

Syllabus

Course description

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| Course title | Theory of Media and Cultural Consumption |
| Course code | 97033 |
| Scientific sector | SPS/08 sociologia dei processi culturali e comunicativi |
| Degree | Bachelor in Design and Art (L-4) |
| Teaching language | English |
| Semester | II |
| Year | 1st, 2nd or 3rd |
| Credits | 5 |
| Modular | No |

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| Total lecturing hours | 30 |
| Total hours of self-study and / or other individual educational activities | about 95 |
| Attendance | not compulsory |
| Prerequisites | - |
| Course page | - |

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| Specific educational objectives and course description | <p>The course belongs to the class “caratterizzante” in the curriculum in Design and in the curriculum in Art.</p> <p>Course description:</p> <p>The aim of the course is to provide students with ü concepts, categories, models and methods in order to observe, describe and compare everyday practices related to consumption of media as well as of ordinary goods. In order to do so, the course will privilege methodology over theory.</p> <p>Theory will be addressed mainly in order to reconsider, reformulate and rearticulate the main concepts defining the course: culture, communication, media and consumption.</p> <p>Such reconsideration, reformulation and rearticulation is needed because these concepts, inherited from the 19th and 20th century social sciences and humanities, are perceived as more and more inadequate in order to account for today’s social phenomena and practices, especially those related to design and to the new art forms.</p> <p>In this first part, particular attention will be given to distinguishing among mediation, mediazation and mediatization.</p> <p>In the second part of the course, the “domestication”</p> |
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| | <p>approach (see bibliography) to media and technologies will be introduced, together with ethnography as main research method.</p> <p>Through the concept of “domestication” students will learn how to take into account and how to account for everyday practices of exchange, appropriation, use, enjoyment, disposal of artifacts.</p> <p>Students will thus be sensitized to what happens to artifacts once they leave the hands of their designers, creators, producers.</p> <p><i>Educational objectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the acquisition of the basic knowledge so as to be able to look critically at their own work and to deal with the complexities of contemporary society • to have the ability to grasp the main phenomena that characterise today's society and to know how to look at these comparatively, and to develop appropriate solutions in terms of the proposal / response of the project • knowledge of the important sociological, semiotic and anthropological aspects • knowledge of the important sociological aspects of media and cultural consumption • know how to apply methods of empirical research coming from the socio-cultural sciences within design or artistic projects • know how to present analysis of social phenomena, in written or oral form • know how to apply the research methods and results in the project to the various areas of the project itself • developed a good independent judgment, both in the critical evaluation of their work and in the ability to use the appropriate descriptive/analytical tools with respect to the contexts where they are going to apply their own practice • communicate at a professional level and argue the reasons for their choices and justify them from a formal, technical, scientific and theoretical point of view |
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| Lecturer | Alvise Mattozzi office F4.04, e-mail alvise.mattozzi@unibz.it , tel. +39 0471 015227, webpage http://www.unibz.it/en/design-art/people/StaffDetails.html?personid=11597&hstf=11597 |
| Scientific sector of the lecturer | SPS/08 |
| Teaching language | English |
| Office hours | Friday, 15.00 – 17.00 |
| Teaching assistant | - |
| Office hours | - |

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| List of topics covered | culture, communication, media (mediation, mediazation, mediatization), consumption, practices, domestication, ethnography |
| Teaching format | Frontal lectures with discussions, some exercises in class, assignments and readings at home |

