

MGA 676 Design Theory and Methodology (5 ECTS, 135h), fall 2016 (16 weeks)

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Contact Details: For efficient communication all email communication regarding this course should be sent to 676_teachers@idmaster.eu. Special online “office hours” will be set up for group and individual mentoring and those will be conducted through google hangout/chat.

Course objectives: The goal of this course is to help students to gain a deeper understanding of designing as a problem solving activity in a specific context. The course offers Design Theory and Methodology as a framework that integrates theoretical concepts from different fields, which all contribute to the process and thus to the product. We will examine how designers conduct research in order to produce relevant and meaningful products/services that are appropriate for specific audiences, cultures, and contexts. Students learn how to apply a range of research methods via fieldwork to their everyday design practice. Concepts include developing and using ethnographic strategies, personas, interviewing, and iterative design processes, among others. Students work in teams, putting theory into action, which informs collaborative design practice.

Course content: Introduction; Thinking about creativity; How it works: Generative tools and techniques; Case studies; Making the plan; Gathering data in the field; Analysis: What to do with what you got; Communication; Conceptualization; Bridging

Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to: (a) Apply a variety of design research methods to specific team-based applications; (b) Employ specific ethnographic research methods in project development; (c) Practice strategy development, prototyping, testing and implementation; (d) Practice experimental fieldwork that includes qualitative, quantitative, speculative, experiential modes of research and expression; (e) Understand the broad ideas and issues related to creativity and innovation, the user-centered approach, and the relationships among them.

Workload: In order to successfully conclude this course, students are required to do both individual and group-based activities. Delivery is organized as a workshop where students work on design projects (26 hours). Theoretical topics are presented as short modules through google classroom and other forms of synchronous and asynchronous communication. Independent work is divided into three parts: work on a group project (approximately 70 hours); work on individual assignments (approximately 8 hours); work on literature (approximately 26 hours).

Assessment: The exam grade consists of following components: individual workbook (20%), design project done as an individual assignment (50%); reflective feedback as group activity (20%); overall participation (10%). Final mark will be on a 0-10 scale in increments of 0.5 points. Passing grade is 5 out of 10.

Expected individual work activities: Students will work individually on a generative research design project engaging in:

- Personal creative reflections
- Recruiting participants
- Observing and documenting participants' current activities (what people do) around the topic of the study
- Create a toolkit and run at least one generative session that encourages participants to:
 - recall memories from earlier experiences
 - reflect on those memories and possibilities for the future
- Create artifacts for future experiences
- Any additional activities to strengthen the quality of your project work

Students will also be asked to keep an individual workbook

The design script and the style of the workbook will be announced on google classroom during the first few week of classes.

Expected group work activities:

In addition to the individual work, students will be required to engage in online reflective group meetings where they will be required to contribute with feedback, comments and participation in other students' project work.

The design script and the style of the workbook will be announced on google classroom during the first few week of classes.

Late submissions are not accepted.

Assessment criteria: Grades will be based on these criteria:

91–100% of the work is done — excellent: outstanding work with only few minor errors.

81–90% of the work is done — very good: above average work but with some minor errors.

71–80% of the work is done — good: generally good work with a number of notable errors.

61–70% of the work is done — satisfactory: reasonable work but with significant shortcomings.

50–60% of the work is done — sufficient: passable performance meeting the minimum criteria.

49% or less of the work is done — fail: more work is required before the credit can be awarded.

Technology needed to perform this course: Basic knowledge of computers and a desire to learn how to use some basic drawing/UI prototyping tools

Synchronous activities: The delivery of the course will be primarily asynchronous with discussions taking place mainly through the google classroom platform. In addition though, there will be set times for short synchronous sessions (either text chat or voice chat through google hangouts). In each session we will discuss acquired knowledge, provide feedback and/or mentor students. We will divide these session in groups and a time for discussion will be agreed with the students. The times and days of these synchronous sessions will be decided and announced early in the semester.

