



AUF

*The American  
University of Florence***SYLLABUS**

---

**IDEAS – SCHOOL OF INTERIOR DESIGN, ENVIRONMENTAL ARCHITECTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY (ID)**

---

**SCHOOL OF INTERIOR DESIGN, ENVIRONMENTAL ARCHITECTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY  
DEPARTMENT OF PRODUCT DESIGN****COURSE TITLE: ONTRODUTION TO PRODUCT DESIGN****COURSE CODE: IDPPD210****3 Semester credits****1. DESCRIPTION**

This introductory course to product design guides students through the exploration of the different stages involved in the design process. Case-studies analysis enhance instruction as students explore parallel paths in the design of interiors, industrial and consumer products, public art projects and fashion. With carefully selected examples and practical exercises, students explore contemporary design practice within production processes. Students become familiar with concepts and terminology relevant to product design. Namely, production volumes, speed of production, costs of production, relevant materials and typical applications. The innovative use of a particular material, sustainability and its effect on the environment is also assessed. As an integral part of the course, students are required to develop a meaningful design challenge and – in the end – deliver a great design. Within such a process, students address the historical context of their designs as they practice critical thinking, research, problem solving, and aesthetic refinement. Projects require sketches, models, written reports and verbal presentations of design concepts.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

- Successfully employ the design process to investigate, conceptualize and generate relevant solutions for design problems.
- Effectively communicate ideas and concepts into written and visual presentations
- Creatively explore and execute diverse strategies to solve problems with original and relevant design solutions
- Strategically apply technical skill, knowledge and craftsmanship to prove feasibility of their concepts.
- Perform as a professional designer as expressed through knowledge, motivation, ethics, skill, participation, teamwork and leadership.

**3. REQUIREMENTS**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**4. METHOD**

This course consists of lectures, class discussions, projects, and site visits within the local community. Mediums for instruction used will include, but are not limited to, interactive and hands-on activities which challenge thought processes, academic texts and studies, videos, slides, guided problem solving,

and experiential and/or field learning activities where applicable.

## **5. TEXTBOOK – FURTHER READINGS – RESOURCES**

TEXTBOOK (Copy available at the university library):

Aspelund, Karl. *The Design Process*. Fairchild Books, 2010.

The textbook is mandatory for successful completion of the course.

Where applicable, additional materials, handouts and/or notes will be provided by the instructor.

### **FURTHER READINGS**

- Burdek, E. Bernhard. *Design: History, Theory and Practice of Product Design*. Birkhauser Architecture, 2015.
- Dent, H. Andrew and Leslie Sherr. *Material Innovation: Product Design*. Thames and Hudson, 2014.
- Kevin, Henry. *Drawing for Product Designers*. Portfolio Skills, 2012.
- Lefteri, Chris. *Materials for Design*. Laurence King Publishing, 2014.
- Maeda, John. *The laws of Simplicity: Design, Technology, Business, Life*. The MIT Press, 2006.

### **LIBRARIES IN FLORENCE**

Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times of the university library. Also note that the library is for consultation only and it is not possible to borrow materials. The library is equipped with a scanner and internet access so that you may save or email a digital copy of the pages needed.

Students may also utilize additional libraries and research centers within the local community:

#### **BIBLIOTECA PALAGIO DI PARTE GUELFA**

Located in Piazzetta di Parte Guelfa between Piazza della Repubblica and Ponte Vecchio. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:

[http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca\\_palagio\\_di\\_parte\\_guelfa/](http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca_palagio_di_parte_guelfa/)

#### **BIBLIOTECA DELLE OBLATE**

Located in via dell'Oriuolo 26. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:

[www.bibliotecadelleoblade.it](http://www.bibliotecadelleoblade.it)

#### **THE HAROLD ACTON LIBRARY AT THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FLORENCE**

Located in Lungarno Guicciardini 9. Please consult the library website for hours of operation. This library requires a fee-based student membership. For information: [www.britishinstitute.it/en](http://www.britishinstitute.it/en)

## **6. FIELD LEARNING**

Please consult your Official Registration for any mandatory field learning dates. Field Learning Activities cited in Official Registrations are an integral part of the course and also include an assignment that counts towards your final grade, details will be provided on the first day of class.

