



## TRANSFORMING BUSINESS, SOCIETY, AND SELF WITH U.LAB

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### WELCOME!

Welcome to U.Lab. As of this writing, we are over 28,000 people (with more joining each day) from 182 countries.

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, as Social Entrepreneurs – and much more. We're thrilled that you have decided to join us in this journey through U.Lab.

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, and how you can make use of them. The following page contains an overview of what you will find in this syllabus.

*Please note: the syllabus may still change in the days and weeks leading up to the launch of the course. Check the footer for current version & date updated.*

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## THE BASICS

### TEAM

#### Instructor:

Otto Scharmer, Senior Lecturer,  
MIT Sloan School of Management

#### Co-facilitators:

Adam Yukelson, Presencing Institute  
Julie Arts, Presencing Institute  
Kelvy Bird, Presencing Institute  
Arawana Hayashi, Presencing Institute  
Dayna Cunningham, MIT CoLab  
Ela Ben-Ur, i2i Experience  
Lili Xu Brandt, Presencing Institute

### CONTACT

You can reach us in different ways: You can post questions or problems to the course discussion board, and team members or other U.Lab participants may respond. Or you can email questions to ([u.lab@presencing.com](mailto: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 instructors 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 DESCRIPTION

We live in a time of disruptive change, one that requires a new collective leadership capacity. In this groundbreaking course, we invite you on a journey to see the world in new ways and practice a method that allows leaders, entire organizations, and larger social systems to connect with and actualize their highest future possibility.

In U.Lab you will learn Theory U, an approach to leading profound change that has been developed by action researchers at MIT, and practiced by leaders around the world, for over 20 years.

You will apply this method to a challenge, issue, or system that matters to you, and “explore the future by doing” by developing a prototype initiative that connects the personal, relational, and systemic dimensions of change.

To support your journey, you will have the opportunity to form self-organized Hubs in your local communities and 5-6 person peer-coaching circles with other U.Lab participants; all of which will support you in co-sensing and co-shaping the future that you feel is wanting to emerge in your work, and life, right now.

### RECOMMENDED READINGS

For each session we will be recommending specific chapters from this book:

Scharmer, C. Otto, and K. Kaufer: *Leading From the Emerging Future: From Ego-system to Eco-system Economies*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2013.

### MAIN LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to create three types of knowledge:

1. Conceptual knowledge: The key concepts here are sustainability and awareness-based leadership (Theory U).
2. Practical knowledge: New tools and practices that help people become better listeners, communicators, and leaders.
3. Self-knowledge: The most important dimension of all great leadership — Who am I? What am I here for? What am I going to do with the rest of my life?

### COURSE DELIVERY

U.Lab begins September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and runs until November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015. New course material will go live every Thursday at 10:00 am EDT (UTC -4) in the Courseware tab on edX. On September 10<sup>th</sup>, we will post the introductory week's content (we're calling this Week 0, because the real kick-off – the first live session – is the following week). We will then post more material every Thursday for the subsequent seven weeks, each week covering a different theme. The final week's content will be posted on November 5<sup>th</sup>, and a follow-up live session will take place on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

## SCHEDULE

Every week, we will release a module of pre-recorded videos, methods, and tools. Additionally, during weeks one, four, and seven, there will **also** be a live session broadcast from the MIT campus. Details below. **Please note all times are listed in EDT (currently UTC -4).** Daylight Savings Time is November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 in the U.S., which may impact timing in your area for the release of Week 8 material. Please check your time <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/>.

### PRE-COURSE: NOW – SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2015

- Create or join a Hub (details below)

### WEEK 0: INTRODUCTION TO U.LAB – LAUNCHES THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> AT 10:00AM EDT

- **Introductory Videos**
- **Tutorials:** How to use edX & the U.Lab course features
- **What are Coaching Circles, Live Sessions and Hubs?**
- **Stories from the Field** – What's already happening in the U.Lab community?
- **Create a profile** on the U.Lab site
- **Pre-reading:** Scharmer, C. Otto, et al: Leading From the Emerging Future: From Ego-system to Eco-system Economies: Introduction

