

San José State University
Department of Design / Industrial Design Program
DSID 122, Critical & Contextual Studies: Industrial Design
Section 1/2, Spring 2022

Instructor:	Mara Holt Skov
Email:	mara.skov@sjsu.edu (preferred method of contact)
Office Hours:	30 minutes after class and by appointment
Office Location:	All office hours will be scheduled on Zoom
Class Days/Times:	Tuesday/Thursday 12:00 pm to 2:50 pm
Classroom:	In person Art 205 and online on Zoom
Prerequisites:	DSGN 100W or Instructor Permission

Course Description

Critical & Contextual Studies: Industrial Design offers readings, research, discussions and activities relevant to the practice of Industrial Design. Throughout the semester we will address four areas of investigation: What design is and what it means, how we design, who we are designing for, and how design can help solve some of the most pressing problems of our time. These four modules are intended to introduce you to many of the key figures, products, concepts and practices of Industrial Design while at the same time complementing and supporting your studio work and personal interests in design.

Course Goals

Critical and Contextual Studies will help you develop a strong foundation for your work at SJSU (and beyond). It will encourage you see the world around you and your place within it with greater awareness. Finally, it will teach you to look more broadly at the important cultural, social, economic, political, technological and environmental factors that influence design, and to apply what you have learned to your own design practice.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Every course is designed to fulfill specific learning outcomes. When you complete this semester in Critical and Contextual Studies you should have mastered the following:

LO1 Describe the cultural, social, economic, political, technological and environmental factors that affect and have been affected by design and mass production.

LO2 Develop an understanding of national and global designers and designed objects, and analyze how their work influences and is influenced by broader cultural forces.

LO3 Use valid research methods to learn about design history and designers, including projects, methods and philosophies that were developed and evolved within specific times and places.

LO4 Explain how designed objects communicate cultural, functional, and human values and how these values can vary by culture and over time.

LO5 Identify a range of influences on industrial design that impact what we create including cultural, material, technological, economic and psychological influences.

LO6 Discuss, critique and write about your own work within the context of contemporary culture and the Industrial Design profession today.

Required Readings and Textbooks

No specific textbook or reader is required for this class. All assigned readings will be provided as PDFs or links uploaded to Canvas.

Required Tools and Materials

You will need a notebook for taking notes in class, a computer for writing papers and designing layouts and slide presentations. You will need access to a printer to print out designed posters when we do presentations and workshops in class. All final assignments both written and designed will be submitted digitally to Canvas in PDF format.

Course Format and Requirements

Course instruction includes short slide lectures, reading discussions, object lessons, student presentations, and peer review and critique. Weekly homework will be between 3-6 hours of reading, research, writing and designing posters and presentations. Success in this class will be based on your preparation for each class meeting, active participation in our discussions and activities and the writing and design assignments that you submit.

All course materials and communication such as the syllabus, assignment briefs, readings, slide presentations, grading and weekly announcements will be accessible on Canvas. All drafts and final versions of assignments will be submitted on Canvas according to required due dates. Written assignments and designed layouts must fulfill all requirements as stated in the assignment briefs.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation, studying, and other course related activities.

Because we are a small group, that means that you will get lots of individual attention and each person will be expected to contribute actively to our class discussions. This class is an important space for you to develop the presentation and design skills to communicate your own critical voice and intentions in design. But with this opportunity comes with the responsibility to be prepared each week so you can fully participate in every class meeting. That way you will get the most out of the experience and you will offer the most to our group.

In Person and Online Class Protocols

As designers, we rarely work alone and we really rely on our teams and partners so we will work this semester on mastering active engagement with others in our in person and our online learning spaces. You are expected to be on time to class meetings and to return on time after breaks. When meeting on Zoom you will need to turn your camera on so that we can all feel each other's presence. If you want to use a digital backdrop for Zoom that is just fine – just remember that how you present yourself is also a designed experience so make your Zoom presence reflect you!

Engagement in class activities is a significant factor in your success in this class and in every class in the SJSU Industrial Design program and in the profession. It also facilitates your intellectual growth, enhances your skills, helps you become a life-long learner and most importantly, it will help you become a successful designer. Please let me know as soon as possible how I can best support any accommodations you might need for our class.

Assignments

There are three assignment types for our class that add up to a total of 100 points possible for the semester. Due dates and times for each assignment are listed on each assignment brief and scheduled on Canvas. If for some reason you cannot submit an assignment on time, please email me and we can discuss it.