## **7. COURSE MATERIALS**

No additional course materials are necessary.

## **8. COURSE FEES**

Course fees cover course-related field learning activities, visits, and support the instructor's teaching methodologies. Book costs are not included in the course fee. The exact amount will be communicated by the instructor on the first day of class.

## 9. EVALUATION – GRADING SYSTEM

10% Attendance

15% Class Participation, Home Assignments and Reading

20% Mid Term Exam and Mid-term Project

25% Final Paper and/or Final Project

30% Final Exam

A = 93-100 %, A- = 90-92%, B+= 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B-=80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C=73-76%, C- =70-72%, D = 60-69%, F= 0-59%, W = Official Withdrawal, W/F = Failure to withdraw by the designated date.

## 10. ATTENDANCE – PARTICIPATION

Academic integrity and mutual respect between instructor and student are central to the academic policy and reflected in the attendance regulations. Student presence is mandatory and counts toward the final grade.

**Absences** are based on academic hours: 1 absence equals 3 lecture hours.

Two absences: 6 lecture hours, attendance and participation grade will be impacted.

Three absences: 9 lecture hours, the final grade may be lowered by one letter grade.

Four absences: 12 lecture hours, constitutes automatic failure of the course regardless of when absences are incurred.

Please note:

- The above hours refer to lecture hours. Please note that the contact / credit hour policy in the academic catalog includes additional distribution ratios according to delivery category. Ex: 1 absence equals 6 FL/SL/Lab hours or 9 EL hours.

- Hours may be distributed in different formats according to the academic course schedules.

### LATE ARRIVAL AND EARLY DEPARTURE

Arriving late or departing early from class is not acceptable. Two late arrivals or early departures or a combination will result in an unexcused absence. Travel is not an exceptional circumstance.

### TRAVEL (OR DELAYS DUE TO TRAVEL) IS NEVER AN EXCUSE FOR ABSENCE FROM CLASS.

It is the student's responsibility to know how many absences are incurred. If in doubt, speak with your instructor!

**Participation:** Satisfactory participation will be the result of contributing to class discussions by putting forth insightful and constructive questions, comments and observations. Overall effort, cooperation during group work, proper care of workspace and tools, responsible behavior, and completion of assignments will be assessed. All of the above criteria also apply to Field Learning and site visits.

## 11. EXAMS – PAPERS – PROJECTS

### Home Assignments

Home assignments aim at documenting your knowledge and understanding on specific aspects relating to the course topic. After each lecture, a question may be posted on the course's blog page (MyFUA) relating to the lecture. Students are expected to contribute a short, thoughtful response. Responses must be posted before the start of the next lecture (all posts are time stamped, late postings (after 9 am) will not be accepted). Be creative, in addition to your short text you can post pictures and videos if you'd like.

### Reading and quizzes

Reading of the textbook is mandatory for successful completion of the course, further reading is highly recommended. Regular reading quizzes have been designed to ensure that you are completing the reading and engaging in active learning and critical thinking about course concepts outside of class. They are also designed to help you prepare for the final exam in manageable increments. Quizzes may be open-note, which means you may use your notes to assist you in taking the quiz. Notes must be originals (not photocopied) and in your own handwriting. Quizzes will NOT be open book.

### Paper/Presentation

The instructor will provide you with specific information concerning the paper/presentation topic and length. Make sure your paper/presentation conforms to academic standards in terms of style and register. Your paper/presentation must include quotations and/or citations from scholarly books, journals, or articles. Your paper/presentation must be properly referenced and must include a bibliography. Evaluation will be based on the following criteria: Pertinence & Coverage; Analysis & Understanding; Organization & Structure; Language & Accuracy; References & Bibliography.

### Exams

The Mid-term exam will take place on Lesson 7 whilst the Final Exam will take place on week 15. Note, **the date and time of the exams cannot be changed for any reason**, so please organize your personal activities accordingly.

Format (for both exams): the exam is divided into three sections:

- Part I: 10 Multiple choice questions. Each correct answer is worth 2 points, for a total of 20 points.
- Part II: 10 short-answer questions. Each correct and complete answer (concise explanations, main ideas, key words, names, etc.) is worth 5 points, for a total 50 points.
- Part III: two essay questions; each correct and complete answer is worth 15 points (based on content, vocabulary, detail, etc.) for a total of 30 points.

