

## Syllabus

The AI Future: Are We Opening Pandora's Box or Creating an "Age of Abundance"?

6 weeks, In person Columbine United Church, Thursday AM

Facilitator: Stephen Bennett

Week 1: Introduction – The Modern Enigma: Innovation, Automation and AI

This session will explore the modern enigma of AI and the major cultural disruptions that ushered in the Digital Age including the impact of globalization, automation, population growth and the exponential growth in energy use.

Week 2: Human Ascendancy: Forty-five Thousand Years of Innovation

Week two covers the history of human innovation and adaptation, focusing on the exponential growth in energy use and population since the last ice age culminating in the digital age and AI. The class will cover a broad range of innovations and their impact, finally leading up to the Industrial Age and the transition to the Digital Age.

Week 3: The New Capitalism: Democratized Finance, Platform Work, and Global Capital Ownership

Disruptive forces led to the transition beginning with the agrarian revolution and continuing through the Industrial revolution. New disruptions are now making the industrial age irrelevant. This session will focus on creation of capital, capital markets and capitalism pre-industrial age and the disruptive factors that are in now play today.

Week 4: The Service Industry: Waiting tables and Writing Code.

A category of work particularly impacted by the disruptions of the recent past is the service industry. The category grew at a phenomenal rate parallel with the demise of the industrial age. The service industry, according to the department of labor, includes a broad range of workers and jobs from wait staff and hospitality workers to designers and bankers. The category of service has grown substantially when compared to more traditional categories including agriculture, agriculture, construction labor or manufacturing and has become more precarious.

Week 5: The Precarity of the Gig Economy and the Perpetual Quest for Work/Life Balance.

Today the pressure to work long or nonstandard hours for most workers has not declined but increased. This is especially true for jobs in retail, hospitality, health, and personal services but other areas are affected including coders and engineers. We will discuss some of the pressures, the effect of stressors and we will investigate the current thinking on a work-life balance.

Week 6: The Future - Homo Sapiens in the new paradigm

This final session will focus on “what if’s” looking at some of the future possibilities and potential disruptors and implications for our way of life. The question raised in the course title will be the primary emphasis: With AI are we opening pandora’s box or creating an age of ‘Age of Abundance.’