Syllabus: FORE 6351 Futures Research
Fall 2025
Course Time/Location: Wednesdays, 5:30-8:30 pm US Central Time
Virtual Class on Zoom: https://uh-edu-cougarnet.zoom.us/j/9091039346?pwd=aklzajN0MEhNU1BBUGJmYnkxSjE2dz09&from=addon
Instructor: Andy Hines
Office Hours: Monday 9-11am, schedule by https://calendly.com/ahinesfuturist/office-hours
Contact: Please use Canvas email; if urgent: ahines@uh.edu

Futures Research covers our core approach to exploring the future. It is based primarily around our Framework Foresight process supplemented by many different variations, tools, and techniques. It covers the basic ways that professional futurists use to help people and organizations understand, map, and influence the future. It is organized around the six framework activities: framing, scanning, futuring, visioning, designing, and adapting. This is the core course for learning how to carry out a foresight project!

Objectives

The student will understand and become familiar with:
- The Framework Foresight process for exploring the future of a domain/topic
- Several methods for carrying out six framework activities
- Why and how to select a particular method

Required Texts
- Andy Hines & Peter Bishop, *Thinking about the Future,* (2nd edition), 2015 Note: the 2nd edition has an additional chapter on Framework Forecasting that is worth having!
- Richard Slaughter & Andy Hines, *The Knowledge Base of Futures Studies 2020*. (note: it's $29.95, but free if you join APF as a student for $50). (link)

Optional
- Jerry Glenn & Ted Gordon (eds.), *Futures Research Methodology V3.0*, CD, Washington DC, Millennium Project, 2012. Order at https://millennium-project.org/publications/futures-research-methodology-version-3-0-2/

And each student will do a synopsis of a book about scenario planning. Some *suggestions* are provided below. You may choose another book. In either case, instructor approval is needed.

- Chermack, Tom. 2017. *Foundations of Scenario Planning: The Story of Pierre Wack*
- Cairns, George and George Wright. 2017. *Scenario Thinking: Preparing Your Organization for the Future in an Unpredictable World*, 2nd ed.
- De Ruijter, Paul. 2014 *Scenario-based strategy.*
- Hawken, Paul, Peter Schwartz & Jay Ogilvy. 1992. *Seven Tomorrows*.
- Kahane, Adam & Van Der Heijden. 2012. *Transformative scenario panning.*

- Lindgren, Mats & Bandhold, Hans. 2003. *Scenario Planning: The Link between Future and Strategy*.
- Ogilvy, Jay. 2002. *Creating Better Futures.*
- Ramirez, Rafael and Angela Wilkinson. 2016. *Strategic Reframing: The Oxford Scenario Planning Approach*.
- Wilkinson, Angela and Roland Kupers. 2015. *The Essence of Scenarios: Learning from the Shell Experience.*
- Ringland, Gill. 1998. *Scenario Planning: Managing for the Future* or *Scenarios in Public Policy*. 2002.
- Schwartz, Peter. 1996. *The Art of the Long View*.
- Van Der Heijden, Kees. 1996. *Scenarios: The Art of Strategic Conversation*. Or *The Sixth Sense*, 2002.
- Wilson, Ian & Bill Ralston. 2006. *The Scenario Planning Handbook*.

Interaction

Classes are held virtually on Wednesday evenings via Zoom (https://uh-edu-cougarnet.zoom.us/j/9091039346). If you can't make the virtual class, you can listen to an archived recording. Links to the recordings will be posted in the Zoom discussion forum in Canvas. Regular communication with the instructor should be through Canvas, but you can use regular email if it's urgent (ahines@uh.edu).

NOTE: please be sure to **download all materials you want to keep** as access to class materials is removed after the semester ends.

Activities and Assignments

See separate schedule document. The key assignment is that each student will pick a futures-related topic to develop a framework foresight project around. The pieces of the framework are chopped up into smaller bites in "assignments," so it is worked on it throughout the semester. Students will also submit 5 scanning hits relating to their framework project, and a review a book on scenarios. There are also weekly discussion posts.