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| Expected learning outcomes | <p><i>Knowledge and understanding</i> Students will learn to comparatively discuss major social science's categories and to understand how these categories can be applied for descriptions within qualitative methods of social research.</p> <p><i>Applying knowledge and understanding</i> At the end of the course students will know how to describe practices of consumption and how to use knowledge about these practices in order to design and/or create artifacts that can take part or subvert those practices.</p> <p><i>Making judgements</i> Students will learn to assess the empirical adequacy of certain concepts and the empirical grounding of certain projects</p> <p><i>Communication skills</i> Student will learn how to communicate results of a qualitative social science research in relation to a design or art project</p> <p><i>Learning skills</i> Students will be able to autonomously deepen the knowledge of social research methods in order to use them within design or art research</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>For attending students: Written: Assessment will be carried during the course through various written assignments and multiple choice tests – which can be taken also at the end of the course – and a final written assignment summarizing what has been done during the course.</p> <p>Assignments are related to the comparison of scientific articles and to ethnography. Multiple-choice tests are related to the content of the lessons and of the slides. The final assignment is an ethnography of domestication accompanied by a reflection about the redesign of the ethnographed artefact(s).</p> <p>The level of participation to the course in the form of questions and engagement in discussions in class, in the form of taking part to revisions during office hours as well</p> |
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| | <p>as animating the Moodle platform, is also considered for the assessment.</p> <p>For non-attending students: A written test consisting of ten questions (5 requiring a medium length answer and five requiring a short answer) about the bibliography list below.</p> |
| <p>Assessment language</p> | <p><i>The same as the teaching language</i></p> |
| <p>Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks</p> | <p>For attending students: Students will be assessed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - five home assignments to be delivered during the course - four multiple-choice tests to be taken during the course or at its end - a final assignment about an ethnography of domestication and a redesign proposal based on the ethnography <p>Home assignments will be graded through a 0 to 2,5 scale, the sum of maximum scores for the home assignment is 12,5. Each of the ten questions composing each multiple-choice test will be graded through a -0,25 (wrong) / 0 (not answered) / 0,25 (right) scale. The maximum score for each multiple-choice test is 2,5, the maximum score for all the 4 multiple-choice test is 10. The final assignment will be graded through a 0 to 10 scale.</p> <p>The final mark will be determined by sum of the marks obtained for each assignment.</p> <p>Participation in class will be graded through 0 to 2 scale. The points for participation will be added to the mark coming out from the written assessment.</p> <p>Evaluation criteria change for every home assignment but tend to always consider the ability to show differences and analogies among two or more essays. More in general evaluation criteria consider not only the way in which 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 eventual personal experience as design or art students.</p> <p>In the final assignment, one of the criteria used for evaluation regards the capacity to manage the various concepts and categories introduced during the course.</p> <p>For non-attending students: Each medium answer question counts from 0 to 5 points,</p> |

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| | <p>each short answer question counts from 0 to 2 points. Besides the exactness of the answers, the other relevant criteria used for evaluation are the capacity to take into account other parts of the bibliography not strictly related to the specific question and to make connections among them.</p> |
| <p>Required readings</p> | <p>For attending students (some of the readings could change and some art related readings could be added, the final list will be presented on the first day of class):</p> <p>First assignment - a hand-out with definitions of culture will be provided in class</p> <p>Second Assignment - C. Geertz, "Deep Play. Notes on the Balinese Cockfight", <i>Daedalus</i>, 101/1, Winter, 1972, pp. 1-37.</p> <p>Third assignment - Cap. 2 and cap. 3 of P. Watzlawick, J. Beavin, D. D. Jackson, <i>Pragmatics of Human Communication</i>, Norton, 1967.</p> <p>Fourth Assignment - a list of articles about "domestication" from which to choose will be provided in class.</p> <p>Fifth Assignment - W. Griswold, G. Mangione and T. E. McDonnell, "Objects, Words, and Bodies in Space: Bringing Materiality into Cultural Analysis", <i>Qualitative Sociology</i>, 36, 2013, pp. 343-364</p> <p>Class Assignment - Quentin Fiore, Jerome Agel and Marshall McLuhan, <i>The Medium is the Massage</i>, Bantam, 1967 (read at least the first third)</p> <p>For non-attending students: - T. Berker, M. Hartmann, Y. Punie and K. J. Ward (eds.), <i>Domestication of Media and Technology</i>, Open University Press, 2006. - N. Couldry, <i>Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice</i>, Polity, 2012 (except Ch. 5, "Network Society, Network Politics?" and Ch. 6, "Media and The Transformation of Capital and Authority)</p> |

