

**NEW COURSE ! Design Studio: Ethics and Aesthetics. Art 110g/ Art 397h Spring 2015**

The course addresses diverse social, environmental, and economic problems through the design of specific objects and environments. A variety of approaches to design research are covered, along with prototyping, testing, and presentation. The design studio is collaborative and interdisciplinary, with value given through a series of critiques. Course problems explore design for sustainability and ethical fitness as well as aesthetic excellence.

Prerequisites: Application and POI. Prefer a studio art course, familiarity with basic art media and principles (see list below). Application from David Finn [finndt@wfu.edu](mailto:finndt@wfu.edu)

### **Approach**

The course gives students insight into the process of design of artifacts and the role of ethics, aesthetics and creativity in problem solving. Problems for the course in spring 2015 will involve the domains of packaging and product redirection. Students learn to define the problem scope by for a range of users, with an emphasis on sustainability and lifecycle use. Teams would be used for a majority of the course and tools will vary from handmade to digital. Research is an important part of the course, as students would be expected to learn about multiple aspects of a problem, and integrate knowledge from other fields of study, including, but not limited to: entrepreneurship, economics, political science, psychology and communication.

The course is studio based, and each student has a dedicated workspace (a desk or workstation). Students will use laptops and programs available through the university (Corel Suite) or for free (e.g. Sketchup). We will use a common area for critique and display of ongoing work, as well as fabrication of, models and prototypes. Class will meet for 29 2.5 hour sessions, plus an arranged Friday or Saturday crit. At least 5 hours of work outside of class per week is expected. Art 110g counts as a 4 credit Divisional; Art 397h counts as a 3 credit course in the studio major sculpture concentration, with an (optional) 1 credit independent study added.

**Prerequisite skills and learning** (students should have at least 3 of the following):

1. *General knowledge of art history* through at least 1 course, preferably Art 103/4/5
2. *Can render a simple object with line and value* (art 111, 112,117, 118)
3. *Understands the properties of color* through wheel, mixing and perception (art 111, 112)
4. *Can organize 2-D or 3-D elements into compositions* that are visually effective (art 111, and all intro studios, and 115)
5. *Can select and use materials* to achieve defined effects (art 115 and others)
6. *Assemble an effective sequential narrative* using drawings, photos or video. (art 111, 114, 119, )
7. *Use a camera and editing* to record and compose images (Art 114,119, 120).

**Learning Objectives:** After the course the student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate how a design problem is formulated from a set of data and circumstances that include user, needs and context.
2. Understand and apply social and ethical considerations, including sustainability, to the design problem.

3. Organize research and resources to discover design directions and possible solutions.
4. Propose multiple iterative design solutions and divergent design solutions to a problem using freehand sketches, computer drawings, and or written descriptions.
5. Design and build a model or prototype from design research and critique.
6. Create a high quality presentation to present and defend a design solution.
7. Predict and explain the ethical, social, environmental, and economic implications of a given design.

### Weekly Timeline of Activity

1. **Introduction** to the course and studio.  
Read: Ulrich, Design: Creation of Artifacts in Society Chap. 1-2  
McDonough & Braungart, Cradle to Cradle, Chap. 1
2. **What is design?** What is good design? Introduction to projects. Practice cutting paper, making boxes. Use of printers. Read: Chap. 3 in Design: Creation and Chap 1-3 in Fry, Design Futuring.
3. **What is the Problem?** Where is the Gap? What is the scale? Use <http://www.myfootprint.org/> as a start for research to make a representation of your personal ecological footprint. Read: Design: Creation.., Chap 4, DeBono, Lateral Thinking Chap. 2, Tharp The Creative Habit, Chap 2.
4. **Can creativity be intentional?** Problem definition, 5 whys, and creative tools from deBono to Twyla Tharp. Packaging Project initial presentations. Read: Design: Creation... Chap 5-7, Excerpts from DuPuis, Package Design Workbook.
5. **What is the packaging domain?** What is design “grammar”, “architecture”, “aesthetics”? Work on packaging project in small teams. Read: Design: Creation... 8-9,
6. **Project Presentations**, Midterm.
7. **What do you think of the future?** Field trip or guest lecture. The issues of redesign, elimination and ethics of design. Start the redirection/redesign project. Read: Cradle to Cradle Chap 2-3, Design Futuring 4-5.
8. **Is sustainability possible?** What does it apply to? Pitfalls? Leadership skills, participation, transparency, engagement, networks, human centered design, respect, and active listening. Redesign project continues. Read: excerpts from E.F. Schumacher, Small is Beautiful, Design Futuring, Chap 8-9.
9. **Prototyping or case study presentations.** Projects continue with group and individual crits.
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11. Work days. Photography and presentation workshops.
12. Final project presentations and critique.
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Final Quiz: Write to a design topic. Photography and portfolio due.