Module Assignments (2 for 10 points, 2 for 15 points) – Each Module will include a multi-week assignment that relates to the larger themes of that Module. These assignments will be research-based and require designed responses (presentations or posters). In these assignments, you are expected to revise and refine your work based on feedback from your instructor, your peers and on your own expectations for excellent work. Your final version of each assignment will be presented to the class on the final week of each Module.

Participation Assignments (15 for 2 points each) – Points for participation are based on responses to the day's presentations, discussions and activities. For in-person class meetings there will be discussions and activities and some written responses to complete. For online class meetings there will be a written prompt to complete as a Canvas forum response. If you miss class or are significantly late to join our meetings, your participation grade will suffer.

Lessons for Designers (4 for 5 points each) – Written reflections about our Module topics are assigned at the end of each Module. They are meant to help you sum up your learning and comment on the aspects of each Module that were the most valuable and interesting to you. They give you the chance to further develop your analytic and critical voice as a designer and are more free-form and open than our other assignments.

OPTIONAL Extra Credit (5 points) - One extra credit assignment will be offered before the end of the semester to all students who might want or need to improve their course grade.

Final Examination and Evaluation

We will not have a final examination meeting. Instead your final Lessons for Designers response will be due at the end of the day on Thursday, May 19.

Grading

Grading is based on a scale of 100 with all assignments totaling 100 points. Grading will follow the standard SJSU A-F system based on the following points values:

Grade	Points	Percentage
A plus	96 to 100 points	96 to 100%
A	93 to 95 points	93 to 95%
A minus	90 to 92 points	90 to 92%
B plus	86 to 89 points	86 to 89 %
B	83 to 85 points	83 to 85%
B minus	80 to 82 points	80 to 82%
C plus	76 to 79 points	76 to 79%
C	73 to 75 points	73 to 75%
C minus	70 to 72 points	70 to 72%
D plus	66 to 69 points	66 to 69%
D	63 to 65 points	63 to 65%
D minus	60 to 62 points	60 to 62%

University Policies

Per [University Policy SI6-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/SI6-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/SI6-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>), which is hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Academic Integrity

The University Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. We have ZERO tolerance for academic dishonesty – it doesn't do any good for a student if they don't learn to do their own work and it is not fair to others who DO do their own work. You can find the Student Conduct and Ethical Development policy at the following address – <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/> .

Plagiarism – At SJSU plagiarism is defined as the act of representing the work of another as one's own without giving appropriate credit, regardless of how that work was obtained, and/or submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism at SJSU includes but is not limited to:

- 1.2.1 The act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts of, and/or the specific substance of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and/or representing the product as one's own work;
- 1.2.2 Representing another's artistic/scholarly works such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, paintings, drawing, sculptures, or similar works as one's own.

For DSID 122, this means that you are expected to write all assignments in your own words and give proper credit to ideas that were borrowed from others in footnotes and bibliographies. You are fully accountable for understanding plagiarism policies. To learn more about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it go to <https://www.sjsu.edu/cs100w/policies/plagiarism>.

Course Schedule

The schedule is subject to change with fair notice (one week) announced in class and on Canvas. Some adaptation might be necessary to adjust to potential online meeting requirements.

Week	Date	Topics, Activities, Readings, Assignments
1	Thurs 1/27	<p>Module 1: What is Design? What Does Design Mean? Topics: Introduction to Critical and Contextual Studies in Design Taste and value in design Class discussion: What is the meaning of taste and value? Participation assignment: Taste and Value in My Object Reading for participation assignment: Paola Antonelli, <i>Humble Masterpieces</i> (2005) Module assignment given: The Chair as a Cultural Construct</p>
2	Thurs 2/3	<p>Module 1: What is Design? What Does Design Mean? Topics: The form, function and meaning of the chair Iconic chairs from the 20th century Class discussion: What do chairs mean to designers, makers and users? Read/Review/Watch for class: Ralph Caplan, Introduction to <i>Chair</i> (1978) Elicot Nana Kwaku Okyere “Traditional African Stool” (n.d.) Christie’s auction house webpage on a Xiao Yi folding chair (n.d.) Presentation: Design history in ten iconic 20th century chairs Participation assignment: One Iconic 20th Century Chair Module assignment due: Chair as a Cultural Construct research DRAFT</p>
3	Thurs 2/10	<p>Module 1: What is Design? What Does Design Mean? Topics: What designed objects signify Chair presentation workshops Class discussion: How can we move beyond form and function into meaning? Read/Review/Watch for class: Roland Barthes selections from <i>Mythologies</i> (1957) Sean Hall selections from <i>This Means This, This Means That</i> (2012) Participation assignment: The Form, Function, Feeling of My Object Module assignment due: The Chair as a Cultural Construct presentation DRAFT</p>
4	Tues 2/15	<p>Module 1: What is Design? What Does Design Mean? Topic: The Chair as a Cultural Construct presentations Object lesson: Designed objects from selected chair designers Participation assignment: Presentation and feedback, no submission needed Module assignment due: The Chair as a Cultural Construct presentation FINAL Lessons for Designers assignment given/due: On “What Design Is/What It Means”</p>