Required Textbook: Convivial Toolbox: Generative Research for the Front End of Design, Liz Sanders & Pieter Jan Stappers, BIS Publishers, 2013 (ISBN: 9789063692841)

The pedagogical script for this course:

Sessions	Topic/Materials	Tasks/assignments	Technology
Session 0: 5-11/09	Induction session: Getting familiar with the course	Assignments: 1) Read course Pedagogical script 2) Explore course Resources	Google applications

	<p>environments and technologies</p> <p>Material: Course pedagogical script</p>	<p>3) Buy the required textbook (https://www.amazon.com/Convivial-Toolbox-Generative-Research-Design/dp/9063692846/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1470748193&sr=8-1&keywords=convivial)</p> <p>4) Watch these videos and think about the concept of creativity. Also study the background of the speakers by finding more about them on the web etc.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sir Ken Robinson: Do schools kill creativity? - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbtY b) Theo Jansen: My creations, a new form of life - http://www.ted.com/talks/theo_jansen_creates_new_creatures 	
<p>Session 1: (12-25/09)</p>	<p>Introduction & Thinking about Creativity</p> <p>Material: Chapter 1 and 2 of the book and additional resources on google classroom</p>	<p>The main aims of this session are to present generative design research by connecting it to theoretical and practical precedents, and situating it in current practice. We will position generative design research with regard to business and marketplace contexts as well as within recent developments/trends in design and design research. We will discuss what creativity is all about, starting with the traditional perspective that creativity is something that happens “in the head”. Then we will introduce larger and larger perspectives on creativity. We will end with a model of collective creativity that describes how people are creative together.</p> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Read and understand the material. 2) Watch Liz Sanders talking about Generative Research Design - https://vimeo.com/89129735 (a good overview of the content of the book). 3) Participate in a synchronous or asynchronous communication 	<p>Google Hangout and classroom</p>

	Work on your workbook and individual project assignments	Assignments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Read the design script 2) start doing secondary research and initial exploration of the topic 3) Start developing your workbook (personal reflection) 	Google classroom
Session 2: (26/09-09/10)	<p>How it works: Generative tools and techniques and Case studies</p> <p>Material: Chapter 3+4 of the book and additional resources on google classroom</p>	<p>In this session we will describe how to put the principles and theories of creative thinking into action. We introduce a wide range of tools and techniques that can be used in generative design research, organized according to a simple people-centered framework: What people say, what people do and what people make. In chapter 4 of the book you will find four complete cases from practise where generative techniques have been used.</p> <p>Assignments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Read and understand the concepts. 2) Watch <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Design & Thinking - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_YwyMssN0Y (gives you a chance to hear from designers from various fields talk about Design Thinking and Creativity) b) Ellen Isaacs: Ethnography - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nV0jY5VgymI (gives you a nice overview of Ethnography) c) Genevieve Bell "Context is Everything"- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_A2481RJsUg 3) Participate in synchronous and asynchronous communication 	Google Hangout and classroom
	Work on your workbook and individual project assignments	Assignments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Engage in observation/ethnographic research 	Google classroom

Session 3: (10-23/10)	Making the plan Material: Chapter 5 of the book and additional resources on google classroom	The main aim of this session is to introduce the concept of a design plan. The plan is a concise and clear description of what the goals of the project are, what the different parties involved are expected to do, what resources are needed, what results are expected and how and when they are to be delivered. Assignments: 1) Read and understand the concepts 2) Participate in synchronous and asynchronous communication	Google Hangout and classroom
	Work on your workbook and individual project assignments	Assignments: 1) Develop you plan and start developing your toolkits 2) Plan your generative sessions	Google classroom
Session 4: (24/10-06/11)	Individual meetings and Group mentoring	Assignments: 1) Participate in a synchronous communication to demonstrate your prototype and receive feedback 2) run generative sessions and engage in data collection	Google Hangout and classroom
Session 5: (07-20/11)	Gathering and analysing data Material: Chapter 6+7 of the book and additional resources on google classroom	This session will cover data collection from the field and data analysis methods. Assignments: 1) Participate in a synchronous communication to demonstrate your prototype and receive feedback	Google Hangout and classroom
	Work on your workbook and individual project assignments	Assignments: 1) run generative sessions and engage in data collection	Google classroom
Session 6: (21/11-04/12)	Communication and conceptualization	We will discuss ways to communicate the results of the generative design research process and how that then links to	Google Hangout and classroom

	Material: Chapter 8+9 of the book and additional resources on google classroom	conceptualization (the generation and development of ideas, concepts, and solutions). Assignments: 1) Participate in a synchronous communication to demonstrate your prototype and receive feedback	
	Work on your workbook and individual project assignments	Assignments: 1) Present your findings to a group of students	
Session 7: (05-11/12)	Bridging Material: Chapter 10 of the book and additional resources on google classroom	In this session we bring analysis and conceptualization back together. Assignments: 1) Participate in a synchronous communication to demonstrate your prototype and receive feedback	Google Hangout and classroom
	Work on your workbook and individual project assignments	Assignments: 1) Finalize the reports and presentations	Google classroom
Session 8: (12-18/12)	Presentation of the final projects	Assignments: 1) The project and workbooks are presented.	Google presentation and documents