

SYLLABUS

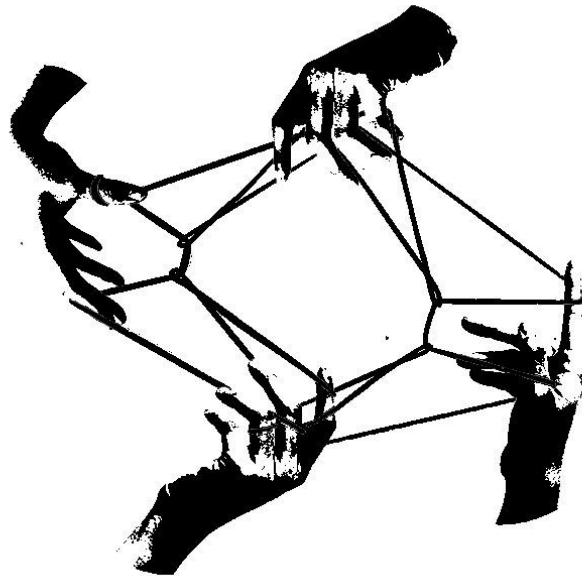
course description

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 “Projects”

Course title	STRING FIGURES – transforming together 2 Area: Projects 2 – Design 2
Course code	96101
Scientific sector	ICAR/13 – Design e comunicazioni multimediali
Degree	Master in Eco-Social Design (LM-12)
Semester	II
Year	1st and 2nd
Credits	12
Modular	No
Lecturer Group A	Juliane Stiegele Office: F4.01a, e-mail: Webpage:
Lecturer Group B	Kris Krois office F4.06a, e-mail: Kris.Krois@unibz.it tel. +39 0471 015224 Webpage: https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/design-art/academic-staff/person/893-kris-krois
Scientific sector of the lecturer	Prof. Kris Krois: ICAR/13
Teaching language	English
Total lecturing hours	90+90
Total hours of self-study and/or other individual educational activities	about 210
Attendance	strongly recommended
Prerequisites	-
Course page	www.unibz.it/en/faculties/design-art/master-eco-social-design/

Course description

Project description group A (Prof. Stiegele) & Project description group B (Prof. Krois):



»sf is a sign for science fiction, speculative feminism, science fantasy, speculative fabulation, science fact, and also, string figures. Playing games of string figures is about giving and receiving patterns, dropping threads and failing but sometimes finding something that works, something consequential and maybe even beautiful, that wasn't there before, of relaying connections that matter, of telling stories in hand upon hand, digit upon digit, attachment site upon attachment site, to craft conditions for finite flourishing on terra, on earth.«

Donna Haraway, 2016

Social-ecological transformation requires the interplay of many actors, building upon each other, interconnecting niches, imagining, experimenting and learning care and commoning, criticising and supporting each other, passing on knowledge and narrations in collective actions, joining struggles and creating momentum overcoming patriarchy, capitalism, its power structures and the devastating exploitation of humans and nature, ..., in a »process of change towards a Good Life for All based on solidarity. It involves a radical transformation of the global mode of living and production as well as of political institutions, norms/values and the relationship of humans to the living world.« (ILA Kollektiv, 2019).

With such perspectives, the students develop projects in cooperation with external partners, aiming at humble but effective social-ecological transformations. As the first step with the start of the semester, the students get into a dialogue with potential partners in the [Partner Forum](#). As a next step, the students create teams (one team per partner of 2-3 students) and start defining the project brief together with the partner.

Students are supported in the continuous development of their design-driven projects, from defining the brief to prototyping, testing and reflecting. This goes along with cycles of ideation, research, sketching, quick prototyping and testing, in the atelier, the labs and in “the real world”. Early on students are encouraged to work in exploratory and experimental ways, quickly developing rough mockups, models, sketches, visualisations and prototypes, for making ideas visible, tangible, and thus discussable. The process is supported by the course in *Design Research Project 1 + 2*, and additionally by techniques, methods and reflections deriving from the courses’ students choose to do in parallel (in the areas *Observe, Analyse & Apply* and in *Make & Intervene*). The design of objects, spaces, processes, interactive applications and of cross-media communication is understood as an integrated task. Each student team is supported individually in setting their focus and priorities, in the choice of media and means, tactics and strategies, etc.

Students are encouraged to take risks. Failures are seen as part of the creative process, and as an occasion to learn, to improve projects and to mature one’s own practice. The expected outcome is a design project, which has been properly developed, prototyped, detailed and tested real-life situations and circumstances. Projects are aspiring to enable desirable transformations in concrete ways, but often real transformations need more than one semester. Therefore, it is important to develop projects in ways that enable continuation and future development.

