

SYLLABUS

Course description

The course belongs to the class “caratterizzante” in the MA in Eco-Social Design (LM-12). This course is a mandatory optional subject in the area “**Make & Intervene**”.

Course title	Social Interaction Design - Interface Design Area: Make & Intervene
Course code	96106
Scientific sector	ICAR/13 – Disegno Industriale
Degree	Master in Eco-Social Design (LM-12)
Semester	II
Year	1st and 2nd
Credits	6
Modular	No
Lecturer	Dr Eleonora Mencarini e-mail: eleonora.mencarini@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/design-art/academic-staff/person/42043-eleonora-mencarini
Scientific sector of the lecturer	ICAR/13
Teaching language	English
Teaching assistant (if any)	-
Office hours	Face to face after the lesson or online. Please, set first an appointment by email.
Total lecturing hours	60
Total hours of self-study and/or other individual educational activities	about 120
Attendance	Strongly recommended. To not-attending students: please contact the lecturer.
Prerequisites	-
Course page	

Course description

The course will explore the topic of “Social Interaction” starting by breaking down the term and exploring what it covers. Particular attention will be given to tangible technology and its potential to enable or hamper meaningful interactions for social, political, and critical dialogue and progress. We will reflect and discuss what lies at the core of meaningful interactions and which approaches trigger dialogue and action between humans and non-humans. Then, we will move towards a general discussion about digitalization and its impact on eco-social transformation. After these preliminary reflections, we will directly step into the phase of making. We will learn the various methods and approaches of interaction design and user experience for codesign (this will be the occasion to investigate participatory design issues too); envisioning, which will help us express utopian and dystopian ideas; paper prototyping; prototype testing and users’ feedback integration. We will iteratively refine the prototypes, which, at the end of the course, will be experienceable by other participants in public or semi-public spaces of Bolzano. On the one hand, we will gain knowledge by doing, testing, and building, and, on the other hand, through analytical reflection. The course offers the opportunity to integrate the student’s semester or master project work upon matching the requirements, that is, in this course, students can design, develop, and test social interactions that are part of their semester project.

Educational objectives

From a theoretical point of view, students will be able to:

- Learn about the extent of possible social interactions
- Know the advantages and disadvantages that tangible technology can bring to social interactions
- Discuss the impact of digitalization on society
- Learn about practice-based research approaches and projects
- Discuss scientific publications related to the topics and research approaches addressed during the class

From a practice point of view, students will be able to:

- Pick the most suitable methods for their design project, according to its contexts, users, activities.
- Develop concepts based on empirical data
- Collaborate with fellow students to develop a concept and a prototype
- Learn how to prototype and contextualize the concepts in a fast way
- Make the concept experienceable through methods such as scenario play
- Combine everyday materials with hardware and software tools for prototyping
- Present the prototype concept to the fellow students as well as to the intended user group (local initiative, organization, municipality)
- Plan and conduct tests of the prototype with the intended user group
- Implement feedback from users in a new stage of the prototype until the final one

From a documentation point of view, students will be able to:

- Highlight how their design process reflects the theoretical insights discussed during the class
- Communicate convincingly through a variety of modalities (written, oral, visual)
- Document and present the overall process clearly; show and name decision points; reflect critically.

List of topics covered

- Social interactions, both mediated by technologies and not

- Advantages and limitations of tangible interfaces to enable social interactions
- Critical reflection of digitalization of society – which role to take as an eco-social designer
- User experience methods to analyze interfaces usage
- Iterative development of experimental interfaces according to the interaction design approach
- Concept methods like “scenario play” combined with prototyping methods like “paper prototyping”
- Research-Through-Design approach: how to combine empirical insights with the conceptual framing of practice-based research
- Participatory design
- Expressing your ideas in a meaningful way

Teaching format

Practice-based teaching with a balanced mix of frontal input, discussion rounds, experiments, method sessions, experts’ input, group presentations, reviews.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

The students will reflect on the concept of “social interaction” and which interactions should be digitally mediated and which ones should not. This course will show how to design interfaces for mediated human-to-human relations as well as for human and non-human interactions. Examples of new hybrid interactions will be provided. By adopting different practice-based research approaches, students will transfer their insights and ideas into physical, digital, hybrid, or analog prototypes.

