FOR BIDDING PURPOSES ONLY

Columbia Business School
AT THE VERY CENTER OF BUSINESS™

SPRING 2026
B Term

MGMT 8569.001
Organizational AI — Transforming how organizations operate

Professor Annie Dean
Email: TBD
Day and Time: Thursdays, 6:00PM – 9:15PM
Office hours: By appointment
Course Assistants: TBD

COURSE OVERVIEW

The post pandemic world required organizations to adapt to the next generation of digital transformation: a world where business is platformed on technology, not conference rooms. But now in the early innings of enterprise AI, organizations need to move from digital transformation to the productization of work, a concept that redesigns organizational charts, collapses functions and requires organizations to deliver work like a product organization instead of the project management discipline that defines many of today's core operations.

This integrative course is designed for advanced MBA students to develop an understanding of how AI will redesign the enterprise, dive deeply into emerging enterprise AI in a business laboratory of new ideas presented by leaders from the field who are grappling with these issues, develop concrete skills that will help them navigate AI transformation as contributors and leaders and begin to cultivate their own understanding of what may lie at the next horizon of AI-driven change.

This is an integrative course designed to link and apply core management disciplines (organization, technology, supply chain, HR, marketing, strategy, finance and operations) with a focus on how to design change in each of these areas like a product leader.

Topics will include the changing nature of work as a result of AI being introduced to the enterprise. We will build on the basic concepts of AI for non technologists to be certain that students can issue spot AI transformation issues with technical awareness. We will discuss the

difference in the rate of adoption of consumer AI vs Enterprise AI, and why the rate of adoption for Enterprise AI is much slower. We will investigate the difference between structured workflows like engineering and unstructured workflows like creative or HR, and why the rate of disruption will be much faster for structured workflows, and harder for unstructured workflows. We will consider how to deliver AI transformation through product thinking and why commonly used metrics like individual AI adoption are probably a vanity metric. Finally, we'll investigate how AI requires us to reconsider the design of organizations as functions erode, generalists emerge, and information is no longer a question of people-networks.

In this course, we use case studies, hands-on exercises and discussion with leading practitioners to understand how to manage and lead the organizations in the age of AI. AI transformation is so new to the enterprise that case studies are not yet available for many of this course's core topics. As a result, we will create recorded podcasts with leading practitioners currently grappling with these topics when case studies are not available. AI transformation is being hotly pursued by the world's largest organizations, though change is being architected mostly by startups. We will investigate both, and as such this course will be relevant for large and small organizations.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

This course is organized in three parts:

Part 1 is about the *current state of AI Transformation and next-generation transformation design*. This module investigates how leading enterprises are transforming their organization with AI. In this module we will define AI transformation and differentiate it from digitization and automation. We will also investigate the difference between AI transformation of an organization's operations and its core commercial offering. This module will include a group exercise where students will attempt to design an approach to AI transformation and identify transformation metrics to measure the transformation's success. We will compare the students' outputs with the approach from 2-3 leaders in different industries who are currently transforming their organizations with AI. Finally, we will investigate the "next generation" approach to transformation, moving from a project-management style PMO approach to a product led approach. A basic understanding of AI fundamentals for non technical leaders is required; students can acquire these fundamentals through other coursework or through optional pre-reading assignments.

Part 2 is about *how to redesign work with AI*. In this section, we will investigate workflows and how to productize them. First, we will consider an organization's structured (engineering, customer support, inventory + fulfillment) and unstructured (marketing, creative, HR) workflows. We'll consider how structured workflows are the "leading edge" of AI transformation, and can largely be transformed through tool adoption. We'll consider how productizing unstructured workflows may unlock greater efficiency than structured workflows, but with greater effort. We'll establish a product methodology for transforming workflows, beginning with identifying and validating the problem to solve, and continuing through a build > measure > learn cycle with a product management mindset. We will consider the importance of specialized data sets within each function (i.e. finance, people data) and the important role these data sets will play in productizing workflows and establishing context for AI applications within an organization.

Part 3 is about *how organizations will change as a result of AI adoption.* In this section, we consider how organizations will change as AI is implemented including how AI will affect individual workers, workforce composition, upskilling, organizational design and functional leadership. We will investigate the characteristics of "native" AI companies including their smaller size, flattened structure and inclusion of agents in workforce composition. Additionally, we will consider the emergence of "product" leadership (vs project or program management) across an organization, not just in product organizations, and consider upskilling toward product management as a core AI skillset, beyond AI adoption or prompting. Additionally, we will consider the simplification of job architectures, the emergence of 'generalists' who have skills across a range of functions (archetypically, product managers who are also product designers), and the emergence of hyper specialists (who due to AI are able to develop even greater expertise in their specialty).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Following completion of the course, students will:

