Retail Design and Visual Merchandising

2025–26 / 200938

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

Course Description

Retail is, by its very nature the perfect showplace for new ideas, new concepts and new products. As such, the store environment serves as the selling stage for the latest merchandise offerings of the day, and a tool of communication used to create a dialogue with the targeted customer.

The specific design of the retail space in terms of the adequacy of the interior layout and the study of the public fluxes, a suitable choice of materials for the walls, flooring and ceilings, as well as the graphic applications and the lighting, determine the spatial quality of the store. Through effective visual merchandising, the retailer communicates both the attributes of the brand and the attributes of the products offered.

The main goal of this course is to introduce students to the importance of retail design and visual merchandising as an integral component of a successful retail strategy. The principles, philosophies and technologies of both, retail design and visual merchandising will be studied through exploration of the marketplace, visits, and hands-on classroom experimentation.

Modules

→ Approach to the classic creative process: briefing, brainstorming, ideas scheme, concept.
→ Space analysis of a store.
→ Materials used in interiors and visual merchandising.
→ Store windows, concept development
→ Lighting: types and applications.
→ Final project: students will apply the already defined concept to the complete design of a retail space, its facade, and its furniture

Learning Objectives / Outcomes

At the end of the course, the student will be able to:
→ Create and apply a new concept or idea in a interior retail space or shop window.
→ Categorize different kinds of products and materials, and analyze them.
→ Select different products and materials to showcase a specific product in a shop.
→ Apply knowledge acquired during visits to shops to the design process.

Requirements

→ Interest in interior design, furniture and materials is required.

Teaching Method

This course will combine lectures, practical exercise to apply concepts, and visits to shops and lighting showrooms.

Grading

20% commitment and participation in class discussion
30% design process
50% design outcomes

Students must complete all components of the grading and must achieve a minimum of 5/10 in each of them.

Bibliography

→ CASTETS, Simon (et. al.): Louis Vuitton: art, fashion and architecture. New York: Rizzoli, 2009.
→ HEIMANN, Jim; HELLER, Steven, (eds.): Shop America. Midcentury Storefront Design. Köln: Taschen, 2007.
→ MORGAN, Tony: Visual merchandising: window in-store displays for retail. London: Laurence King, 2008.
→ NEUFERT, Ernst; NEUFERT, Peter; KISTER, Johannes: Architects' data. Chichester, West Sussex, UK & Ames, Iowa: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.
→ PRACHT, Klaus: Tiendas: planificación y diseño. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2004.
→ SCHMIDT, Petra; TIETENBERG, Annette; WOLLHEIM, Ralf (eds.): Patterns in Design Art and Architecture. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2005.