Note, the instructor may select a different format. Please, refer to study guide.

### Mid-term Project and Final Project

To be determined by instructor. Please refer to study guide.

## **12. LESSONS**

Lesson 1	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Introduction to course syllabus, course objectives and expectations. Introduction to product design. What is product design? Elements and principles of product design. The design process. Key concepts.
Homework/ Assignments	TBD by instructor
Reading	Textbook, pp.1-16.

Lesson 2	
Meet	In class
Lecture	How to improve design through inspiration. Actively seeking for and finding inspiration in a variety of sources.
Homework/ Assignments	TBD by instructor
Reading	Textbook, pp. 17-38.

Lesson 3	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Identifying an idea, recognizing and working within constraints, developing solutions to the design problem within these constraints. The designer's responsibility towards the community and society as a whole.
Homework/ Assignments	TBD by instructor
Reading	Textbook, pp. 40-70.

Lesson 4	
Meet	In class
Lecture	The design concept. Examining a concept and exploring fully what it contains. Applying the laws of <i>gestalt</i> perception to the examination of a design concept. Analogies, metaphors, similes, and intuitive thinking as helpful tools to visualize, describe and explain non-existent objects.
Homework/ Assignments	TBD by instructor
Reading	Textbook, pp. 71-96.

Lesson 5	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Conceptualization continued. How designers relate to designs and their end users. Meeting the different needs of clients, fabricators, and fellow designers. Proxemics: exploring the relation between people as it is expressed in the use of space. Integrating ergonomics into the product development process.
Homework/ Assignments	TBD by instructor
Reading	Review textbook, pp. 71-96. Additional reading provided by instructor.

Lesson 6	
----------	--

Meet	In class
Lecture	Exploring and refining concepts to ensure clarity. How one's choice of methods and media affects the development of ideas. Developing 'fluency' in many different media.  Submit midterm project and in class presentation/critique.
Homework/ Assignments	TBD by instructor
Reading	Textbook, pp. 97-116.

Lesson 7	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Mid-term exam

Lesson 8	
Lecture	Academic break

Lesson 9	
Meet	In class
Lecture	How to convey the effect and intent of a design through modelling. Creating models for a design and planning the creation of a concept model. Revising a design thesis in light of new occurring developments.
Homework/ Assignments	TBD by instructor
Reading	Textbook, pp. 118-139.

Lesson 10	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Communication as a key factor for successful deigning throughout an entire project. Communicating clearly by employing different modes of communication to different audiences. What to communicate, to whom, how, and why. Exploring the different venues, methods, and styles of presentation.
Homework/ Assignments	TBD by instructor
Reading	Textbook, pp. 142-168.

Lesson 11	
Meet	In class

Lecture	The interaction between designers and their production teams. The benefit of feedback (both positive and negative). Prototyping as a way of finalizing ideas before they are ready for production (overview). Decision-making in terms of budgets, schedules, materials and sustainability.
Homework/ Assignments	TBD by instructor
Reading	Textbook, pp. 169-186.

Lesson 12	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Decision-making in product design continued. Know your materials: basic principles of choosing materials. Understanding the environmental, social, and economic impact of the selected materials. Wood, metal, plastic and glass – overview, pros and cons of using each material.
Homework/ Assignments	TBD by instructor
Reading	Lefteri, Chris. <i>Materials for Design</i> . Laurence King Publishing, 2014. Selected chapters as indicated by instructor.

Lesson 13	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Know your materials further. Alternatives to twentieth-century Western thinking. Grown materials to overcome preconceptions about how products should look like. Recycled materials and the concept of repurposing.
Homework/ Assignments	TBD by instructor
Reading	Dent, H. Andrew and Leslie Sherr. <i>Material Innovation: Product Design</i> . Thames and Hudson, 2014. Chapter 1 and chapter 5.

Lesson 14	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Final revision Submit final project, in class presentation/critique
Homework/ Assignments	TBD by instructor
Reading	Review all reading in view of final exam.

Lesson 15	
Meet	In class

Lecture	Final exam
---------	------------