

SYLLABUS

course description

Course title	Seminar 2: Transformative Work as a Livelihood Area: Seminar
Course code	96117
Scientific sector	
Degree	Master in Eco-Social Design (LM-12)
Semester	I
Year	1 st and 2 nd
Credits	2
Modular	No
Lecturer	Flora Mammana
Scientific sector of the lecturer	-
Teaching language	English
Teaching assistant (if any)	-
Office hours	6
Teaching language	English
Total lecturing hours	18
Total hours of self-study and/or other individual educational activities	
Attendance	mandatory
Prerequisites	-
Course page	

Course description

How do we (want to) work (together) as transformation engaged designers in (post) pandemic and neoliberal times and in the future(s)? How can designers, who want to question and challenge the prevalent economic system through their own work, gain a satisfying degree of social and economic security without having to submit themselves to the commercial pressures of the market? What alternative values and organizational strategies can designers adopt to make their socially engaged practices viable in the long-term? And which feminist practices and questions can help us to get there?

These big questions will encompass the discourses that will be plunged into during the 3-day seminar. Concrete examples of feminist practices of collaboration, transformational work within already existing structures, self-initiated organizations, and radical alternatives outside of wage labor are explored in order to become collectively capable of action in the interstices of the mainstream labor market. Students will have the chance to learn which mix of approaches and roles best fits their desires and capabilities.

A digital *“Living Accomplices-Archive”* will be co-created, to collect landscapes of transformative work possibilities, and serve as a platform in forming alliances and synergies between critically engaged designers. This archive will be a fertile ground to facilitate the transition from studying to generating livelihoods through eco-social design work.

Transformative engagement should not follow the competition and innovation logics of the market economy but must engage itself in the difficult task of letting these become cracked and establish hierarchy-critical forms of work. At the same time, structures must be created that do not allow eco-social design to remain a privileged practice that only people with a safe "parachute" can engage with. The seminar locates itself in this in-between space and these controversial dynamics and takes them as the starting point for a rubbing, tingling and restless negotiation about HOW TO WORK?

Throughout the seminar, the aim is to maintain and draw a better sense of self-understanding, to assess work from a critical feminist perspective and to look at transformative design work as a practice of radical interdependence.

Educational objectives

Students will be able to:

- Critically examine (transformative) work, workplaces, and structures from a feminist perspective dismantling and discussing the term “work”
- Outline challenges, contradictions and personal perspectives related to transformative design-work
- Recognize diverse possible (new) roles for eco-social designers within more established and radical work contexts through the help of the collectively created *“Living Accomplices-Archive”*
- Learn how to work with and maintain the collectively created *“Living Accomplices-Archive”*
- Identify ways of practicing design that differ from the currently prevailing individualistic and market-driven structures
- Describe eco-socially engaged labor in an understandable and accessible fashion to a broader public with little or no relation to the field

- Identify and ideate feminist solidarity practices in collaboration, and mutual support structures for current and future livelihood engagements
- Express how they would like to work and relate to others and where they want to take their practice
- Explore strategies of co-organization and bonding against precarious working conditions
- Develop strategies and tactics helpful in the transition from university to the wage labor working world
- Conceptualize personal job descriptions
- Develop an individual way of thinking, leading to critical judgements and self-assessments
- Practice the open sharing of information, offering mutual support and looking at transformative design work as a practice of interdependence - taking distance from current market values such as individualism and competition

Knowledge will be acquired in the following fields:

- Transformative Livelihood generation
- Transdisciplinary fields of work for eco-social designers
- Feminist understandings of work, collaboration & complicity
- Hierarchy-critical thinking and working
- Feminist transformative thinking
- Speculative dilettantism and experimental format development
- Negotiating undisciplined forms of knowing, thinking, and acting
- Anti-capitalist futures
- Creative writing
- Relational thinking practices, prefigurative work politics

List of topics covered

- Critical feminist understanding of work and diverse work economies
- Redefining (design) career models
- Co-organizing politically engaged transformative practices
- Cooperation and support structures
- Examples of transformational work from different interdisciplinary fields
- Self-understanding and description
- Heterotopic workplaces in the present and future modes of livelihood creation
- Mixed work economies
- Funding opportunities for design/art residencies, associations, self-organized projects and political groups
- Power structures and low hierarchy approaches
- Mapping needs, ambitions, desires, and values
- Feminist questions and practices in collaboration
- (Application) Techniques for jobs that still have to be created; re-thinking design portfolios
- Job search and description for transformative work
- Solidarity strategies and unconventional alliances
- Making transformative work tangible to a broader public

