite the best planning, however, we know that life happens! So:

- All work is expected to be submitted on time.
- Beyond that, your grade for an assignment goes down a third of a letter grade (e.g., A- to B+) for every 12 hours the assignment is late.

The Honor Code

Class meetings and sections in this course will be highly interactive, you will hear plenty of great ideas from your peers, and if things go as planned, you might even [change your mind](#) based on what others say! However, you will be evaluated in this course as an individual and are expected to cite sources and individuals from whom you have learned and borrowed as a display of academic, intellectual, and creative integrity. Failure to do so is a violation of Stanford's Honor Code and is a serious offense, even when the violation is unintentional. Conduct prohibited by the Honor Code includes all forms of academic dishonesty, among them unpermitted collaboration and representing others' work as one's own. Please review [Stanford's Honor Code](#), [these recommendations](#) from the Office of Community Standards, and [documentation and citation resources](#) from the Hume Center for Writing and Speaking. When in doubt, contact your section instructor.

Current Circumstances

We are each starting the 2021-2022 year in unique circumstances, likely trying to juggle a variety of commitments and emotions. Especially under such conditions, we appreciate your participation in our course and will do everything we can to support you. We have tried to build variation in when and how you complete your coursework. There are also campus resources, such as [virtual study halls](#), [learning accommodations](#), [learner variability support](#), [well-being coaches](#), [counselors](#), [academic skills coaches](#), [Hume Center writing tutors](#), the [FLI opportunity fund](#), [assistance with home internet access](#), and [community emergency funding](#), for broader needs you might have. For information about specific policies and procedures for

Winter 2022, [Stanford COVID-19 Guidance](#) has the most up-to-date information for students. If there are additional ways we can support you in the course, please feel encouraged to reach out to us. Without requesting or expecting details of your situation, we will do everything we can to ensure your course learning is productive and enjoyable.

Course Expectations

What you can expect from us

We firmly believe that anyone can learn anything to which they put their earnest effort and thought. We also believe that answers are overrated, and in our view, what is most important is the quality of the questions you frame, the ways in which you think through the answers, and how you propose to act upon preliminary conclusions you reach. We are here to guide your learning along these pathways and will challenge you to actively engage in the learning process through activities, assignments, and more. We will strive for an inclusive and collaborative classroom - one that is respectful of gender, disability, age, race, and all other dimensions of diversity and identity, as well as each person's unique circumstances at this time. We will do our best to give you the tools, feedback, and support to succeed, and welcome any suggestions for improvement. We highly encourage each of you to ask us questions and share ideas through the Canvas Q&A forum, during live Zoom sessions, during Open Conversation Hours, and one-on-one. We want to get to know you and support you in this course learning experience!

What we expect from you

Thinking Matters courses encourage vigorous intellectual exchange, the expression of various viewpoints, and the ability to communicate effectively and cogently. We expect you to take an active role in your learning by coming prepared and ready to share your ideas and collaborate with your peers. We know it can be easy to get distracted during online meetings, so we ask that you [try as best as you can to remain focused and engaged during class](#). Each member of this class has different ideas and perspectives that will enrich the experience for everyone else, so we ask you to be respectful and thoughtful in your interactions. Online settings can often feel anonymous and less personal, sometimes making it easier to misinterpret comments or to share thoughts with less filtering. We ask that you give each other (and your instructors) the benefit of the doubt, and remain mindful of gaps between intention and impact. As noted in [university policy](#), we expect what happens in class to stay in class, to protect the privacy of class members and other rights of the university. Given our virtual format and the commitments we each have outside of class, we have tried to build flexibility into assignments, deadlines, and other course engagement. However, we are relying on you to give us regular feedback on what we can do to better support you in your course learning. Perhaps most importantly, we expect you to be empathetic, understanding and supportive of one another - through this course, and through these times.

Academic Accommodations

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for instructors dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at

563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: <http://oae.stanford.edu>).

Even if you do not have a documented disability, variability in how people learn is a documented phenomenon. Staff at the [Schwab Learning Center](#) can meet with you individually and help you identify your learning strengths, as well as areas for growth, and connect you to available support.

Student athletes who anticipate challenges in being able to attend synchronous class meetings or submit assignments on time should speak to a course or section instructor as soon as possible about available accommodations.

Learning Resources

Have you ever noticed that elite performers across different fields - from athletes to musicians to leaders - work regularly with coaches? No matter what the domain and where you are starting from, consistent practice and guidance from others can help you improve your skills. In the academic context, this includes specific skills, such as essay-writing or quantitative problem-solving, as well as the more general skills of learning (anything) effectively and maintaining your well-being. Stanford has a wide range of tutors and coaches to help you up your game. Which will you take advantage of?

For this course, we especially recommend:

- [Writing tutors](#) from the Hume Center for Writing and Speaking, to sharpen your essay-writing skills
- [Academic skills coaches](#) from the Center for Teaching and Learning, to help you manage your time and work effectively during online and remote learning
- [Virtual study halls](#), organized by the Center for Teaching and Learning, to work and learn in quiet, virtual companionship with other students

Other campus resources include:

- [Remote Learning Strategies](#), from the Center for Teaching and Learning
- [Well-Being services](#), including [well-being coaches](#), Vaden Health Center
- [Tutoring for Learning Differences](#), Schwab Learning Center
- [Tutoring for Student Athletes](#), AARC

THINK 66 (Winter 2022) | Course schedule

(Subject to ongoing redesign, based on ongoing instructors evaluation, student feedback, and other considerations)

Lectures will be interactive and it is imperative that you complete all readings/watch any assigned videos *before* lecture Tuesday and Thursday.

