The American University in Cairo is a premier English-language institution of higher learning. The University is committed to teaching and research of the highest caliber, and offers exceptional liberal arts and professional education in a cross-cultural environment. AUC builds a culture of leadership, lifelong learning, continuing education and service among its graduates, and is dedicated to making significant contributions to Egypt and the international community in diverse fields.
AUC upholds the principles of academic freedom and is dedicated to excellence. On April 28, 2011, AUC became the first university in Egypt to be accredited by the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education, an Egyptian government body formed in 2007 with the purpose of establishing quality standards for Egypt’s educational institutions. Many of AUC’s programs have received specialized accreditation.

AUC offers 37 bachelor’s degrees, 44 master’s degrees, and 2 doctoral degrees in applied sciences and engineering in addition to a wide range of graduate diplomas in five schools: Business, Global Affairs and Public Policy, Humanities and Social Sciences, Sciences and Engineering, and the Graduate School of Education. The university’s English-language liberal arts environment is designed to promote critical thinking, language and cultural skills as well as to foster in students an appreciation of their own culture and heritage and their responsibilities toward society.
THE CENTER FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

The Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT) was established in 2002 to help create a stimulating learning environment at AUC, by promoting excellence in teaching. We strive to remain a haven for faculty on campus, a place to ask questions, seek advice and collaborate on projects. Within the context of the liberal arts approach to education, to which AUC is committed, CLT offers support to faculty to enhance their teaching strategies in areas of: innovative pedagogy, creative assessment, and digital education.

Following a learner-centered approach, CLT is a strong believer in human-centered design. We approach teaching and learning challenges with an anthropological mindset, placing both educators and learners at the center of our design canvas. We inform the learning design process by insights gathered through educator and learner engagements and ethnographic classroom observations.

Our multidisciplinary team of educational developers and designers at CLT work collaboratively to generate learner-centered solutions that enrich the teaching and learning experience at AUC. We foster academic excellence and a culture of continuous improvement through innovative pedagogies that cultivate life-long learning, personal fulfillment and adaptability to the future requirements of local and international job markets.

“With our professional and creative team at CLT, we will continue to support faculty to fulfill our mission in advancing the strategic pillars of Quality of Education and Innovation at AUC” - Hoda Mostafa (CLT Director)
Rooted in the ethos of human-centered design, CLT has interwoven Design Thinking into its culture, practice and services. A key to the success of Design Thinking is its multidisciplinary team-based approach. It follows an intentional and iterative process to discover the unmet needs and unarticulated aspirations of users, and develop solutions that balance user desirability, technical feasibility and economic viability.

Design Thinking relies on a collaborative innovation culture, a key pillar in AUC Strategic Plan moving forward. The anticipated value of this opportunity to our departments, service centers, programs, staff and students is eminent and of high impact, while moving forward with the university’s strategic direction towards innovation and quality of education.
LEARNING EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Higher education has entered into an era of transition. Rapidly evolving stakeholder demands and expectations are requiring universities to reconsider their classical model of teaching, and enforcing new paradigms for student-faculty relationship. Many educational institutions across the world are using design thinking as a problem-solving framework to redesign their students’ learning experiences, inside and outside the classroom.

Unlike traditional pedagogies, Design Thinking is a human-centered, innovative approach to problem-solving. Placing emphasis on user-centeredness, integrated team communication, as well as cooperation and idea exchange among interdisciplinary talents, design thinking has been shown to enhance learning and promote innovation.

At CLT, we work with faculty members to integrate design thinking into their curriculum and teaching practices to enhance student engagement and promote creativity across disciplines.

DESIGN THINKING FELLOWSHIP INITIATIVE

As part of the AUC Centennial, The Center for Learning and Teaching, with the support of the office of the Associate Provost for Research, Creativity and Innovation, has designed an immersive year-long fellowship program for educators as design thinking coaches and innovation enablers. The selected cohort is currently undergoing design thinking training, coaches training and academic integration training and consultations throughout the duration of the fellowship. Design Thinking fellows are expected to integrate this innova-
tive approach to problem solving into the curriculum to foster real-life experiential learning opportunities for students. This initiative is in line with the Quality of Education and Innovation Pillars in the Centennial AUC Strategic Plan.

DESIGN THINKING BOOTCAMPS

In line with our effort to enhance the quality of education and innovation at AUC, CLT frequently offers immersive design thinking bootcamps to AUC faculty, staff members and both undergraduate and graduate students. In previous bootcamps, CLT has partnered with challenge providers from both business and societal worlds. We help our partners solve their complex challenges through the user-centered, multi-disciplinary collaborative nature of design thinking.

The bootcamps provide participants with practical experience, where they get a chance to apply their technical, problem solving and collaboration skills to designing innovative solutions to real-life challenges. This help us in closing the widening gap between industry and academia, and provide real value to both our participants and challenge partners.
WHAT IS DESIGN THINKING?

Design Thinking is an anthropological approach to problem solving that combines practices from ethnography and design to generate user-centered solutions that are resource feasible and economically viable. Design thinking is practiced by fortune 500 companies, universities, governments and NGOs across the world to identify hidden opportunities, generate hidden insights, and design user-centered innovative products, services and solutions to some of the world’s most complex businesses, governance and social challenges.

Design research techniques can go much deeper than historical data and market research, which are only capable of scratching the surface. By designing human-centered empathy, observation and immersion research, we are able to identify not just what people do, but how and why they do it. Every action that people engage in has a deeper social or emotional meaning to them, even though they often lack the tools to articulate those connections. At the core of every successful design thinking story is a state of customer intimacy, a deep understanding of users’ or customers’ unarticulated needs. Equipped with empathy, ideation, experimentation and prototyping skills, design thinking practitioners embrace the unknown and navigate through ambiguity towards clarity.
Design is a process that starts with discovery and ends with a user-centered offering that solves one of the user’s most pressing problems. In its simplest form, design thinking is an iterative process, that starts with finding inspiration by immersing in the challenge space and truly understanding the user’s tensions and pains, to generating multiple solutions, designed to alleviate those pains, to implementing the most promising solutions through an iterative build-test-evolve cycle.

The goal of the design framework is to help problem solvers embrace ambiguity, and face the unknown by slicing the challenge into smaller parts that you can tackle one at a time. The learning from each step then becomes the foundation of the next step.

During bootcamps, multidisciplinary teams dissect challenges provided by our partners, and under the mentorship of experienced design thinking coaches, develop innovative solutions to our partner’s pressing challenge. During the process, teams develop tangible prototypes for their ideas, and test them with actual users to inform the next iteration of their design. At the end of the engagement, each team prepares and delivers a final documentation of their solution, and the suggested next steps.
AUC, through The Center for Learning and Teaching, and the Hasso Plattner Institut - School of Design Thinking in Potsdam Germany, have signed a two-year MoU in July 2018. Under the scope of the MoU, CLT and HPI are collaborating on the design and delivery of future Design Thinking bootcamps at HPI D-School and AUC.