Teaching format

Balanced mix of:

- input lectures (providing concepts, concrete tools, and recommendations)
- group discussions and brainstorming (Buzz groups, silent conversations, collective critical reflections, little individual exercises)
- mutual mentoring and coaching sessions
- online interventions by various people/groups who are already generating their livelihood through transformative actions
- group work and small presentations by students
- health and concentration caring exercises

** The seminar will be significantly shaped-by and adapted-to the common dialogue with the students.**

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

- Ability to recognize diverse fields of action for transformative work and possible ways how to get there
- Acquisition of a set of methods and tactics that can be mobilized and adapted - both alone and together to guide the direction of possible practices after graduation with more agency
- Ability to understand, reflect and communicate one's own position as an eco-social designer
- Capability to identify values, structures and stances that should underpin transformative work from a feminist perspective

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Possibility to practice the open sharing of information, offering mutual support and generating a fertile ground for the transition into transformative action already during studies
- Ability to apply more actively, find self-organized structures and transformative workplaces in diverse contexts more easily
- Capability to train one's imagination to discover present and future forms of livelihood creation
- Enablement to empower and support each other

Making judgments

- Actively consider one's needs, desires, and skills to figure out which mix of transformative activities might create a good diverse livelihood economy
- Ability to critically consider and question future workplaces from a feminist perspective and to apply feminist practices in collaboration

Communication skills

- Ability to formulate and communicate concrete self-descriptions or role understandings, as well as to concretize different possible forms of work
- Ability to communicate and publish generated job profiles to diverse publics
- Ability to apply for jobs or create (new) positions/structures creatively and courageously

Learning skills

- Collective management
- Critical self-thinking
- Creativity, motivation, and ability to motivate others through transformative actions
- Cooperation and mutual support
- Interdependence thinking
- Heterotopic present-making

Assessment

Students are required to give a short oral/ audiovisual presentation on one of their created "job searches". These job searches serve as a creative reflective writing exercise and vision proposal to specify and concretize personal/collective possible and preferred areas of eco-social engagement. In addition, this final exercise is intended to help students sharpen their self-understanding as transformational practitioners and get a clearer idea of what intelligent steps to take to get closer to preferred areas of transformative action and to create mutual support structures during university.

The students are also asked to create in small groups concrete proposals for publishing and communicating the created speculative- suggestive job searches.

Assessment language: English

Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks

For the presentation and the written "job searches" developed by each student, the following criteria apply:

- Degree of self-reflection, self-positioning, self-understanding, and engagement with the specific sector of possible transformative action
- Creativity, imaginative power, and originality of the developed work
- Critical reflection on outcome and topics discussed during the class
- Comprehensibility, transmission, and language of the written and presented work

Required readings

A selection of short texts and quotations will be provided and read collectively during the seminar.

Supplementary readings

Bradley, Will, Mika Hannula, and Cristina Ricupero. *Self-Organisation, Counter-Economic Strategies.* New York/Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2006.

Carrot Workers. *Surviving Internships: A counter guide to free labour in the arts.* Available online: https://carrotworkers.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/cw_web.pdf

Hickey, Amber. *A Guidebook for Alternative Nows.* The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest Press, 2012.

Jo Freeman. THE TYRANNY of STRUCTURELESSNESS. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology.* 17, S. 151–164.

Miller, Ethan. "Community Economy: Ontology, Ethics, and Politics for Radically-Democratic Economic Organizing." *Community Economies,* 2013.

Parker, Martin, George Cheney, Valérie Fournier, and Chris Land, eds. The Routledge Companion to Alternative Organization. Oxon: Routledge, 2014.

Raunig Gerald, Gene Ray, and Ulf Wuggenig. Critique of Creativity: Precarity, Subjectivity and Resistance in the “Creative Industries.” London: MayFlyBooks, 2011.

Sara Ahmed. On Being Included – Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life_
<https://www.dukeupress.edu/on-being-included>

Weeks, Kathi. The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.