## **Textbooks:**

McDonough, William and Braungart, Micheal, *Cradle to Cradle*, 2002, North Point Press, NYC

Ulrich, Karl T., *Design: Creation of Artifacts in Society*, 2011, University of Pennsylvania Press

Fry, Tony, *Design Futuring: Sustainability, Ethics and New Practice*, 2009, Berg Press, Oxford and NYC

Tharp, Twyla, *The Creative Habit*, 2003, Simon and Shuster, NYC

DeBono, Edward, *Lateral Thinking*, 2010, Harper Collins

DuPuis, Steven and Silva, John, *Package Design Workbook: The Art and Science of Successful Packaging* by 2011, Rockport Press.

## **Projects and Grades Outline**

### Class Participation in Critiques and Discussions ... 10 points. (ongoing)

Everyone starts with 7.5 discussion points and fractions are added or subtracted according to significance of critical contributions. Participation is graded every week, available in sakai.

### Notebook/Blog... 10 (ongoing)

Students keep a 'design diary' in the form of notebook or blog. Instructor reviews the notes at 3 random intervals during the semester.

### Project 1 Packaging Domain... 25 points

The purpose of the project is to understand the importance of a domain, and to work in a group as a team. Teams are chosen by the instructor from the course application, and teams must confer and find consensus for their own rules of conduct. Packaging is chosen for its scale, purpose, role as a brand marker, and potential for critical reevaluation. The actual package problem is TBA.

Stage 1: The Domain. Learn the basics of package design using cut and folded cardstock. Research the domain. Design and print nets and simple graphics using Corel draw. Review use of photography, text and color.

Stage 2 Concept Development. Teams develop strategy and a concept array for the problem. Student communicate their approach and after critical feedback, points in the array are iterated. Iterations are constantly reviewed and improved in this stage.

Stage 3. Build prototypes for leading designs, testing physical attributes, production issues, and market possibilities.

Stage 4 Prototypes and testing are presented for critical discussion which is used in the final project selection.

Stage 5 Formal presentation of the product and design narrative for the class and outside reviewers. Reviewers from Calloway, CEES and Art.

## Project 2 Deconstruct /Redirect ..... 25 points (adapted from Designers Accord)

The purpose of this project is to offer an experiential design process to help students personalize sustainable design principles. Students work and are graded individually.

Student choose a ubiquitous object, artifact, medium of communication, or system to explore and redesign. Examples could include a disposable coffee cup, generic shoebox, pizza delivery car, or public library system.

Stage 1: Deconstruct. Students collect, observe, and record details regarding their artifact of choice. A strong sense of the artifact's form, history, and the ways in which people engage with it help students uncover approaches to rethinking it. Indicate possible areas for improvement make the artifact more accessible, more democratic, or instantiate positive environmental and social impact. What will the role of the artifact be in the future?

Stage 2: Inspire. Look for adjacent experiences for inspiration. Students reference other systems and artifacts, and evolve their design work to by removing or adding features or characteristics to their object of study.

Stage 3: Communicate. Students clearly articulate the opportunity this feature offers using oral and visual narrative in classroom presentations. Students to lead their own critique, soliciting critical feedback to strengthen their ideas.

Stage 4: Prototype. Students design and develop their most effective idea(s), and use their prototype to observe and solicit feedback in and out of the classroom.

Stage 5: Document. Present the visual and textual narrative to describe the journey to the final product, highlighting specific areas of diversion, reinforcement, and revelation.

## Essay on design ... 15

In this essay the student is asked to integrate the theoretical knowledge form reading, discussion and lectures with the personal direct experience of the design projects.

## Quiz on design concepts... 10 points

## Photography of work... 5 points

## **Teaching Resources**

The Designers Accord was created in 2007 as a five-year project to mainstream sustainability in the global creative community. Formed as a distributed knowledge network of design firms, universities, and business leaders, the Designers Accord has helped advance the conversation around the ethics, practices, and responsibilities of the creative community. <http://designersaccord.org/>