SOCIAL THEORY & DESIGN THINKING
(2410302)

Politics & Global Studies (PGS)

1st Semester 2025 (1/2025-26)
Tuesday: 1-4 p.m.
Building POL3, Room M08

Week 3 (8/19/25): "Wicked Problems in Design Thinking" Group Exercise

Part I: Theories and Concepts

Task: With your group members, choose only ONE from TWO items/questions below.

You may go back to the assigned readings if you have not read them before coming to class.

Then, try to answer them in your own words in a clear and concise bullet points or short paragraphs that could be put on the Microsoft PowerPoint or any other presentation computer softwares' and mobile phone applications' pages. You answer should be only 4 pages.

1. From Richard Buchanan's article:

    A. Richard Buchanan's design thinking as a "new liberal art of technological culture"

    B. Richard Buchanan's elaboration of Horst Rittel's 10 characteristics of "wicked problems"

2. From Jeff Conklin's book chapter:

    C. Jeff Conklin's dialogue mapping approach for addressing the problem of fragmentation that stifles collective intelligence

    D. Jeff Conklin's discussion of Horst Rittel's 6 characteristics of "wicked problems"

Part 2: Applications

Task: With your group members, choose only TWO from the list of all items/problems.

Talk through your assigned problem(s), trying first of all to get a sense of the enormous complexities it involves.

Who are the stakeholders (the players, constituencies, and interested parties) in the situation(s) you are considering, and how do the various stakeholders' motivations align or conflict with one another? How do the possible resolutions to the problem(s) change as you include the perspectives of different stakeholders?

What other factors (e.g., technical, regulatory, etc.) may be relevant to your assigned problem(s)? After identifying as many stakeholders and relevant factors as you can, try to develop a consensus on a recommended course of action to each problem you group is attempting to solve.

Then, try to answer them in your own words in a clear and concise bullet points or short paragraphs that could be put on the Microsoft PowerPoint or any other presentation computer softwares' and mobile phone applications' pages. You answer should be only 4 pages per item/problem selected.

3 out of 12 groups will be randomly picked to give a short, no more than 10 minutes presentation at the beginning of next week's session. All 12 groups must submit their slides by uploading their PDF files into the designated folders in Week 3's folder in the course's Google Drive.

1) Problem: Due to rapid spreading of fake news and hate speeches during the recent global political turmoil, your team must provide the preventive measures for the netizens. [#MediaLiteracy]

2) Problem: The design of gadgets and facilities in everyday life only support and made for normal people. As a design consulting agency, your team must devise a new campaign for promoting a universal design for people with disabilities. [#Accessibility]

3) Problem: In response to recent media exposure and the threat of increased government regulation, the executives at your automobile company want to increase the fuel efficiency of the entire product line, and roll out a new car that showcases the company's new commitment to environmental sustainability. [#Sustainability]

4) Problem: In response to gender discrimination and sexual harassment in your campus, the Student Council has to devise a media campaign to alleviate the problem. [#Gender Equality]

5) Problem: As part of the global health care policy team of the World Health Organization (WHO), you must try to advise the Thai government regarding the most effective solution for the post-COVID-19 sustainable preventive measures against the new pandemic in the near future. [#PublicHealth]

6) Problem: Due to the rapid increase in pet owners, your city's mayor wants to create more pet friendly spaces. Should the pets be allowed to share our existing spaces, or the new spaces should be exclusively built for them? [#PetHumanization]

7) Problem: The couture handbags designed by your world-famous employer are being knocked off, complete with counterfeit logo badges, faster than the company can have the new designs manufactured and brought to market. [#IntellectualPropertyRights]

8) Problem: The large, publicly owned clothing company for which you work has been accused of using sweatshop labor (i.e., poorly paid, possibly underage workers forced to work in hazardous conditions). [#LaborExploitation]

9) Problem: As part of the humanitarian movement of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), your team must encourage the refugees in the borderlands between Ukraine and Russia to raise their voices for peach. [#Migration]

10) Problem: Due to population growth, your city's mayor wants to build a new highway, promoting commerce as well as private use by citizens. Should the highway be routed through the middle of the city, or around it? [#UrbanDevelopment]

