



# IDEAS worth TEACHING



THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

**2021 AWARDS**

This past year has seen challenges of historic proportions – from the global toll of the pandemic, to racial injustices that spurred a new reckoning over long-standing inequities, to the daily struggles to make ends meet that have grown in magnitudes and threaten the human dignity of those we call most essential or critical to keep society functioning. Even democratic processes, in the United States and more broadly, continue to be jeopardized by a rise in populism, polarization, and misinformation. Few can argue that serious cracks haven't appeared in our systems and institutions. Yet through great uncertainty and upheaval also comes opportunity for reawakening and new perspectives around what is possible.

We believe we are experiencing a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reposition the fundamental relationship between business and society. There is immense power in business practice – the collective and normalized decision-making across corporations and global markets – to affect health, economic and environmental inequities; to affect how governments function and how public goods are protected and sustained.

The [Aspen Institute Business & Society Program](#) has long focused on business education as a key lever of change. Here, students are equipped with the context, capacity, and skillset to make business decisions, and absorb 'conventional wisdom' about value and the purpose of the corporation. With our [Ideas Worth Teaching](#) initiative, we aim to elevate tools, resources and inspiration for teaching that helps prepare students to lead us into a world where environmental sustainability, strong democratic systems, and social and economic equity and inclusion are key determinants of true long-term success. Our annual Awards seek to highlight and bring deserved recognition to the visionary faculty who are leading examples of what is possible in management education.

## 2021 Awards

As we approach this opportunity to build a more just, resilient, and sustainable society, the 2021 Ideas Worth Teaching Awards will honor exceptional teaching that prepares students for their urgent roles in a drastically changed world, one that requires business to consider and act on challenges that extend well beyond the walls of the firm. Nominations for this Award will help the Aspen Institute Business & Society Program assemble a catalogue of winning courses that represent a breadth of concepts, issues and disciplines and together showcase what business education for a brighter future can look like.

As with past winners, the Awards will recognize courageous educators who are:

Prompting students to think expansively about the **purpose of the corporation** and their role in it – and empowering students to integrate purpose into their work and to act as **social intrapreneurs** to drive constructive change within firms.

Encouraging students to examine the **fundamental assumptions** that govern the current market system and explore **new definitions** of value, new business models, and new governance and management practices that value people over profits.

Reframing the context, metrics, and valuation tools that support **long-term decision-making** and alignment between business decisions and the health of society.

Recognizing business as a deeply human endeavor, and **integrating wisdom** from the liberal arts and social sciences into the business context so that leaders are better equipped to understand the complexities they face.

We welcome nominations for courses that address and give context to a broad array of topics. Those of particular interest include:

- The importance of **democracy and civic engagement** – and the role that business practice plays in supporting or dismantling
- How **trust and power** factor into relationships and decision-making both between employees and management but also between institutions, organizations, and communities
- Historical and current context around **racial injustice** and how to embed diversity, equity, and inclusion not only in HR practices, but in the DNA of the entire firm
- Business models that support **healthy ecosystems** and sustainable and regenerative use of resources
- Responsible and human-centric implementation of **new technology and new business models** (gig/platform economy, automation, AI, data use and privacy)
- Financial models and accounting frameworks that encourage **capital investment in sustainable and productive value creation** rather than extractive or rent-seeking activities

## Nomination Requirements

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The 2021 Ideas Worth Teaching Awards will focus on individual courses that address key problems in society and recognize educators creating **real movement and change in business education**.

We welcome and invite nominations from **all those familiar with the course**, including students, peer faculty and staff, and self-nominations from teaching faculty themselves.

We encourage nominations from **all geographies**—internationally as well as in the United States.

- Courses may be at either the Graduate or Undergraduate level
- Graduate-level courses must be listed in the course catalogue of an MBA or your institution's comparable degree; courses listed for an Executive MBA program are eligible
- Undergraduate courses must fulfill a requirement for a business-related major or minor
  - Note: An elective in the business school would apply, but an elective that only fulfills a general core requirement would not.*
- Courses must have been taught within the past two years (Fall 2019-Spring 2021)

## How We Evaluate the Courses

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Aspen Institute staff, with the support of a selected advisory board of business school faculty and business practitioners, evaluates each submission, asking three central questions:

1. Is this course a new take on an existing business school topic, or does it address new content not typically considered within the business school?
2. Does this course consider the social challenges we are facing now and in our near future?
3. How unique is the course design? Do assignments and projects help students acquire the knowledge, skills, insights, and sensitivities they will need as business decision-makers?

## Nomination Process

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To start, go to [IdeasWorthTeachingAwards.org](https://IdeasWorthTeachingAwards.org) and click on “Nominate a Course.” Please provide:

- Your contact information
- Short-answer response to why this course should be considered to win a 2021 Ideas Worth Teaching Award
- A copy of the course syllabus

*NB: because the syllabus is a key piece of our evaluation process, please provide a standalone document which outlines course objectives and learning outcomes, reading lists, class session topics, activities, assignments, etc. In the past, some submissions have included links to documents that are inaccessible to those outside the nominator's institution and are therefore not considered during the review process.*

- Contact information for the faculty involved in the development and teaching of the course

It has been a stressful, taxing, and unrelenting year, and we sincerely appreciate your effort, time, and energy in contributing to Ideas Worth Teaching, whether that be through your own classroom (or Zoom room), or identifying and uplifting others' courses. Thank you.

## Timeline

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Nomination Period: **March 4, 2021 - May 7, 2021**

Course Selection: **Summer 2021**

Public Announcement of Awards: **Fall 2021**

## Questions

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If you have questions about the nomination process or to confirm that a course is eligible, please contact us at [ideasworthteaching@aspeninstitute.org](mailto:ideasworthteaching@aspeninstitute.org).