- Be fluent in AI transformation of enterprise companies
- Understand the key issues enterprises are facing related to AI in their organization
- Differentiate between digitization, automation and AI transformation
- Understand workflow productization
- Challenge 'old' ways of doing things, like PMO-led transformation, and discover new tools to design the future like Product Led Transformation
- Be introduced to exciting leaders for first-hand learning

CONNECTION TO THE CORE

The learning in this course will utilize, build on, and extend concepts covered in the following core courses:

Core Course	**Connection with Core**
Strategy Formulation	1. Competitive Advantage 2. Competitive Dynamics 3. Corporate Scope
LEAD	1. Individual and group biases 2. Introduction to networks 3. Leadership

CONNECTION TO OTHER ELECTIVES

This course is complementary to a number of electives. The most important ones are the following:

Strategy and Leadership in the Future of Work (XXX) is a course that sheds light on how technology is affecting work, the workforce and the workplace. It draws implications for strategy and leadership.

Strategy and Leadership in the Future of Work is an important combination with Organizational AI as it lays the groundwork for the broader industry and organizational shifts caused by the future of work. Organzational AI is an opportunity to go deeper specifically on the disruption caused by AI, but AI-driven change is best understood in the broader context offered by this FOW course.

Advanced Org Change (B8512) is about the principles of new management approaches to structure, processes and norms which fits the current era of a new workforce, and of new complexities in managing globally and digitally. As such, it focuses on the emerging laboratory of new management approaches and revolutions called Management 2.0. It focuses on a set of organizational inventions—designs and cultures-- which are meant to be more agile and responsive. It is complementary to this course's focus on the concept of the FoW is affecting strategic decisions.

Technology Strategy (B8570) provides an introduction to the strategy management of technology. The class is about how to integrate technology into strategic decisions and how strategy is affected by technology. The class is about business models being affected by technology while this class is about how technology changes the workplace profoundly. Both classes are complementary.

Generative AI for Business (B8609) provides hands on experience with GenAI tools such as API experiments, tool demos and business case presentations. This course is more technical and applied at the user and tool development level. Organizational AI considers how the adoption of these tools will disrupt the wider enterprise, and establishes a zoomed-out perspective for students.

Product Management (B8636) provides hands on experience with leading product management frameworks and establishes fluency with the product management discipline. Organizational AI applies product management concepts in an enterprise transformation context.

COURSE ADMINISTRATION AND GRADING

Grading will be based on 1) class participation, 2) two case write-ups, and 3) an optional final project. These components are weighted in the following way to calculate the course grade:

1. Class Participation	40%
2. Two Class Write-ups	20% (10% each)
3. Optional Final Project	40%

Class participation will be graded based on the following rubric:

All the foregoing components of the grade are individual of type C vis-à-vis the honor code.

A student who only participates actively in class and does a good job on the two case write-ups can receive a maximum grade of HP. Students who wish to receive an H must also submit an individual final project as described below in addition to actively participating in class and doing well on the two case write-ups. There is no reason to do a final project unless you are going to put forth a serious effort on all three components of the grade.

1. Class Participation

Your participation is essential for both your own learning and that of other students. Because "Organizational AI" is a case-based course, either through documented cases or through direct learning from practitioners, most of the learning will take place in our class discussion of these very cases. I expect that every student will arrive having done the required readings and able to answer the day's assignment questions. Students should also expect to be cold called in class. 40% of your overall course grade will be your participation grade, which is further decomposed into the following components:

	Criteria	Exceeds Expectations (2 points)	Meets Expectations (1 point)	Below Expectations (0 points)
1	**Preparation for class**	Completes all readings, often re-reading assigned texts to develop novel and critical responses to them; completes, edits, and submits all work on time.	Completes all assigned readings far enough in advance to have developed thorough responses to them; completes and submits all work on time.	Does not complete multiple reading assignments; many assignments missing, completed late, or containing significant errors.
2	**Frequency of participation in class**	Initiates contributions more than once in each session.	Initiates contributions once in each session.	Initiates contributions in at least half of the total class sessions.
3	**Quality of comments**	Comments are always insightful and constructive; uses appropriate terminology. Comments balanced between general impressions, opinions, and specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions.	Comments are mostly insightful and constructive; mostly uses appropriate terminology. Occasionally comments are too general or irrelevant to the discussion.	Comments are sometimes constructive, with occasional signs of insight. Doesn't use appropriate terminology and comments are not always relevant to the discussion.
4	**Listening skills**	Listens attentively when others present materials, perspectives, as indicated by comments that build on others' remarks (i.e., the student hears what others say and contributes to the dialogue).	Mostly attentive when others present materials, perspectives, as indicated by comments that build on others' remarks. Occasionally needs encouragement from instructor to refocus comment.	Often inattentive. Occasionally makes disruptive comments when others are speaking.
5	**Classroom conduct and respect for others**	Avoids cell phone/laptop use during discussion; makes eye contact; encourages others to share conflicting viewpoints; looks to learn from others' experiences and backgrounds.	Demonstrates respect by avoiding cell phone and laptop use while others are speaking; makes eye contact; avoids personal attacks when disagreements arise.	Is often distracted and inattentive during discussions; may dominate conversation or lack courtesy when addressing others; interrupts others often.