11). Problem: Thailand is becoming an aging society in the present. Your team is responsible for providing an effective blueprint for the public policy against the generational conflicts that might unfold into the political unrest on the streets. [#AgingSociety]

12). Problem: Due to the recent surges in the Generative AI integrated technologies such as the Chat GPT around the world, your team must suggest some preventive measures against the misuse of such technologically dependent behaviors in education. [#DigitalLiteracy]

13) Problem: Criminal gangs have been recruiting in your town's high school, leading to an increase in drug use, weapons possession, and violence there. [#Crime]

14) Problem: Thailand is becoming an aging society. The senior citizens now face hardships in daily routines such as living, working, commuting, and enjoying their free times. Your team is assigned to devise a blueprint of policy to mitigate this social problem. [#AgingSociety]

15) Problem: As part of his foreign policy team, you must advise the American president on the most effective way to promote the country's national security interests. [#NationalSecurity]

16) Problem: In response to the more inclusive awareness of the LGBTQ+ identities in the Thai society, the Student Council needs to formulate a media campaign to promote this awareness in campus life. [#GenderEquality]

17) Problem: Overconsumption plummets the world's annual resources. Your team is tasked to come up with a blueprint of policy and awareness campaign to allay such problems. [#Overconsumption]

18) Problem: PM 2.5 smog has covered the sky of the major cities across Asia, what are possible solutions of this transnational complex issues? [#PublicHealth]

19) Problem: Klongteoi Market has been providing Krungthep's fresh ingredients but has also been deemed one of the dirtiest urban areas in the city, what are some possible solutions that would minimally affect small vendors in/of the area? [#Gentrification]

20) Problem: Owning to the ongoing climate crisis, Krungthep is predicted to be swept under the rising sea levels. Your team is assigned to find out possible and practical solutions for the country's capital. [#ClimateChange]

21) Problem: In order to feed the world, your foundation must come up with some campaigns that possibly can promote changes in dietary consumption to sustain our hungriness. [#FoodSecurity]

22) Problem: A big fire glowing over the Jatujak Weekend Market. How can we prevent another fire and, more fundamentally, the overcrowding of uses in the area? Your team is now called to work on this. [#HazardousManagement]

23) Problem: Internationally praised as one of the most visited hubs of tourism in the world, Thailand should aim for the leader of animal ethical tourism. Your department must advise the ministry of Tourism on the matter of animal exploitation. [#HospitalityManagement]

24) Problem: Based on the controversial handling of monkey business in Lopburi in recent news, your association must advise the city's mayor on this issue concerning the animal welfare movement around the world. [#AnimalWelfare]

25) Problem: Literacy rate, digital literacy, and emotion management are the core issues in the contemporary Thai society. What are the possible solutions that your human development team can advise to the recent cabinet? [#LifeLong LearningSkills]

26) Problem: Urban gentrification can always bring about the luxurious mega-projects that keep the city under constant (re)contruction. Your corporate social responsibility team now has to plan such development in an ethical and local-friendly ways. [#UrbanDevelopment]

27) Problem: As an assembly of alternative journalists from renowned national newspapers in the world, your mission is to critique Eco-modernism such as electric cars and green washing products, how do you plan a draft of such news report? [#GreenWashing]

28) Problem: In contemporary life, we are constantly bombarded with unnecessary and obtrusive advertisements. How do your corporate social responsibility team intervene and plan for the future of advertisement to assuage the problem for the mass consumers? [#MediaLiteracy]

29) Problem: Our campus is swamped with stray dogs and cats; the director suggests a set-zero policy(total extermination) as a possible solution. As a representative of the progressive Student Union, what should your policy looks like, if you were to manage this project? [#AnimalWelfare]

30) Problem: In recent news, Barcelona's police force has been deployed to manage the group of riots against mass tourism in the city. Would such problem be

a problem in Thailand? What would be your team's advice to the Ministry of Tourism to prevent this from happening. [#HospitalityManagement]

31) Problem: Would the basic universal income solve the economic inequality in Thailand? Why and why not? What can your association advise the Ministry of Finance for this specific wealth redistribution approach? [#WealthRedistribution]

