

## MEJO 530-001 – GREEN BRAND LAB | SPRING 2023

**UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media**  
**3 Credits | Online | Asynchronous**

### INSTRUCTOR

Lisa Villamil  
Assistant Professor  
School of Journalism and Media  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27599  
lisa\_villamil@unc.edu  
202.288.3420 (c) *emergencies only*

### OFFICE HOURS

Tuesdays from 9 a.m. – 10 a.m. or by appointment | Meetings via Zoom  
Wednesdays from 9 a.m. – 10 a.m. or by appointment | Meetings via Zoom

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Development and design of creative strategies for green products and good services. Students innovate environmentally sustainable products, services and processes that lead to brand loyalty and positive impact. Triple bottom line: social, ecological, and financial strategies, brand development, advocacy communications, research, data, and storytelling come together to make the world a better place. Prerequisite or co-requisite recommended: MEJO 433 UX Strategy or MEJO 340 Visual Design or equivalent experience. *This course fulfills UNC Experiential Ed (EE) requirements.*

### APPROACH

The Green Brand Lab explores the growing influence of design and creative strategy as a powerful process for human-centered activity, social innovation, and management. In this course students investigate how designers and product developers are becoming integrated into companies and organizations across the globe. Design brings holistic problem-solving, deep creativity and a time-honored collaborative process. Green Designers help brands and organizations develop socially and environmentally responsible products, services and systems that are economically viable, socially responsible and environmentally friendly.

The Green Brand Lab is highly participatory and structured as an open studio. Individual work or collaboration is encouraged. Partnerships with other courses or real-world companies and organizations are supported. A variety of media and methodologies will be used including design research, applied theory, design thinking, service design, systems thinking and social consciousness.

The exploratory nature of this course encourages diverse opinions. This course is a catalyst for open and free thinking with the intention of learning to express opinions and ideas within an environment of respect and shared purpose. Indeed, the ability to listen, evaluate, and reevaluate ideas is the central lesson of the Green Brand Lab.

### OBJECTIVES

- Understand social innovation as a field of study and process.
- Explore how societal issues arise from within social and cultural systems.
- Investigate societal issues and challenges using various design theories and system models.
- Understand power flow in systems and relationships.
- Use systems thinking, design thinking, research, and ethnographic techniques to help develop innovative approaches where established solutions have failed.
- Compare how brand is developed in governmental, non-profit and corporate organizations.
- Analyze how sustainability is environmentally, socially and financially responsible.
- Be a changemaker through the ethical and insightful practice of design, communication and thought leadership that benefits the world.

## ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION POLICY

While this class is online and asynchronous, the frequency and quality of your interaction is key to a successful learning experience. You should be participating in the course throughout the week in some way or another. There will be a mix of ways to participate from joining virtual discussions to working on projects alone or with a team. Please note that I will be flexible regarding deadlines for students who are experiencing illness or other challenges related to the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic and the personal and family issues related to its impact. Please contact me as early as possible if you think you may not be able to complete an assignment or participate in course activities.

Please be aware that you are bound by the [Honor Code](#) when making a request for a University approved absence. (source: <http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/>)

### **University Attendance Policy:**

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#), and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC).

## COVID-19 PROCEDURES

Spring 2023 Course Delivery: I understand the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may require changes to this plan and will be monitoring the situation closely. If I need to change the format of the course temporarily due to outbreaks of illness, I will announce this via email and the course Sakai site.

## MASK USE

The indoor mask requirement was lifted for most of the campus on March 7, 2022, with some exceptions. Please see <https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/community-standards/> to stay current with University mask policies.

## HONOR CODE

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean C. A. Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

## CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Weekly curriculum will consist of a lecture or instruction, discussion, and production of multipart "design-thinking" projects. Students should plan on spending a generous amount of time participating in the weekly discussion forum, reading the course textbook or online readings, collaborating with peers, and completing projects. Students are encouraged to participate through their discipline of interest such as producing work as a social advocate, brand strategist, journalist, educator, UX designer, policy thinker, scientist, public relations professional, etc. You are expected to organize your week's work and meet requirements posted on the weekly Sakai page. It is extremely important that you read weekly directions and project specifications carefully as you complete weekly assignments related to larger projects you will be producing. You are expected to let me know if you have questions or run into problems for one reason or another by emailing me or attending an online office hour session.

## TEXTBOOKS

*Required*

**Lean Impact (2019)**

Ann Mei Chang

Wiley

ISBN-978-1119506607

*Optional*

**Let My People Go Surfing (2016)**

Yvon Chouinard  
Penguin Books  
ISBN- 014310967

*Optional*

**Braiding Sweetgrass (2013)**

Robin Wall Kimmerer  
Milkweed Editions  
978-0141991955

**TUTORIALS** (required / free and online)

LinkedIn Learning / A subscription is free to UNC students. <https://software.sites.unc.edu/linkedin/>

**SOFTWARE** (required / free and online)

Some students may need to applications and services from the Adobe Creative Cloud. UNC Chapel Hill provides students with a free subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud. Directions for accessing Adobe CC and the required UNC Virtual Private Network (VPN) are provided on the Sakai course site.