Poll question: There is one poll question for each case and guest speaker in class. Poll questions will be posted as assignments in your Canvas Calendar. They require you to read the relevant case or article and give a short response to 1-2 questions. You must submit your answer to the poll question through Canvas by 9 AM on the day the relevant case or guest speaker is scheduled for class. If are you submitting a class write-up (see below) that addresses the poll question, you must still submit an answer to the multiple choice question(s), but you may write "Please see write-up" in the short response section.

Frequency and quality of class participation: Both the frequency and quality of your class participation will be affected by non-attendance. Obviously, not coming to a class means that you will not have a chance to take part in class discussion, which is a critical component of your overall grade. In terms of the quality, the best class comments:

- Articulate a clear stance or argument
- Raise issues from past classes, current events, or other anecdotes that are relevant to the discussion
- Show curiosity and a willingness to experiment
- Use data, examples, or your own personal and professional experience to support arguments

- Be respectful when disagreeing by summarizing the contravening opinion before delivering your own

If you are comfortable with participating in class, I encourage you to help others feel safe about participating by inviting further discussion or referring to points that have already been made by your classmates. Students are also expected to be present, prepared, and participate per the Columbia Core Culture. For excused absences, please submit the OSA administered survey on Canvas before the session you have to miss to make sure that your participation grade does not suffer. Use of electronic devices in class is not allowed except in answering Poll Everywhere questions during class.

2. Two Class Write-Ups

You must complete two (2) memos to address specific problem problems that will be provided throughout the course. In each case, your objective will be to influence a CEO or C-level leader to proceed with your proposed approach to the problem presented. This should be written in memo format using Smart Brevity writing techniques and be no more than 3-4 mins reading time. A standard format for the response would be to establish the problem framing, assumptions, goals, non goals and outline the proposed approach to solving the problem provided. In addition, you should provide a 2 min or less recorded video with an executive summary and to provide the relevant context for your memo. You can record this video with Loom or other free tools.

Write-ups should be uploaded to Canvas by 9 AM on the day the relevant problem area will be discussed in class.

3. Optional Final Project

The final project is for students hoping to receive an H in the course. However, doing a final project does not guarantee that a student will receive an H, and receiving an H also requires doing well in participation and the two write-ups.

For the final project, I ask that you write a concise memo proposing an organizational AI transformation of a public company to the company CEO. The memo should follow the product-led transformation principles and be written with principles outlined in Smart Brevity, an optional reading material. The memo should be no more than a 6 min read. In order to accomplish this, your thinking will need to be rigorous and supported by data. If desired, you can include additional materials that you used to establish your recommendations. Clear, simple, writing is required. In addition to your memo, include a 2 minute video pitch recorded through loom or other available free software providing an executive summary and necessary context for your memo. You are welcome to make use of industry contacts. I am also happy to provide a real-world 'case' if you have trouble deciding on your own.

Students who wish to do a final project must sign up on Canvas by XXX to confirm the project's topic. Not signing up with a proposal by XXX means that you will not have an opportunity to submit a final project. Discussing your topic with me in advance is advised but not required. The optional final project is due on XXX.

CLASSROOM NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to adhere to CBS Core Culture in this class by being Present, Prepared, and Participating.

Present:
- On time and present for every session
- Attendance tracked

Prepared:
- Complete pre-work needed, expect cold calling
- Bring nameplates and clickers

Participating:
- Constructive participation expected and part of grade
- No electronic devices unless explicitly called for by the instructor

Generative AI Policy
- **Tools:** Use of GenAI is encouraged, but integrity and attribution of AI-generated content is required

Inclusion, Accommodation, and Support for Students

At Columbia Business School we believe diversity strengthens any community or business model and brings it greater success. The School is committed to providing all students with equal opportunity to thrive in the classroom by providing a learning, living, and working environment free from discrimination, harassment, and bias on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or ability.
Students with documented disabilities may receive reasonable accommodation. Students are encouraged to contact Columbia University's Office of Disability Services for information and to register for services.
Columbia Business School adheres to all community, state, and federal regulations as relate to Title IX and student safety. Read more about CBS' policies to support Inclusion, Accommodations and Support for Students.