The project outcomes are exhibited at *Gäste–Ospiti–Guests (GOG)*, the end-of-semester exhibition of the faculty. The outcomes and key steps need to be well documented on online portfolio pages and in a booklet, including a critical reflection of the work and its future perspectives. An essential summary for portfolio and press has to be submitted in a defined format.

The project work goes along with inputs, exercises, review and support sessions, reading & designing circles, manifesto sessions, a community learning session and convivial activities. The week starts with a plenum, usually on Mondays, at 14:00. Additionally to the mentioned activities, regular exchange sessions across the project teams will take place. Students are encouraged to propose and/or self-organise other activities, which enable peer-learning, community and whatever matters to them.

»...we require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles.«

Donna Haraway, 2016

Educational objectives

Group A (Prof. Stiegele) and Group B (Prof. Krois)

Students will be able to:

- develop projects in eco-social design from problem finding to prototyping
- collaborate with partners, experts and other designers to develop, prototype and test an integrated project;

- analyse the context of projects, conceptually frame them and explore potentials
- create and develop projects in an integrated way, with an interplay of diverse elements like social interactions, spaces, products, services, cross-media communication, etc.
- think, communicate and act across diverse areas and disciplines. Apply and integrate instruments and knowledge from Design Research and from the chosen courses in the areas Science & Discourse and Make & Intervene. Find for synergies across all areas
- make complex issues tangible by design, visualization and storytelling
- collaborate with partners and experts and other designers to develop and implement an integrated project
- prototype, and partially implement and test projects
- learn quickly and adapt to given situations and their contexts
- propose and develop projects which will contribute to local development while considering the global context, starting from a “glocal” vision, which “focuses on the global and planetary dimension and the local one at the same time” (from the Dizionario Treccani);
- integrate socio-economic aspects and sustainability requirements in project design
- adopt and invent project methods that comply with the requirements and with the needs of the project and its stakeholders
- work with interdisciplinary, international and multidisciplinary teams
- organize and manage creative processes
- organize, manage and motivate a team
- develop an individual way of thinking, leading to critical judgements and self-assessments. Apply critical thinking as it is taught in the area Observe, Analyse & Apply
- balance inspiration and systematic planning
- balance more intuitive ways of working with more analytical ones
- design by taking into account the needs and desires of a given territory, of a situation/set of circumstances, of a specific group of people, thanks to the ability of observing, listening, interacting and mediating amongst various stakeholders involved in the project. Apply methods learned in the area Observe, Analyse & Apply

speList of topics covered

Shared part:

Project description group A (Prof. Stiegele) & Project description group B (Prof. Krois):

Critical thinking and creative doing, Eco-Social Design, Public Art, Social-Ecological Transformation, Project Development

Specific part (Object–Space–Services)

Project description group A (Prof. Stiegele):

Strategic creativity, Strategies in Public Art, Site-specific Social Design, Experiment

Specific part (Communication–Interaction–Services)

Project description group B (Prof. Krois):

Strategic Design, Media Tactics, Visual Communication, Social Interaction Design

Teaching format

Project group A (Prof. Stiegele) & Project group B (Prof. Krois):

Project-work with a balanced mix of lectures, exercises, labs, workshops, presentations and reviews (individually and in groups);

Additionally: interventions by external experts and eventually (small) excursions

Learning outcomes

Group A (Prof. Stiegele) & Group B (Prof. Krois)

Knowledge and understanding

- understand the potential and restrictions of given settings, the connected issues and actors / stakeholders, considering available capacities, recourses, instruments and technologies
- understand the requirements and potentials of a project, including all the above mentioned

Applying knowledge and understanding

- be able to conceptually frame projects, integrating competencies and knowledge from Design Research and from courses of the area *Observe, Analyse & Apply*
- be able to co-create original ideas for effective projects, aiming at desirable and viable Eco-Social transitions
- be able to develop effective projects in given situations (see above) with the above-mentioned aims
- setup and organize a project according to its requirements, across all phases: initial research, finding, project development, exploration and experimentation, prototyping, testing and publishing / exhibiting.
- be able to design and build mockups, functional models and/or other artefacts, which make the project tangible and testable, integrating methods and skills from courses of the area *Make & Intervene*
- Integrate approaches, knowledge, methods, competences, skills and technologies from multiple fields and (design) disciplines

Making judgements

- be able to critically assess potentials and restrictions of given situations and settings (see above), and estimate strength, challenges, risks and prospects
- be able to review projects critically, to understand what is working, what could be improved (and how)
- apply instruments and knowledge from other courses, regard to making judgments, in particular critical thinking as learned in courses of the area *Observe, Analyse & Apply*

Communication skills

- think, communicate and act across diverse areas and disciplines
- be able to present and discuss the own project successfully (in diverse settings, using appropriate media and modes)
- be able to communicate and collaborate in teams, with partners, stakeholders and potential users or audiences