Applying knowledge and understanding

The students will learn how to transfer qualitative insights into rough paper prototypes. In this way, they can gain a deeper understanding by both materializing their ideas and receiving feedback from others. In this way, the initial prototype will evolve into a more elaborate interface.

Making judgments

By testing the prototypes, the students will experience the users' sense-making of the interaction and its outcome and integrate the user feedback in their research process. Furthermore, by adopting a Research-through-Design framework, the students will be able to generate theoretical insights about their design.

Communication skills

By presenting their outcomes to fellow students, users, and experts, students will learn how to communicate their design choices, like the intended usage, the choice of material, or interaction pattern.

Learning skills

By reflecting on their design process, the students will learn about the participatory process and methods as well as the advantages of rapid prototyping through everyday materials.

Assessment: oral, video, and written

- Oral: a presentation of the final prototype and the overall design process that has led to it. A template will be provided. Plus, critical discussion of the project focused on the choice of interaction patterns and satisfaction of needs related to the intended user group.
- Video: an explanatory video (max 2-minute long) showing the prototype in its context.

- Written: concise documentation of the pivotal steps of the process with an explanation of the motivations behind the design.

Assessment language: English

Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks

- Formal requirements like presence, adherence to deadlines
- Originality, coherence, and conceptual qualities of the design project in relation to its aims, interaction pattern used, context addressed
- Critical reflection on the project outcome and the topics discussed during the class
- Ability to work in a team, with partners and/or experts (social skills)
- Effectiveness in communicating both process and concept

Required readings

- Bannon, L. J., & Ehn, P. (2012). "Design matters in participatory design". In *Routledge handbook of participatory design*, pp. 37-63.
- Chen, D. S., Cheng, L. L., Hummels, C., & Koskinen, I. (2016). "Social design: An introduction". In *International Journal of Design*, 10(1), pp. 1-5.
- Ehn, P. (2008). "Participation in design things". In *Participatory Design Conference (PDC)*, pp. 92-101. ACM Digital Library.
- Findeli, Brouillet, Moineau, Tarrago (2008). "Research Through Design and Transdisciplinarity. A Tentative Contribution to the Methodology of Design Research". In *Focussed - Current Design Research Projects and Methods*. Mount Gurten, Bern Switzerland. Kap. 4, S. pp. 67–91.
- Gaver, W. (2012). "What should we expect from research through design?". In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, pp. 937-946.
- Hornecker, E., & Buur, J. (2006). "Getting a grip on tangible interaction: a framework on physical space and social interaction". In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on Human Factors in computing systems*, pp. 437-446.
- Kurvinen, E., Koskinen, I., & Battarbee, K. (2008). "Prototyping social interaction". In *Design Issues*, 24(3), pp. 46-57.
- Sanders, E. B. N. (2002). "From user-centered to participatory design approaches". In *Design and the social sciences*, pp. 18-25. CRC Press.
- Sanders, E. B. N., & Stappers, P. J. (2014). "Probes, toolkits and prototypes: three approaches to making in codesigning". In *CoDesign: International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, 10(1), pp. 5–14. doi: 10.1080/15710882.2014.888183
- Wellman (2002) "Little Boxes, Glocalization, and Networked Individualism". In M. Tanabe, P. van den Besselaar, T. Ishida (Eds.): *Digital Cities*, LNCS 2362, pp. 10-25, 2002. Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg.
- Zimmerman, J., Forlizzi, J., & Evenson, S. (2007). "Research through design as a method for interaction design research in HCI". In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on Human factors in computing systems*, pp. 493-502.

Supplementary readings

- DiSalvo, C. (2009). "Design and the Construction of Publics". In *Design issues*, 25(1), pp. 48-63.
- Dourish, P. (2004). *Where the action is: the foundations of embodied interaction*. MIT press.