### WEEK 1: CO-INITIATING – LAUNCHES THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup> AT 10:00AM EDT

- **Live Streamed Event:** September 17th, 2015, 10:00AM – 11.15am EDT (UTC -4). Topics will include: *Our current moment of disruption; "bending the beam of scientific observation back on ourselves"; guided mindfulness practice; overview of the journey through U.Lab*
- **Join a coaching circle**
  - Sign up for a coaching circle (a great opportunity to connect to other participants, but only sign up if you are willing to commit to meeting with your group each week)
  - Have a call or meeting to introduce yourselves, and schedule weekly meetings with your group
  - Learn the case clinic method – a process for addressing the root issues of a current leadership challenge in your life or work
- **The Iceberg Model of Current Reality:** Understanding the deeper sources of our current global challenges
- **Theory U:** An introduction to origins and basic principles of the framework at the heart of this course – in the face of disruptive change, how can we become aware of and actualize our highest future possibility rather than re-enacting patterns of the past?
- **The Art and Practice of Deep Listening:** Shifting the inner place from where we operate as individuals
- **Guest Faculty:** Ed Schein, MIT Sloan; Dayna Cunningham, Executive Director, MIT Community Innovators Lab (CoLab)
- **Field Experience:** Empathy Walk
- **Practices:** Listening Assessment Tool, Reflective Journaling
- **Pre-reading:** Scharmer, C. Otto, et al: Leading From the Emerging Future: From Ego-system to Eco-system Economies: Chapter 1

### WEEK 2: CO-SENSING PT. 1 – LAUNCHES THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup> AT 10:00AM EDT

- **Principles of Co-Sensing:** Gathering data by suspending and listening
- **The Four Levels of Conversation:** Shifting the inner place from where we operate as groups
- **Learning Journeys:** How to plan and go on a journey and where you practice sensemaking at the edges of your system
- **Guest Faculty:** Ed Schein, MIT Sloan; Dayna Cunningham, Executive Director, MIT Community Innovators Lab (CoLab)

- **Coaching Circle #1:** Practice your first case clinic
- **Field Experience:** Learning journey or stakeholder interviews
- **Practices:** Listening tool, reflective journaling
- **Pre-reading:** Scharmer, C. Otto, et al: Leading From the Emerging Future: From Ego-system to Eco-system Economies: Chapter 2

### WEEK 3: CO-SENSING PT. 2 – LAUNCHES THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup> AT 10:00AM EDT

- **Co-sensing:** Continue with your sense-making activities (learning journeys or stakeholder interviews)
- **Sense-making:** For those working in groups or hubs, have a meeting to make sense of what you've seen and done – and consider using the Social Presencing Theater practices available this week (see below)
- **Institutional Innovation** – Applying the principles of the levels of listening and conversation to larger systems
- **Guest Faculty:** Ed Schein, MIT Sloan; Dayna Cunningham, Executive Director, MIT Community Innovators Lab (CoLab); Martin Kalungu-Banda, Presencing Institute
- **Coaching Circle #2**
- **Pre-reading:** Scharmer, C. Otto, et al: Leading From the Emerging Future: From Ego-system to Eco-system Economies: Chapter 3

### SOCIAL PRESENSING THEATER MODULE: LAUNCHES THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup> AT 10:00AM EDT

- **Learn and practice the basics of Social Presencing Theater:** a method that allows you to make sense of your current reality in a way that's fast, surfaces deep data, and provides a common language for the system you're operating in to sense and see itself.

### WEEK 4: PRESENSING – LAUNCHES THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8<sup>TH</sup> AT 10:00AM EDT

- **Live Streamed Event:** October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 10:00AM-11:15AM.EDT (UTC -4) Topics will include: *Field of the Future Journaling exercise; connecting to our highest future possibility.*
- **Presencing:** How to connect with our highest future possibility
- **Absencing:** What process unfolds when we face disruptive change and cling to the patterns of the past rather than opening ourselves to what's emerging?
- **Guest Faculty:** Peter Senge, MIT Sloan; Arthur Zajonc, Mind & Life Institute
- **Coaching Circle #3**
- **Empathy walk at home**
- **Practices:** Listening tool, reflective journaling
- **Pre-reading:** Scharmer, C. Otto, et al: Leading From the Emerging Future: From Ego-system to Eco-system Economies: Chapter 4-5