Date	Assignment	Estimated time to complete this work	Deadline time (Pacific)
Week 1: The Complexity of Design			
Tues 1/4/22	Lecture 1: Welcome to THINK66 and introduction: "What is design?"	~10 mins	
Thurs 1/6/22	Lecture 2: Dr. Reist's mini-Lecture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch How Do You Design a Just Society? and Comment Responses (<i>PBS Idea Channel</i>, Mike Rugnetta) • For Dr. Reist's mini-Lecture, please come to class having read "Brazil's New Problem With Blackness" • Written response (250-300 words) due before lecture 	~25 mins < 60 mins	Written response due by 11am 1/6/22
Week 2: What is Designed?			
Tues 1/11/22	Lecture 3: mini-lecture "Cyberpunk" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Prelude/Manifesto & Chapter 1 of Wang's <i>Artful Design</i> • Reading response (250-300 words) 	~1.5 hours < 60mins < 60 mins	Written response due by 5pm the night before section 1 of week 2.
Thurs 1/13/22	Lecture 4: mini-lecture "Design and the Sublime"		
Fri 1/14/22			Design Etude #1 due by 11:59pm.
Week 3: Why Do We Design? Part I: Human-Centered Design			
Tues 1/18/22	Lecture 5: "Models of Design" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapters 1 and 2 of Norman's <i>The Design of Everyday Things</i> • Reading response (250-300 words, 	< 60 mins	Written response due by 5pm the night before section 1 of week 3.

	Canvas)		
Thurs 1/20/22	Lecture 6: “context, context, context” (issues with “Human-Centered Design”) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Langdon Winner’s “Do Artifacts Have Politics?” 		
Fri 1/21/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University deadline: Last day to add/drop a course 	N/A	5pm

Week 4: Why Do We Design? Part II: Artful Design

Tues 1/25/22	Lecture 7 “What Makes Design Artful?” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 2 of Wang’s <i>Artful Design</i> • Reading response (250-300 words, Canvas) 	~2 hours <60 mins	Written response due by 5pm the night before section 1 of week 4.
Thurs 1/27/22	Lecture 8: “Design for Flourishing” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 8 + Coda of Wang’s <i>Artful Design</i> • Reading response (250-300 words, Canvas) 		

Week 5: How Do We Design for Flourishing? Part I: Aristotle

Tues 2/1/22	Lecture 9: “The Pursuit of Happiness” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Books I and VIII of Aristotle’s <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> • Reading response (250-300 words, Canvas) 	3 hours < 60 mins	Written response due by 5pm the night before section 1 of week 5.
Thurs 2/3/22	Lecture 10: “The Design of Media: Social, VR, & AI, Oh My!” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “metaverse...” and “Is Facebook making us lonely?” • Reading response (250-300 words, Canvas) 	30 min	Due Week 5: Paragraph Outline and Bibliography for Mid-Term Analysis Paper. Submit to your peer review group and Section Instructor the day before Section 2 of the week. Tutorial #2 will take place during Section 2.

Week 6: How Do We Design for Flourishing? Part II: What Does It Mean Today?

Tues 2/8/22	Lecture 11: Dr. Edmondson's mini-Lecture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Coca's Lines of Love, <i>The Stanford Daily</i> 	~2 hours < 60 mins	Written response due by 5pm the night before section 1 of week 6.
Thurs 2/10/22	Lecture 12: "Three Scenarios for Strong AI" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Reeves and Nass "The Media Equation" 		
Sat 2/12/22	Mid-Term Analysis Paper due via Canvas (1000-1500 words)	4-5 hours	Mid-Term due by 11:59pm.
Week 7: Whom Do We Design For? (power, inequity, resistance, animal rights, climate change)			
Tues 2/15/22	Lecture 13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read "Humans in the Loop: The Design of Interactive AI Systems" https://medium.com/artful-design/humans-in-the-loop-b83e3bffa65e Video: "Experimental Creative Writing Using Vectorized Words" (link) Reading/viewing response (250-300 words, Canvas) 	~90 mins 40 min	Written response due by 5pm the night before section 1 of week 7.
Thurs 2/17/22	Lecture 14 Mini-Lecture by Dr. Alison Laurence on design + dinosaurs		
Week 8: How Will We Design Ourselves and Our Future? Part I: Ourselves			
Tues 2/22/22	Lecture 15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Chapter 7 of Wang's <i>Artful Design</i> John Lanchester, "You are the Product" (link) 	60 mins < 60 mins 60 mins	Written response due by 5pm the night before section 1 of week 8.
Thurs 2/24/22	Lecture 16 [over Zoom] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest Lecture: Srinija Srinivasan Reading: "The Wisdom of Improvisation" Lecture response (250-300 words, Canvas) 	~60 mins < 30 mins 0 mins	Due Section 2 of Week 8: Title, abstract for Speculative Design Project
Fri 2/25/22	University deadline: Last day to change course grading basis (e.g., letter grade to C/NC), and last day to withdraw from a course	N/A	5pm

