UCLA Department of Design | Media Arts
Professor Erkki Huhtamo

T.A.s:
Joanna Cheung (Section A: A-Dee),
Jesse Chorng (Section B: Diep – Khau),
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Rhazes Spell (Section E: Syrkin - Z)

Fall Quarter 2010

Syllabus:
Design Culture - an Introduction (Desma 10)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Design is a powerful force in culture and society. It surrounds us, whatever we do and wherever we go. It has an impact on us, whether we are aware of it or not. It is not easy to define all the things the word “design” is supposed to denote. In fact, it is even becoming difficult to say where design ends and related phenomena like art, architecture and popular media begin. One thing is certain: design is not just about creating “cool-looking” things; it is much more. It affects our ways of understanding the world. It is also a form of communication - by creating or using certain designs we send messages about ourselves to others.

Desma 10 provides a broad overview of the phenomena that make up design culture. It demonstrates that design does not mean only the "high design" of famous star designers and design and fashion companies. The most efficient design is often invisible - devices like door knobs and traffic lights help us without drawing attention to themselves. To understand design culture we must therefore pay attention to invisible things as well. We have to study the motives that guide their planning, their marketing, their reception and their uses.

Desma 10 will discuss the main movements and trends in design as a cultural and social phenomenon. Particular emphasis will be given to the interconnections between design and technology. The relationship between design and art will also be explored from a historical perspective within various contexts from the Victorian era and early 20th century modernism to the 1960s pop culture and Postmodernism. A rich array of demonstration material, ranging from classical industrial design to recent postmodern design trends, will be introduced.

The ultimate goal is to create design awareness: to inspire the student to look at and listen to one's everyday environments in new and critical ways.
WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Meeting 1 (Sep. 24) What is Design? What Is Design Culture?
Keywords: Definitions of design and culture / Design, nature, culture / Can animals design? / Design and Artificial Intelligence
Readings: No

Meeting 2 (Oct. 1) Design Culture – The Basics
Keywords: Visible and invisible design / high and low Design / design and art / Etymology of the word “design” / The beginnings of design culture
Readings:

Meeting 3 (Oct. 8) Design, Society and Technology
Keywords: Function and ornament / mass production and assembly lines / designer and engineer / Mechanisation and automation / Design and power / Streamlining
Readings:

Meeting 4 (Oct. 15) SPECIAL SESSION: The Great UCLA Design Game 4.0
Readings: No, but please BRING GOOD WALKING SHOES AND NOT TOO MUCH TO CARRY! If you are unable to walk please contact your TA in advance!

Meeting 5 (Oct. 22) Design for Public Spaces
Keywords: The Dream of Total Design / Art Nouveau / Konstructivism: design as political spectacle / Skyscrapers / World’s Fairs
Readings:

Meeting 6 (Oct. 29) Design, Consumers and Corporations
Keywords: Designing and marketing consumer goods / “built-in obsolescence” / corporate design and branding.
Readings:

(MIDTERM PROJECTS TO BE HANDED IN ON OCT. 29)

Meeting 7 (Nov. 5) Alternative Design
Keywords: Design and pop culture / Underground and psychedelia / Punk, Situationism / Design as weapon / Sustainable design

Readings:

Meeting 8 (Nov. 12) Design in the Postmodern Era I
Keywords: Keywords: / Design and art – blurred boundaries / Designer as “Superstar”/ Emotional Design / Design within media culture
Readings:

(MIDTERM PROJECTS WILL BE RETURNED ON NOV 12)

Meeting 9 (Nov. 19) SPECIAL SESSION: Peeks at the Design Process.
Reading: No

------- Nov. 26 Thanksgiving Holiday, No Class Meeting! ---------------

Meeting 10 (Dec. 3) Design in the Postmodern Era II
Proliferation of (de)sign / Interface design / Wearables, mobile interfaces / Design, surface, skin.
Readings:

(FINAL PROJECTS TO BE HANDED IN ON DEC. 3 !)

FINALS WEEK: No Class Meeting!

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GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

- There will be a midterm assignment and a final assignment. The midterm is an individual homework. The final is a group project (4-5 people in a group). The topics will be announced later.
- There will also be three unannounced multiple choice quizzes based on the previous week’s lecture and the readings assigned for the day of the quiz.
- There will also be a Special Session, “The Great UCLA Design Game”.
- The overall grade consists of the midterm assignment (35 %), the final assignment (40 %), the quizzes (3 x 5% = 15%) and the Great UCLA Design Game (10%).
- More than two absences (without the instructor's permission) will lower the final grade by one step per absence (-).
- In addition, a Blog will be set up. Active participation may raise the overall grade by one step (+).

REQUIRED READINGS

1. *A course reader* is available for purchase at CopyMat, Westwood Village, 10919 Weyburn Avenue (between the Bruin Theatre and Westwood Boulevard), tel. 310 - 824 5276 .


The student is expected to buy both the reader and Heskett’s book. A limited number of copies of both will be on reserve for consultation at the Arts Library (Public Policy Building).

COURSE READER: TABLE OF CONTENTS


**RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL READINGS**

The following books are recommended as additional readings. Whenever possible, copies are on reserve at the Arts Library (Public Policy Building):


**TIME AND PLACE OF CLASS MEETINGS**

Fridays from 9:00am to 11:50am at Haines 39.

**CONTACTS**

*Prof. Huhtamo:* by email (erhuhta@ucla.edu), or during office hours (Fridays, 12:30pm – 1:30pm, Dept. of Design | Media Arts, Broad Art Center, room 3251).

**The T.A.’s and their office hours:**
Each student will be assigned one of the T.A.’s as the primary contact person. For minor issues and questions it is recommended to use e-mail.

- **Joanna Cheung** (joshmoe@ucla.edu) Tuesdays, 12noon-1pm, at Café Untitled (Broad Art Center)
- **Jesse Chorng** (jessechorng@gmail.com) Thursdays, 12noon-1pm, at Café Untitled (Broad Art Center)
- **Jamie Hughins** (jhughins@ucla.edu), Fridays, 1-2pm, Perloff Hall, room b315
- **Noa Kaplan-Sears** (noa.kaplan.sears@gmail.com), Thursdays, 1-2pm, at Café Untitled (Broad Art Center)
- **Rhazes Spell** (rhazes2119@ucla.edu), Wednesday, 11-12am, at Café Untitled (Broad Art Center)
COURSE WEBSITE

http://classes.design.ucla.edu/Fall10/10/

(Will be available early next week!)