Learning skills

- learn quickly and adapt to given situations and their contexts
- understand own capacities and limitations, and understand, where, when and how to involve other experts / partners, for certain competences, roles and tasks

Group A (Prof. Stiegele)

Knowledge and understanding

- understand basic methods, tools and strategies of innovation process and creative problem solving (understand, systemize, create) for the design of objects, services, spaces and interventions
- understand the key features of a human-centred approach
- learn conceptual, transdisciplinary and experimental thinking
- learn basic knowledge of Social Entrepreneurship
- understand the different aspects and impacts of design at social, environmental, political and functional levels around your defined problem space
- understand the approach of holistic solution ecosystems - in terms of value chains, socio-economic strategies, systems, relationships and processes
- The focus within this spectrum depends on the needs and interest of each student and each project. The main part of the teaching is conducted through individual consultancies of project teams and single students.

Group B (Prof. Krois)

Knowledge and understanding

- understand basic methods, strategies and tactics of project development, communication design, and social interaction design oriented towards social-ecological transformation. The focus within this spectrum (and beyond) depends on the interest of each student and on the needs of their project as if the main part of the teaching happens in individual consultancies of project teams and single students.

Assessment

Group A (Prof. Stiegele) & Group B (Prof. Krois)

Throughout the semester the works-in-progress are critically and constructively discussed.

At the end of the semester, students exhibit, present, and critically discuss their work and its future perspectives.

All presentations include tangible materials such as sketches, diagrams, images, models and prototypes, documentation of interventions or events, and/or any other designed artefacts. A special emphasis is given to the final exhibition and the presentation as a design project by itself. It should emphasise the qualities of the project in a clear, convincing and attractive ways and communicate especially with the external partners and stakeholders.

Additionally, a documentation has to be submitted. This essential documentation should be concise and attractive for interested audiences, like fellow designers and practitioners, project partners and stakeholders' potential collaborators, participants, etc.. The format of the documentation will be defined and communicated two weeks before the end of the semester at the latest. At the very end of the exam period the so-called [The Transfolder](#) has to be submitted by each student (with the exam of the English course; students, who are exempt from the English course are asked to submit the transfolder on the same date). It contains all relevant outcomes of all courses a student did in the academic year. It's just a compilation. No additional documentation needs to be done. Just a table of contents and a short description of links between courses have to be written (both is part of the

English exam and supported by the English teacher) needs to be added. *The Transfolder* enables both students and teachers to get an overview of the complex of one academic year and to see how the diverse activities play together (or not).

An essential summary for portfolio and press has to be submitted in a defined format. **Delivering the summary and material for portfolio and press in a quality that is good enough for high-quality print publications such as magazines and books or online publications such as portfolio pages or blogs is a precondition for getting the grade.**

Assessment language: English

Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks

Group A (Prof. Stiegele) & Group B (Prof. Krois)

1. **Eco-Social agency**
Impacts and potentials for positive eco-social change
2. **Qualities of designed artefacts**
Aesthetic and technical qualities, and in how far these qualities foster the eco-social agency. How they build upon the state of the art in your chosen field and (design) disciplines. Boldness and vigour of experimentation and design exploration.
3. **Conceptual framing, reflection and future perspectives**
A visual map of 'state of art' setting out the terrain of your project and your starting position. Critical analysis, synthesis, reflection and evaluation. Understanding of iterative development and future perspectives.
4. **Relations, processes and organisation**
Understanding and managing relations and processes with the project team, collaborators, partners, stakeholders and other actors. Project management.
5. **Storytelling**
Effectiveness and potential in communicating the project to relevant publics. Quality and effectiveness of presentation techniques and narrative. How well the story attracts attention, convinces and touches audiences. Defence of your proposition and your response to critics.

All works have to tackle all 5 qualities. Particular weight is given to the interplay between *eco-social agency* (1), the *qualities of the designed artefacts* (2) and *Conceptual framing, reflection and future perspectives* (3).

Required readings

A selection of short texts, which are used for the *Reading and Designing Circles*. To be provided at the latest one week before each *Reading and Designing Circle*.

Supplementary Readings and other inspirations

[24 facts](#) compiled by Scientists for Future

Barlow, Nathan, Livia Regen, Noémie Cadiou, Ekaterina Chertkovskaya, Max Hollweg, Christina Plank, Merle Schulken and Verena Wolf (ed, 2022): *Degrowth & Strategy – how to bring about social-ecological transformation*. MayFly

Boehnert, Joanna: *Design, Ecology, Politics: Towards the Ecocene*, 2018

Brand, Ulrich and Markus Wissen (2020). *Beyond the Green Economy. The Imperial Mode of Living as Major Barrier for a Circular Economy*, Springer Nature Switzerland ([PDF download](#))

Brand, Ulrich and Markus Wissen (2018): *What Kind of a Great Transformation? The Imperial Mode of Living as a Major Obstacle to Sustainability Politics*. In: *GAIA – Ecological Perspectives for Science and Society* 27(3), 287-292.; ([PDF](#))

Chatzidakis, A., Hakim, J., Litter, J., & Rottenberg, C. (2020). *The Care manifesto: The politics of interdependence*. Verso Books.