Honor Code and Academic Integrity
The Columbia Business School Honor Code calls on all members of the School community to adhere to and uphold the notions of truth, integrity, and respect both during their time in school, and throughout their careers as productive, moral, and caring participants in their companies and communities around the world. All students are subject to the Honor Code for all of their academic work. Failure to comply with the Honor Code may result in Dean's Discipline. Here students can review examples of Academic Misconduct which may result in discipline. The Honor Code applies to all students and is also found on the EMBA Honor Code page.

Course materials (videos, assignments, problem sets, etc.) are for students' use in this course only. Students may not upload them to external sites, share them with students outside of this course, or post them for public commentary without the instructor's permission.

READINGS
All cases, required readings, and videos will be made available via links in the Calendar section of the course Canvas page. There is no physical casebook for this course.

Optional, but Highly Recommended Readings

Croll, Alistair, and Yoskovitz, Ben. *Lean Product and Lean Analytics*. O'Reilly Media, 2013.

Cagan, Marty. *Inspired: How to Create Tech Products Customers Love*. Wiley, 2017 (2nd ed.)

Coase, R.H. "The Nature of the Firm." *Economica* 4 (November 1937): 386-405

Harari, Yuval Noah. *Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI*. Random House Publishing Group, 2024.

Perri, Melissa. *Escaping the Build Trap: How Effective Product Management Creates Real Value*. O'Reilly Media, 2018.

Ries, Eric. *The Lean Startup: How Today's Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses*. Crown Business, 2011.

VandeHei, Jim, Mike Allen + Roy Schwartz. *Smart Brevity: The Power of Saying More with Less*. New York: Workman Publishing Company, 2022.

INSTRUCTORS

Annie Dean is a globally recognized transformation leader and expert on the future of work. She was named to the Forbes Future of Work 50 for "bringing facts and focus to the conversation."

Annie is the Chief Strategy Officer of Building Operations + Experience at CBRE, a business unit representing $20B in annual revenue and 95,000 employees. Previously, Annie was the VP of Workplace and Future of Work Transformation at Atlassian and the Director of Remote Work at Meta, where she spearheaded the company's future of work portfolio, in each case, she guided c-level leadership through seismic shifts in work models, workforce design, and talent strategy. Annie's thought leadership and research have been featured in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and Fast Company and onstage at SXSW, Transform and more.

ADD LINK FOR MSFT NEW FUTURE OF WORK REPORT + NAOMIisms+ TOBI LUTKE ARTICLE + BAIN + CO Firm of the future

COURSE OUTLINE

Session	Date	Module	Topic	Key Concepts	Cases/Readings
Week 1	XXX	Part 1: AI Fundamentals	AI Transformation State of Play	Define: digitization, automation + organizational AI; Consider: consumer AI vs Enterprise AI. Define: Product Led Transformation	45 min recorded video podcast with chief people officer at open AI (to be created)
Week 2	XXX		Current State AI in the market + the enterprise	Discuss: 3 companies in different industries and their approach to AI transformation, including outcome metrics. Group project: Design AI transformation outcome metrics.	3x 20 min recorded video podcasts with leaders at Atlassian, Meta + CBRE (to be created) Tobi Lutke + Duo Lingo AI memos (Articles), Consumer AI vs Enterprise AI (30 min recorded Podcast with Slack Head of Research)
Week 3	XXX	Part 2: Transforming Work with AI	Structured Work vs Unstructured Work	The rate of disruption + change for structured workflows will significantly outpace unstructured workflows; innovation is needed to disrupt unstructured workflows.	Productizing work: AI in Structured vs Unstructured Work (I am seeking to author this in HBR, article forthcoming) 45 min recorded podcast with cursor executive (to be created) 45 min recorded podcast with Jonny Bauer from fundamental or Josh Higgins from Atlassian + Creative Agency
Week 4	XXX		Applying product management to workflows	AI transformation won't succeed with a project plan; change requires a product mindset Deep dive: shift from PMO led	Naomi Gleit (Head of Product, Meta) "Naomisms" (link) 45min recorded video podcast with head of transformation at McKinsey (to be created)

				transformation to Product Led Transformation	45 min recorded video podcast with leader at IDEO (to be created)
Week 5	XXX	Part 3: AI driven organizational change	Organizational Change as a Result of AI	In a world where information is instantly accessible and individual workers have skills that break across functions, the core design of an organization needs to be updated to be fast, flat and networked.	Microsoft New Future of Work Report 2025: The Frontier Firm (link) 45 min recorded podcast with head of teamwork lab at Atlassian (to be created)
Week 6	XXX		Reimagining G+A Functions	Moving from a "project" to a "product" mindset that supports AI-first workflows requires upskilling, new roles and a new set of outcomes	How WPP is transforming itself with AI (link) + 30 min recorded podcast with WPP leader 45 min recorded podcast with former chief people officer, shopify (to be created)