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| | <p>- R. Sassatelli, <i>Consumer Culture. History, Theory and Politics</i>, Sage, 2007.</p> |
| <p>Supplementary readings</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - culture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ P. Descola, <i>Beyond Nature and Culture</i>, Chicago University Press, 2013. ○ D. Hebdige, <i>Subculture. The Meaning of Style</i>, Routledge, 1979. ○ J. Lotman, B. Uspensky and G. Mihaychuk, "On the Semiotic Mechanism of Culture", <i>New Literary History</i>, 9/2, 1978, pp. 211-232. ○ I. Reed, J. C. Alexander and L. Chavenson Saden, <i>Meaning and Method: The Cultural Approach to Sociology</i>, Routledge, 2015. ○ M. Strathern, "No Nature, No Culture: The Hagen Case.", in <i>Nature, Culture and Gender</i>, Cambridge University Press, 1980, pp. 174–222. ○ M. Strathern, "Future Kinship and the Study of Culture" in <i>Futures</i>, 27/4, 1995, pp. 423-435. ○ M. Wray, <i>Cultural Sociology: An Introductory Reader</i>, Norton, 2014. - communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ J. Fiske, <i>Introduction to Communication Studies</i>, Routledge, 1990. - media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ J. D. Bolter, <i>Remediation. Understanding New Media</i>, the MIT Press, 2000. ○ N. Couldry, <i>Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice</i>, Polity, 2012. ○ R. Eugeni, <i>Semiotica dei media. Le forme dell'Esperienza</i>, Carocci, 2013. ○ Krauss ○ T. Gillespie, P. J. Boczkowski and Kirsten A. Foot, <i>Media Technologies. Essays on Communication, Materiality and Society</i>, the MIT Press, 2014. - mediations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A. Gell, "Vogel's Net. Traps as Artworks and Artworks as Traps", <i>Journal of Material Culture</i>, 1/1, 1996, pp. 15-38. ○ B. Latour, "Where are the missing masses? Sociology of few mundane artifacts", in W. Bijker and J. Law (eds.), <i>Shaping Technologies / Building Societies</i>, the MIT Press, 1992, pp. 225-258. |

- B. Latour, "On interobjectivity", *Mind, culture and activity*, 3/4, 1996, pp. 228-245.
- B. Latour, "A Collective of Humans and Nonhumans", in B. Latour, *Pandora's Hope*, Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 174-215.
- A. Mattozzi and T. Piccioni, "A Depasteurization of Italy? Mediations of Consumption and the Enrollment of Consumers within the Raw-Milk Network", *Sociologica*, 3, 2012.
- N. Oudshoorn and T. Pinch, *How users matter. The Co-Construction of Users and Technology*, the MIT Press 2003.
- G. Simmel, "The Handle", *The Hudson Review*, 11/3, 1958, pp. 371-378.

- consumption:

- A. Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things*, Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- P. du Guy et al. (eds.), *Doing Cultural studies. The story of the Sony Walkman*. Open University Press, 1997.
- H. Jenkins, *Textual Poachers. Television Fans and Participatory Culture*, Routledge, 1992.
- R. Sassatelli, *Consumer Culture. History, Theory and Politics*, Sage, 2007.
- D. Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, Polity, 1997;

- domestication:

- T. Berker, M. Hartmann, Y. Punie and K. J. Ward (eds.), *Domestication of Media and Technology*, Open University Press, 2006.
- E. Gombrich, "Pictures for the Home", in E. Gombrich, *The Uses of Images*, Phaidon, 1999, pp. 108-135.
- M. Lie and K. Sorensen (eds.), *Making Technology our Own*, Scandinavian University Press, 1996.
- R. Silverstone and E. Hirsch (eds.), *Consuming Technologies. Media and Information in Domestic Spaces*, Routledge, 1992.
- R. Silverstone and L. Haddon, "Design and the domestication of information and communication technologies: technical change and everyday life", in R. Mansell, and R. Silverstone (eds.), *Communication*

by Design: The Politics of Information and Communication Technologies. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, pp. 44-74.

- ethnography and research methods:
 - A. Crabtree, M. Rouncefield, and P. Tolmie, *Doing Design Ethnography*, Springer, 2012.
 - M. Hannula, J. Suoranta, T. Vadén, *Artistic Research. Theories, Methods and Practices*, Academy of Fine Arts of Helsinki and University of Gothenburg/ArtMonitor, 2005.
 - I. Koskinen, J. Zimmerman, T. Binder, J. Redstrom, and S. Wensveen. *Design Research Through Practice: From the Lab, Field, and Showroom*, Morgan Kaufmann, 2012.
 - B. Laurel and P. Lunenfeld, *Design Research. Methods and Perspectives*, the MIT press, 2003.
 - N. Nova, *Beyond Design Ethnography: How Designers Practice Ethnographic Research*, SHS Publishing, 2012.
 - G. Gobo and A. Molle, *Doing Ethnography*, SAGE, 2017.