

## SYLLABUS

### course description

The course belongs to the class “caratterizzante” (alternativa) in the MA in Eco-Social Design (LM-12). This course is a compulsory optional subject in the area “**Observe, analyse & apply**”

Course title	<b>Social Studies of Design</b> <b>Area: Observe, analyse &amp; apply</b>
Course code	<b>96112</b>
Scientific sector	<b>SPS/08</b>
Degree	<b>Master in Eco-Social Design (LM-12)</b>
Semester	<b>II</b>
Year	<b>1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup></b>
Credits	<b>6</b>
Modular	<b>No</b>
Lecturer	<b>Ingrid Kofler</b> office F4.05, e-mail: <a href="mailto:Ingrid.Kofler2@unibz.it">Ingrid.Kofler2@unibz.it</a> , Webpage <a href="https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/design-art/academic-staff/person/18815-ingrid-kofler">https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/design-art/academic-staff/person/18815-ingrid-kofler</a>
Scientific sector of the lecturer	<b>SPS/08</b>
Teaching language	<b>English</b>
Teaching assistant (if any)	-
Office hours	<b>After lesson</b>
Teaching language	<b>English</b>
Total lecturing hours	<b>30</b>
Total hours of self-study and/or other individual educational activities	<b>about 120</b>
Attendance	<b>recommended</b>
Prerequisites	-

## Course description

The course intends to introduce the students to the various relations existing between social sciences and design. The course will provide students with general knowledge about social sciences and sociology. The course also intends to introduce the students to the ways design has been tackling, is tackling and is challenging social sciences and sociology and what are common practices and intersections. Inter- and transdisciplinarity in social sciences and qualitative research methods are questioned. The course will start by introducing students to questioning “the social” as it has been traditionally used within social sciences, sociology and within design, while also integrating the annual theme. The rest of the course will address different approaches and theories as well as practical examples addressing different issues, such as: what are social relations and social networks, what is social network analysis and the actor-network theory; how conflicts and controversies and their mapping at global and local level can be an example of integration of social sciences and design; how social sciences can provide notions, concepts and methodological tools to describe and analyze artifacts and objects and their relation to the social; how future studies and anticipation are closely related to the design practice and research. By addressing these issues the course will introduce sociological notions and categories - as well as research methods, techniques and tools. Part of the course will be offered in cooperation with Design Research and Interaction Design. The course program is adaptive and foresees support of the student’s main projects.

## Educational objectives

### Students will be able to:

- *collaborate with other designers and experts in order to develop and implement an integrated project;*
- *take into account the social relevance of their interventions occurring within the tension between global and local dimensions;*
- *take into account the social aspects that characterize a territory, a community and a group of people;*
- *integrate social aspects in project design while considering the tension, which occurs between the local and the global dimensions;*
- *develop an individual and critical way of thinking, leading to critical judgements and self-assessments;*
- *communicate, multilingually in a convincing way, through a variety of modalities (written, oral, visual);*
- *talk to experts about the project;*
- *read experts’ and academic articles, studies and reports related to one’s own project issues and integrate those analyses with one’s own project design;*
- *organize a research project while identifying relevant studies and researches, experts to collaborate with, methods and instruments to adopt;*
- *outline the cultural and social territorial framework where the students will intervene;*
- *set up a field work or an inquiry in order to define the socioeconomic framework, by exchanging ideas with researchers and experts’ students will collaborate with;*

- *understand specialist literature so as to integrate it within their own research project;*

**Knowledge will be acquired in the following fields:**

- the relations between social sciences and design and the main methods, techniques and tools through which such relations can be carried out, developed and transformed.

**List of topics covered**

- Action
- Social change
- Artifacts
- Social Networks
- Micro/Macro
- Practice
- Social Capital
- Structure
- Future studies

**Teaching format**

Most of the classes will consist in frontal lectures and discussions. In few cases, the discussion will be based on class exercises, most of the times on home assignments, usually readings and experiments. Some classes will be tackled through an interdisciplinary co-presence with other teachers.

**Learning outcomes**

*Knowledge and understanding*

Students will learn how social sciences and design can productively dialogue.

At the end of the course students should be able to understand their interventions in relation to the broader coordinates of the social sciences' debates and to position their intervention in relation to such debates, also in order to choose the most appropriate research methods and collaborators.

*Applying knowledge and understanding*

At the end of the course students should be able to find, understand and integrate social research into their design projects, as ground for their project's choices and features.

At the end of the course students should be able to dialogue with social scientists in order to discuss the sociological aspects of their projects.

At the end of the project students should be able to discuss and choose the appropriate method to gather data about their design projects.

*Making judgments*

At the end of the course students should be able to assess the relevance and value of a social sciences and their methods for design and vice-versa.

*Communication skills*

At the end of the course students should be able to communicate with social scientists about their design projects.

### Learning skills

At the end of the course students should be able to get deeper into the social sciences' debates and to learn about specific social research related to the specificities of their design projects.

### **Assessment**

Written and oral.

Students will be assessed considering:

- the results of the home assignments assigned during the course
- participation in class activities and exercises
- the ability to integrate course topics and issues into the final presentation of the design project

**Assessment language:** English

### **Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks**

Evaluation criteria will consider the ability to compare essays among them or with empirical findings and/or observations and/or critical reflections about social phenomena. More in general evaluation criteria consider not only how the assignment brief has been fulfilled but also the capacity to take into account other parts of the course and to make connections among them, as well as with possible personal experiences as design student.

### **Required readings**

- Berger, P. L. (1999). Invitation to sociology. New York: Anchor Books.
- Gidley, J. M. (2017). The future: A very short introduction. Oxford University Press.
- Kofler, I. (2023). Beyond Disciplinary Constraints: Designing Transdisciplinary Research and Collaboration in Real-World Laboratories. *Societies*, 13(9), 205.
- Lupton, D. (2018). Towards design sociology. *Sociology Compass*, 12(1).
- Mills, C. Wright (1959). The sociological imagination. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Venturini, Tommaso, et al. Designing controversies and their publics. *Design issues*, 2015, vol. 31, no. 3, p. 74-87.
- Yaneva, Alben; Heaphy, Liam (2012): Urban Controversies and the Making of the Social. *Architectural Research Quarterly*. vol. 16, issue 1, pp. 29-36.

Further readings will be communicated the first day of class.