Design Contexts. Culture, History, Art and Architecture

2025–26 / 200932

Credits: 6 ECTS
Language: English
Contact Hours: 45 Hours

Course Description

This course relates different branches of human knowledge like architecture, design, sociology, history and art with the aim of developing a cognitive map of the world. The course analyzes the basic theories and practices of art, architecture and design from the industrial revolution to the present day and discusses their social and cultural impact. Taking Barcelona as a case study, the course will provide the student with analytical and discursive tools in order to develop a global understanding of design and its relationship with the social context from a critical and innovative point of view. The analysis of Barcelona, which epitomizes the formation process of the modern industrial city and its shifting to the post-industrial metropolis of the globalization era, will be related with the specific contexts of the students, with the aim of reflecting on the different approaches to the design issues from a multicultural perspective.

The course takes advantage of the extensive resources of Barcelona, complementing the classes with visits to the city's museums such as MNAC (National Museum of Art of Catalonia), MACBA (Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona), Joan Miró Foundation and the Picasso Museum, emblematic buildings by Gaudi, Mies van der Rohe and other world class architects, among others.

Modules

→ The shifting city: history, society and urban design in context
→ Ways of seeing, ways of living: architecture and interior design
→ Between arts & crafts, mass production and customization: graphic and product design
→ Expression: the Art and Design experience

Learning Objectives / Outcomes

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:
→ Analyze examples of modern art and design.
→ Identify the fundamental factors related to design, art and architecture, such as economy, tradition, and use.
→ Discuss the relationship between art, design, society and culture.
→ Apply methodologies and principles related to art and design to any case study.

Requirements

→ Students will be asked to read key texts, research, visit museums and art galleries in Barcelona, and present to the rest of the class the results of their work.
→ A sketchbook will be the method through which students will write, draw, compare and synthesize all the topics of the course.
→ A final project will confirm the students' capacity to apply the methodologies of the course and communicate their findings.

Teaching Method

This course will combine classroom lectures, reading and discussions sessions, visits to museums, buildings, art galleries, and class presentations on individual sketchbooks.

Grading

10% attendance to class and field visits
20% commitment and participation in class discussions
30% research process and personal reflection
40% research outcomes

Students will have to complete all the parts included in the grade weights and earn at least a 5/10 in each part.

Bibliography

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→ MASSEY, Anne. Interior design of the 20th century. London: Thames and Hudson, 1990.
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→ HESKETT, John. Design, a very short introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
→ RAIZMAN, David. History of Modern Design. London: Laurence King, 2003.
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→ HELLER, S. Merz to Emigre and Beyond: Avant-Garde Magazine Design of the Twentieth Century. Londres: Phaidon, 2003.
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→ HUGHES, Robert. Barcelona. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.