### WEEK 5: CRYSTALLIZING – LAUNCHES THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup> AT 10:00AM EDT

- **Principles of Crystallizing:** Staying connected to your deeper sources of inspiration – paying attention in a way that will enable you to sense and actualize prototyping initiatives
- **Coaching Circle:** Week off from case clinics – instead, use the time with your group for open dialogue. What is the future you feel called to connect to?
- **Guest Faculty:** Eileen Fisher, Eileen Fisher Inc.; Isabel Guerrero, formerly VP World Bank, currently MIT / Harvard
- **Pre-reading:** Scharmer, C. Otto, et al: Leading From the Emerging Future: From Ego-system to Eco-system Economies: Chapter 6

## WEEK 6: PROTOTYPING – LAUNCHES THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22<sup>ND</sup> AT 10:00AM EDT

- **Principles of prototyping**
- **Guest Faculty:** Peter Senge (MIT), Ela Ben-Ur, formerly of IDEO and now i2iExperience, who will support your prototyping; Nipun Mehta, Service Space
- **Explore the future by doing** – Develop a prototype initiative that connects the the personal, relational, and systemic dimensions of change
- **Coaching Circle #4**
- **Practices:** Listening tool, reflective journaling
- **Pre-reading:** Scharmer, C. Otto, et al: Leading From the Emerging Future: From Ego-system to Eco-system Economies: Chapter 7

## WEEK 7: CO-EVOLVING – LAUNCHES THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29<sup>TH</sup> AT 10:00AM EDT

- **Live Streamed Event:** Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 10:00AM – 11:15AM EDT (UTC-4). Topics will include: *Sharing emerging results from U.Lab participants' multi-local prototyping.*
- **Cultivating the Social Field**
- **The Four Distractions:** What keeps us from connecting to our highest future possibility?
- **Guests:** Peter Senge (MIT); Roberto Benzo (Mindful Breathing Laboratory, Mayo Clinic); Michelle Long (BALLE)
- **Coaching Circle #5**
- **Continue prototyping**
- **Practices:** Listening tool, reflective journaling
- **Pre-reading** Scharmer, C. Otto, et al: Leading From the Emerging Future: From Ego-system to Eco-system Economies: Chapter 8

## WEEK 8: GLOBAL MOVEMENT BUILDING – LAUNCHES THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>, 2015 AT 10:00AM EST

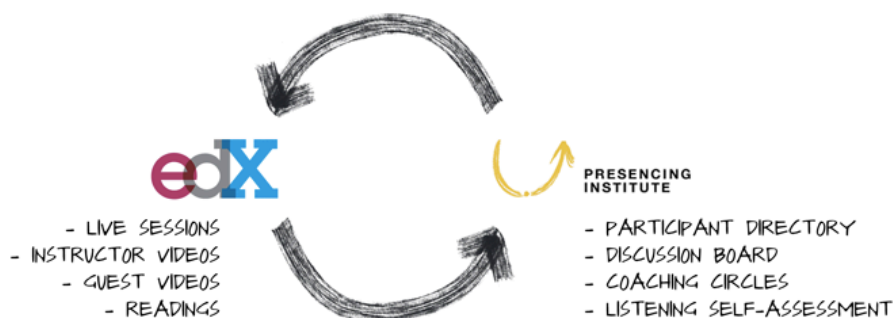
- **Institutional Inversion:** what is emerging in our global community of awareness-based change makers, and what is needed to carry the momentum forward?
- **Coaching Circle #6** (if needed)
- **Provide feedback:** share what you have been learning as co-creators of the ongoing U.Lab community
- **Guests:** Peter Senge (MIT)

*Week 8 is the closing session for the course.*

## GRADING

The course is pass/fail and there will be no exams. More details about grading will be released closer to the launch of the course.

## PIONEERING A GLOBAL ACTION-LEARNING PLATFORM



THROUGHOUT the COURSE, YOU WILL MOVE BACK & FORTH between TWO WEBSITES

### COURSE DESIGN

In the U.Lab, we invite you to join us in pioneering a global action-learning platform that takes the process of learning from the classroom into the real world, from the head to the heart, and from the heart to the hand.