Grading
The breakdown:
Assignments: Framework Foresight Project   65%
Assignments: Scanning hits (part of FF project)   15% (5@3% each)
Activities: Discussion postings   15%
Scenario Book Review: 5%

Criteria

Points	Category	Description
95	Excellent; 100 for super- awesome!	Demonstrates exceptional mastery of concepts, expression, and application of course materials. No improvable items
90	Very Good	Only one or two minor improvable items.

85	Solid Competence	Demonstrates good ability to meet specifications of assignments and evaluation criteria. Only one major *or* more than two minor improvable items
80	Meets Minimum Expectations	Demonstrates adequate performance on assignments and meeting evaluation criteria. More than one major improvable item.
75	Below Expectations	Some value, but serious deficiencies

Resubmitting Assignments

Students may re-submit assignments **one time** to make improvements based on instructor feedback. Please highlight your changes in a different color font!

Late Assignments

Assignments are given due dates in the schedule and in Canvas. Late assignments are deducted a one-time 10 point penalty and may be submitted any time thereafter with just that penalty. So, there is no good excuse not to submit an assignment!

Discussion Post Scoring

For discussion posts, it's a simple two point system: 2 points if you are on time, and one point if you are late, but you can post late right up until the final deadline for all work.

AI Policy:

The use of AI tools is permitted. Guidelines for the use of AI tools in this class follow, however, if at any time, departmental, College of Engineering or University of Houston policy differ from what is written here, the institutional policy takes precedence. It is **YOUR responsibility as a student** who has chosen to use these tools to keep abreast of any changes at the department, school, or university level.

You must cite the use of any AI Tool used in an assignment including the name of the tool(s), date, and the ratio of Human to AI contribution with description. Over time, this information will help inform the value of AI work to futurists.

Example:

ChatGPT+, July 21, 2025, 35% Human through prompt development, response verification, and revision of text/65% AI generated response.

Important notes about using large language models

- Fabrication. AI can lie and produce plausible sounding but incorrect information. Don't trust anything it says at face value. If it gives you a number or fact, assume it is wrong unless you either know the answer or can check with another source. You will be responsible for any errors or omissions provided by the tool(s) and the presence of such an error will result in an automatic, permanent 10-point grade deduction. It works best for topics you understand and can verify. Larger LLMs (like GPT-4) fabricate less, but all AIs fabricate to some degree.

- AI bias. AI can carry biases, stemming from its training data or human intervention. These biases vary across LLMs and can range from gender and racial biases to biases against particular viewpoints, approaches, or political affiliations. Each LLM has the potential for its own set of biases, and those biases can be subtle. You will need to critically consider answers and be aware of the potential for these sorts of biases.
- Privacy concerns. When data is entered into the AI, it can be used for future training. While ChatGPT offers a privacy mode that claims not to use input there for future AI training, the current state of privacy remains unclear for many models, and the legal implications are often uncertain. Do not share anything with AI that you want to keep private.

From: Harvard Business Publishing-Education, Sept 2023

Other policies

Academic honesty policy. All UH students are responsible for knowing the standards of academic honesty. Please refer to the UH catalog. Plagiarism, using research without citations or using a created production (such as other people's words) without quotations or citations, will result in a grade penalty or failure of the course. Internet sources must be credited according to the sites recommended citation guideline if available. If no citation guideline is provided by the web source, then the date, URL site owner, and author must be included with the web material used.

A note about accommodations: *Students who require individualized accommodations for this course must inform the professor and follow university procedures in order that appropriate arrangements can be made. For information about services provided by the Dart Center, please call 713.743.5400 or see the Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center website for more information.*

Incompletes: A grade of "I" is given only in cases of documented emergency or special circumstances late in the semester, provided that the student has been making satisfactory progress. An Incomplete Grade Contract must be completed.

Last day to **drop** a course or withdraw with a 'W' is **November 19, 2025.**