Escobar, Arturo (2018): *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds*, MIT Press ([PDF](#))

Fezer, Jesko & Studio Experimentelles Design (2016): *Öffentliche Gestaltungsberatung—Public Design Support 2011–2016*, Sternberg Press Ltd, London

Fuad-Luke, Alastair et al. [Agents of Alternatives](#). Berlin: Agents of Alternatives, 2015.

Gold, R. (2007). *The Plenitude. Creativity, Innovation and Making stuff*. The MIT Press

Gibson-Graham, J.K. and Ethan Miller (2015): *Economy as Ecological Livelihood*, in Gibson, Katherine, Deborah Bird Rose and Ruth Fincher (Eds). *Manifesto for the Living in the Anthropocene*. Brooklyn, NY ([PDF of the article](#); [whole book](#))

Gruendl, Harald, Ulrike Haele, Marco Kellhammer, Christina Nägele (IDRV):
EN: [Tools for the Design Revolution. A handbook for sustainable design strategies](#) by IDRV – Institute of Design Research Vienna (book with hands-on tools and cases)
DE: [Werkzeuge für die Designrevolution. Ein Handbuch für zukunftsfähige Designstrategien](#) vom IDRV – Institute of Design Research Vienna

Habermann, Friederike (2016): *ECOMMONY – re-care to mutuality*, Chapter 1: *The Favour of the Day* ([unofficial translation](#))

Original (in German language): *Ecommony. UmCARE zum Miteinander*, Ulrike Helmer Verlag ([PDF](#), CC BY-NC-SA)

Hallam, Roger (2019): *Common Sense for the 21st Century*

Helfrich, Silke and David Bollier: *Free, Fair and Alive*, 2019; [free online version](#)

Hickel, J. (2021). *Less is more: How degrowth will save the world*. Windmill Books.

ILA Kollektiv (2019): At the Expense of Others?, oekom, Munich ([PDF](#))

ILA Kollektiv: Das Gute Leben für Alle – Wege in die solidarische Lebensweise, Munich, 2019 ([free PDFs](#))

ILA Kollektiv (Hrsg.; 2022): Die Welt auf den Kopf stellen: Strategien für radikale Transformation. Ein Handbuch für Menschen in sozialen Bewegungen, oekom, München ([open access PDF](#))

Lupton, E. (2021). [Extra Bold: A Feminist Inclusive Anti-racist Non-binary Field Guide for Graphic Designers](#). Princeton Architectural Press.

Manzini, Ezio, and Rachel Coad. [Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation](#). Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2015.

Manzini, E. (2018). Politiche del quotidiano: progetti di vita che cambiano il mondo. Edizioni di comunità.

Müller, Christa, Andrea Baier, Tom Hansing (Ed.) [Die Welt reparieren. Open Source und Selbermachen als postkapitalistische Praxis](#) (visions, reflections and cases; Open Access to PDF) Schwarz, Michiel and Diana Krabbendam: Sustainist Design Guide. How Sharing, Localism, Connectedness and Proportionality Are Creating a New Agenda for Social Design, BIS Publishers

Pater, R. (2021). [Caps Lock: How Capitalism Took Hold of Graphic Design, and How to Escape from It](#). Valiz Press.

Segal, Rafi, and Marisa Morán Jahn (2023). Design and Solidarity. Conversations on Collective Futures, Columbia University Press

Sutterlütti, Simon, Stefan Meretz (2023). Make Capitalism History. A Practical Framework for Utopia and the Transformation of Society, Palgrave Macmillan, [Open Access \(free ebook & PDF\)](#)

Welzer, Harald (2019): Alles könnte anders sein. Eine Gesellschaftsutopie für freie Menschen , S. FISHER, 2019. chapter: *Modulare Revolution* (p. 185 - 192) [scan \(PDF\)](#); [unofficial English translation](#)

Welzer, Harald, and Sommer, Bernd: [Transformation Design: A Social-Ecological Perspective](#) in Jonas, Wolfgang / Zerwas, Sarah / von Anshelm, Kristof (Ed.) Transformation Design – Perspectives on a New Design Attitude, BIRKHÄUSER, November 2015, ISBN: 978-3-0356-0653-9

Wizinsky, Matthew (2022). Design after Capitalism. Transforming Design Today for an Equitable Tomorrow, The MIT Press

Wright, Erik Olin (2010): Envisioning Real Utopias, London, Verso