

SYLLABUS

Course description

The course belongs to the class “caratterizzante” (obbligatoria) in the MA in Eco-Social Design (LM-12). This course is a compulsory subject in the area “Skills & Technologies”

Course title	Interface Design Area: Skills & Technologies
Course code	96003
Scientific sector	INF/01 – Discipline tecnologiche e ingegneristiche
Degree	Master in Eco-Social Design (LM-12)
Semester	II
Year	1st and 2nd
Credits	6
Modular	No
Lecturer	Jennifer Schubert office F4.01
Scientific sector of the lecturer	-
Teaching language	English
Teaching assistant (if any)	-
Office hours	By appointment
Teaching language	English
Total lecturing hours	60
Total hours of self-study and/or other individual educational activities	about 120
Attendance	recommended
Prerequisites	-
Course page	http://pro2.unibz.it/projects/blogs/essen/

Course description

The course will dive into the topic of “Interface Design” in an experimental manner. After a general discussion about the term “interface” and practice-based research approaches, we will step outside the university to gain empirical data about everyday interfaces and their usage. This experience will be the basis for future interface ideas. With those ideas in mind, we will dive into the phase of making. Design methods will help to express those ideas in a materialised way and we gain knowledge by doing, testing and building. Through a range of mockups and scenarios, we will grasp the topic of experimental interfaces. By testing and integrating feedback, we will iteratively develop one unique interface, which will be experienceable by others in the end of class.

Educational objectives

Students will be able to:

- discuss and dismantle the term “interface”;
- learn about practice-based research approaches and projects;
- read and discuss papers related to the research approach of the class;
- adapt the own design process related to the theoretical insights;
- gain and analyse empirical data by applying qualitative research methods like observations and interviews;
- develop concepts based on empirical data;
- collaborate with fellow students to develop their own project or go one step further with an already existing project;
- learn design methods how to prototype and contextualize the concepts in a fast way;
- make the concept experienceable with everyday materials;
- reflect if concepts will contribute to the local development while considering the global context (“glocalized dimension” by Barry Wellman, 2002);
- use hardware and software tools for designing and producing prototypes;
- read articles and reports and integrate those analyses within the project;
- prepare and present the prototypes as well as the overall concept to fellow students but also the intended user group;
- plan and conduct user tests of the interface prototype with the intended user group
- implement feedback from users in the new stage of prototype;
- communicate multilingually in a convincing way, through a variety of modalities (written, oral, visual);
- document the overall process and insights in a visual and comprehensible way (documentation template will be provided);
- develop and present one final prototype with an experienceable interface

Knowledge will be acquired in the following fields:

- interface-design and user-experience design;

List of topics covered

- Research-Through-Design-Approach (Findeli, Jonas 2004): How to combine empirical insights with the conceptual framing of practice-based research
- The process of “Analysis, Projection, Synthesis” (Jonas, 2004) to leave the common path behind and think outside the existing categories and assumptions
- *Concept* methods like “scenario play” combined with *prototyping* methods like “paper prototyping”

- *User experience* methods to analyse the usage of interfaces
- iterative development of experimental interfaces
- learning by materialising (Ehn, 2008)
- expressing your ideas in a meaningful way

Teaching format

Practice-based teaching with a balanced mix of frontal input, discussion rounds, experiments, method sessions, expert inputs, group presentations and reviews

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

The students will reflect about the term “interface” and how to design surfaces “in between”. Through passing a practical based research approach they will reflect their ideas and the transfer of insights into 3D prototypes.

Applying knowledge and understanding

The students will learn how to transfer qualitative empirical data into rough paper prototypes, gain insights through materialising their ideas and through that gain feedback from others. In this way a more elaborated interface can evolve.

Making judgments

By testing the interface prototypes the students will judge the usage and adaption by users and analyse the outcome. By providing a Research-Through-Design-framework (Findeli, Jonas 2004) the students will integrate the user feedback in their research process and generate theoretical insights about their design.

Communication skills

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

Learning skills

Through the reflection of their process the students will learn about the participatory processes and methods as well as the advantages of a rapid prototyping through everyday materials.

Assessment

Oral and Written:

- Oral, audiovisual and/or physical presentation of the students prototypes (inside or outside their main design project)
- Critical discussion of the project, in particular related to the choice of interaction patterns and satisfaction of needs related to the intended user group
- In the end of the class every student or team should provide a Documentation about the overall process from the beginning to the end of the class (a template will be provided)

Assessment language: English

Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks

- Formal requirements like presence, adherence of deadlines, etc.
- Originality, coherence and conceptual qualities of the design project, in relation to the context and the aims of the project; in particular related to the use of the interaction pattern and the addressed context

- Effectiveness in communicating the project
- critical reflection on outcome and all topics discussed in the class
- Ability to work in a team, with partners and and/or experts (social skills)

Required readings

Please insert list or specify if available for students in the reserve collection: <http://pro.unibz.it/rc/>

- Findeli, Brouillet, Martin, 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. 67–91.
- Star, Griesemer (1989) "'Translations' and Boundary Objects", Jstor, Social Studies of Science, Vol. 19, No. 3, pp. 387-420
- Sanders (2006) "Design Serving People", Cumulus Working Papers, Publication Series G, University of Art and Design Helsinki
- Sanders (2002) "From User-Centered to Participatory Design Approaches" In: Design and the Social Sciences. J. Frascara (Ed.), Taylor & Francis Books Limited, 2002.
- Ehn (2008) "Participation in Design Things", Proceeding PDC '08 Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Conference on Participatory Design 2008
- 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 2002

Supplementary readings

- Jonas, (2004) "Forschung durch Design", Swiss Design Network, Symposium, HGK Basel 13.-14.5. 2004, S.27-33
- Fuad-Luke (2009) "Design Activism", Earthscan publisher
- Di Salvo (2009) "Design and the Construction of Publics", MIT
- Ehn (2009) "Design Things and Living Labs, Multiple ways to Design Research", Swiss Design Network