**IMPORTANT:** The online elements of the U.Lab will be hosted on two websites: edX.org and the new U.Lab page on the Presencing Institute website (which will go live September 10th, 2015)

### ABOUT THE PRESENCING INSTITUTE

The Presencing Institute, co-founded by Otto Scharmer, is an awareness-based action-research community that creates social technologies, builds capacities, and generates spaces for profound societal renewal. Several of the course staff and many of the leaders you will meet throughout the U.Lab are affiliated with the Presencing Institute.

### 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 a large group of people turn their attention to an event in real time, a real sense of connectedness emerges.

For this reason, during the first, fourth, and seventh weeks of the course – as well as follow-up session seven weeks after the course officially concludes – Otto and the U.Lab team will facilitate a live, interactive, 75-minute session

that will bring together U.Lab participants from all over the world.

See the Course Schedule above for dates and times.

### HUBS

We believe that it is both necessary and possible, in our generation, to create a profound shift in the ways our economies and societies are organized. One of the reasons this has not yet happened is that change makers across sectors, systems, cultures, and generations do not typically have a shared place to connect, co-sense and co-create the emerging future.

The U.Lab invites you to create such a place for yourself and a few other friends and colleagues whom you might want to invite. By doing so, and using the MOOC infrastructure to connect and co-inspire ideas with others, we will collectively prototype a new platform or leadership school that helps change makers across generations to connect with each other, with the situation we face, and with our own sources of inspiration, in order to build a movement of awareness based change across systems, sectors, and cultures.

Creating a Hub is actually quite simple. 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. A Hub is a space in which U.Lab participants complement the online/digital part of the U.Lab with a place based, in-person component. It's simple because it starts by having a conversation after each of the three live-sessions – something that anyone

can organize. It can evolve into a place where you do sense-making together (after learning journeys or stakeholder interviews), and also support each others' prototyping processes.

There are two different ways to form a Hub:

1. **Circle of Friends:** as a small group in your home or in another suitable location. Invite your friends, use the U.Lab Participant Directory (which you can join beginning September 10th) to find other U.Lab participants in your area, and arrange a space to meet. Or tell friends with whom you want to connect to enroll in U.Lab now so you can use the Lab (and your coaching circle) to deepen your connection with them.
2. **Innovation Hub:** as a group of individuals who want to change the system in which they work. If you are taking the U.Lab with others in your organization or larger system, use live sessions as the opening part of half- or full-day workshops, and use the entire U.Lab as an eight-week innovation period to co-create or accelerate a new initiative.

*\*Live sessions will be recorded and made available immediately following the conclusion of the live broadcast*

## COACHING CIRCLES

A coaching circle is a group of five or six U.Lab participants who will meet virtually 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.

The backbone of the coaching circles is a process we call case clinics. Beginning Week 1 (September 17th, 2015), you will learn the case clinic method and have a chance to practice it. But in order to practice, you first need to join a coaching circle.

Here are some FAQ's about coaching circles:

*A group of five or six? But I don't know anyone else in this course...*

Perfect! There are thousands of other people thinking the same thing. During Week 1 (beginning September 17th), we will give you access to a new feature on the Presencing Institute / U.Lab website that will enable you to meet other U.Lab participants and join a coaching circle. All coaching groups will be self-selected – meaning you will choose your own group. You can start a new group or browse groups that are still in need of members. When browsing groups, you will be able to search by the

dates/times you would like to meet, preferred language, and more.

Also, if you have joined a Hub and are able to form a group of five or six that meets in person (rather than virtually), that group could be your coaching circle.

*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 meeting each week. This is very important! 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 immediately following **the Live Session** (September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015).
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 definitely interested in joining a coaching circle but know in advance that you won't be available to participate during a particular week, you should still join; but we recommend you bring that up in advance in your circle. Make sure that you can fully join all other sessions.

If you're not sure whether you want to join a coaching circle, it's better to wait and join during Week 2 of the course (September 24th – 30th, 2015) than to join a group and not participate or drop out. For the self-selection process to work, we need everyone to follow these guidelines as best as possible.

*When does my coaching circle meet?*

That is entirely up to you to decide! If you are forming a group online, you will be able to search for groups that meet during a time when you are available. If you are working with an in-person group, one good time to meet might be right after the live sessions. Your coaching circle should always meet before the next week of the course goes live (new course material goes live every Thursday).

**We look forward to working together with you in U.Lab!**