**ONLINE LEARNING SOFTWARE** (required / free and online)

As a remote learning course we will use Zoom for video, class gatherings and one-on-one meetings. You can connect to the UNC Zoom network here <https://zoom.us/> using your UNC Tar Heel email address.

**Additional Course Materials**

Notebook or sketchbook, back-up system for project files such as the free UNC Microsoft OneDrive, Google Drive, or an external hard drive.

**DETERMINATION OF GRADE (Rubrics provided)**

<b>Discussion</b>	Class weekly discussions	25%	
<b>Process</b>	Social innovation studies and sprints	25%	
<b>Practice</b>	Social innovation in-depth investigation	50%	100%

**EXPLANATION OF COURSE LETTER GRADES\***

- A Excellent: Mastery performance that is above and beyond (original)
- B Strong: Strong performance demonstrating a high level of attainment (competent)
- C Adequate: An acceptable performance demonstrating an adequate level of attainment (solid)
- D Marginal: Performance demonstrating a minimal passing level (weak)
- F Fail: For whatever reason, an extremely poor performance (unacceptable)

\* Rubric provided. For more information about grades see [UNC Grade Definitions](#).

**GRADING SCALE**

- A = 95–100
- A- = 90–94
- B+ = 87–89
- B = 83–86
- B- = 80–82
- C+ = 77–79
- C = 73–76
- C- = 70–72
- D+ = 67–69 \*
- D = 63–66
- F = 62 and below

\* A semester grade below a C- requires repeating this course to earn credit.

## **EXPLANATION OF DESIGN GRADING AND FEEDBACK**

Your grade will be based on objective and subjective criteria as is the standard in creative arts and in professional practice where your work will be evaluated by clients and supervisors of differing backgrounds. To help you develop as a professional, I use a grading rubric that helps you understand your strengths and weaknesses. In class, you will receive ongoing feedback and evaluation during the conceptual and design-making process and through online class critiques. Feedback takes the form of instructor/student conversations, peer critiques, class critiques, and grading comments. I cannot stress enough the importance of class discussions. I recommend you read all discussion comments and write notes in your sketchbook or journal to accelerate learning.

## **ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES (ARS)**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

## **SEEKING HELP**

We live in complicated times. If you need individual assistance, it is your responsibility to let me know and to allow me to help you. The time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem—whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

## **COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

## **TITLE IX**

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim – [titleixcoordinator@unc.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gpsc@unc.edu](mailto:gpsc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](http://safe.unc.edu).

## **DIVERSITY**

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's [Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination](#) offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied. If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at [safe.unc.edu](http://safe.unc.edu)) or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#), or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

## **DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions. More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion [mission and vision statements](#) with accompanying goals. These complement the University policy on [prohibiting harassment and discrimination](#). In summary, UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender

identity, or gender expression. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] 966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies.

## **ACCREDITATION**

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. No single course could possibly give you all these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas.

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

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### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We thank the Occaneechi Tribe as our UNC community partner and acknowledge the many other Indigenous peoples including the Eno, the Shakori, the Sissipahaw who for thousands of years were the original inhabitants of the land we now know as the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. May our work together be of honor to the original stewards of this land many of whom were displaced, erased, suffered, and still suffer today. We start out with a good heart and intention to honor our ancestors, our community, and our work together.

### SCHEDULE

<b>WEEK 1</b>   January 9	Those before us / <i>Introduction</i>
<b>WEEK 2</b>   January 16	It depends / <i>Framing</i>
<b>WEEK 3</b>   January 23	Not so fast! / <i>Non-linear design thinking</i>
<b>WEEK 4</b>   January 30	Hurry up! / <i>Strategic thinking</i>
<b>WEEK 5</b>   February 6	Holistic analysis / <i>Systems thinking</i>
<b>WEEK 6</b>   February 13	Complex possibilities / <i>Systems mapping</i>
<b>WEEK 7</b>   February 20	Power and flow / <i>Finding viable solutions</i>
<b>WEEK 8</b>   February 27	The open work / <i>Community decision-making</i>
<b>WEEK 9</b>   March 6	The North Star / <i>Defining the in-depth, in field project</i>
<b>WEEK 10</b>   March 13	No classes / <i>Spring Break</i>
<b>WEEK 11</b>   March 20	People, planet, profits: Sustainability and brand / <i>In-depth project</i>
<b>WEEK 12</b>   March 27	Circular economy model: Sustainability and brand / <i>In-depth project</i>
<b>WEEK 13</b>   April 3	Climate change: Sustainability and brand / <i>In-depth project</i>
<b>WEEK 14</b>   April 10	Equity: Sustainability and brand / <i>In-depth project</i>
<b>WEEK 15</b>   April 17	Bringing into balance / <i>In-depth project</i>
<b>WEEK 16</b>   April 24	Sharing / <i>In-depth project presentations</i>

*Last day of classes: Friday, April 28, 2022*

**F FINAL EXAM: Friday, May 5, 2022 , final project delivery by 12 noon.**