32) Problem: Since the major areas of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) are located on the wet lowlands prone to floods which recently has been worsen by the climate crisis, your urban planning firm must tackle this critical issue now. [#ClimateChange]

33) Problem: The fast-fashion industry is targeted by the public as one of the most polluted industries to the environment and people's welfare. Your design consulting firm is urgently called to change the face of the fashion industry toward a positive image and more sustainable practice. How do you create a campaign for in this situation? [#Sustainability]

34) Problem: What policies can be developed to manage mass migration in a way that supports both the needs of refugees and the stability of host communities? Your transnational humanitarian association has just received a phone call from some major political figures to address the problem. [#Migration]
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35) Problem: What measures can be taken to reduce the widening income gap and wealthiness in Thailand? Your assembly in the Ministry of Finance is elected to solve this urgent economic inequality facing the nation. [#WealthRedistribution]

36) Problem: How can we develop and implement health policies that effectively respond to upcoming global pandemics in the near future, while respecting individual rights and freedoms? Your research and development team has been awarded a huge grant to shed light on this controversial public health problem. [#PublicHealth]

37) Problem: How can we protect individuals' privacy and data security in a digital world? Your security consultant firm is hired to formulate a first-year plan on behalf of the global netizens. [#DigitalSecurity]

38) Problem: How can we reduce political polarization and enable constructive dialogue in Thai politics among the ideological divides? As a representative of the Civil Union, you are expected to mediate among other constituencies as the first step to solve this national problem. [#PoliticalPolarization]

39) Problem: What strategies can be implemented to stop biodiversity loss while balancing human development? Your research and development team has been paid to work on the case study of the Land Bridge Development Plan in Ranong and Chumporn. [#SustainableDevelopment]

40) Problem: Should we ban social media? If yes, what kind of social networking platforms can be built in substitution? If no, how can we improve such existing social media landscape? Your cohort of psychologists and psychiatrists from around the world are meeting in a significant conference to provide a major solution for the people. [#MediaLiteracy]

41. Problem: With the growing trend of digital afterlives, how should societies manage the social media accounts and online data of deceased individuals in a way that respects dignity and privacy? [#DeathManagement]

42. Problem:: Traditional burial practices are increasingly unsustainable due to land shortages and environmental impacts. Your team must design innovative and culturally sensitive alternatives for funerals. [#DeathManagement]

43. Problem: Many families struggle with the financial burden of end-of-life care. What public policies or community-based solutions could alleviate this inequality? [#DeathManagement]

44. Problem: As artificial intelligence becomes capable of creating realistic simulations of deceased loved ones, as digital natives, what suggestions do you think A.I. companies should regulate or ethically guide this practice? [#DigitalEthics]

45. Problem: With the global rise of loneliness, especially among youth and the elderly, how can communities create sustainable systems of social connection? [#SocialCohesion]

46. Problem:: As urban areas expand vertically with megastructures and skyscraper housing, how should cities balance liveability, cultural heritage, and human wellbeing? [#UrbanFutures]

47. Problem: Misinformation spreads faster than fact-checking. Should societies regulate free speech on digital platforms, and if so, how? [#Democracy&Media]

48. Problem:: Global water scarcity is accelerating. Your environmental consulting firm is tasked with proposing equitable policies for water usage among agriculture, industry, and households. [#ResourceManagement]

49. Problem: In the wake of automation and robotics, how can societies reimagine the meaning of work, income, and human purpose? [#FutureofWork]

50. Problem: With the increasing popularity of virtual reality (VR) and metaverse lifestyles, should governments tax or regulate virtual economies like real ones? [#DigitalEconomy]

51. Problem: As genetic editing technologies such as CRISPR advance, what ethical boundaries should be drawn to balance innovation with human rights? [#Biotechnology]

52. Problem: The rise of "cancel culture" has blurred the line between accountability and social exclusion. How should universities or governments create policies on digital justice? [#DigitalJustice]

53. Problem:: Climate-induced displacement is forcing millions to move across borders. How can international law adapt to recognize "climate refugees"? [#Migration&ClimateChange]

54. Problem: The growing use of surveillance technologies threatens personal freedom. Should societies sacrifice privacy for safety, and where should the line be drawn? [#Surveillance&Security]

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