5	Tues 2/22	<p>Module 2: How Do We Design? Topics: Designing for People: ergonomics and human factors Defining functionality and user experience Class discussion: How can we design “for people”? Read/Review/Watch for class: Henry Dreyfuss “Joe and Josephine” (1955) Presentation: A short history of ergonomic design Object lesson: Tools for Ergonomic Design Participation assignment: Ergonomic Design Tools, no submission needed Module assignment given: Functionality / User Experience poster project</p>
6	Tues 3/1	<p>Module 2: How Do We Design? Topic: Storytelling for designers Class discussion: How can we tell compelling stories about our designs? Read/Review/Watch for class: Storytelling Design website https://storytelling.design/storytelling.html Emma Coats Pixar 22 Rules for Great Storytelling (2012) Paul Jarvis “The 5 Common elements of Good Storytelling” (2014) Eli Silva Montgomery “Strategic Storytelling for Designers (2017) Presentation: Storytelling for designers Object lesson: Bobjects! Participation assignment: Story Spine Stories, no submission needed Module assignment due: Functionality / User Experience text DRAFT</p>
7	Tues 3/8	<p>Module 2: How Do We Design? Topics: Big Ideas and Keywords Functionality / User Experience poster discussion small groups Class discussion: How can we use rich language to express meaning in our designs? Presentation: Keywords in Mara’s recent book <i>The Impermanence of Things</i> Participation assignment: Big Ideas and Keywords brainstorm Module assignment due: Functionality / User Experience poster design DRAFT</p>
8	Tues 3/15	<p>Module 2: How Do We Design? Topic: Functionality and User Experience poster presentations Participation assignment: Presentation and feedback, no submission needed Module assignment due: Functionality / User Experience poster design FINAL Lessons for Designers assignment given/due: On “How We Design”</p>

9	Tues 3/22	<p>Module 3: Who Are We Designing For? Topics: Stakeholders in product Creation/Production/Consumption/Distribution Using TED Talks as research Class discussion: Who (and what) matters most when we design? Read/Review/Watch for class: Paul du Gay et al. “The Sony Walkman” (1997) Marcus Mutz “How Supply Chain Transparency can Help the Planet” (2019) Participation assignment: Identifying stakeholders response Module assignment given: TED Talks as a Research Tool</p>
	3/29	<p>Spring Break. No class meeting this week.</p>
10	Tues 4/5	<p>Module 3: Who Are We Designing For? Topic: Defining Sustainability Strategies Class discussion: The complexities and contradictions of sustainable design? Read/Review/Watch for class: William McDonough, Michael Braungart “A Question of Design”(2002) Janine Benyus TED Talk on Biomimicry (2005) Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim TED Talk on Indigenous Knowledge (2019) The Okala Strategy Wheel (2014) Object lesson: Dematerialization Participation assignment: Okala Strategy Wheel examples, no submission needed Module assignment due: TED Talks as a Research Tool paper DRAFT 1</p>
11	Tues 4/12	<p>Module 3: Who Are We Designing For? Topic: Universal Design and Accessibility Class discussion: How can we define good design for aging and/or disabled people? Read/Review/Watch for class: Luticha Doucette “If You’re in a Wheelchair, Segregation Lives” (2017) Liz Jackson “We are the Original Lifhackers” (2018) Alice Wong “Resisting Ableism” (2017) Experiential Research: Mobility tools for the disabled Participation assignment: Sharing knowledge about disability, activists, media and tools for independent living, no submission needed Module assignment due: TED Talks as a Research Tool paper DRAFT 2</p>
12	Tues 4/19	<p>Module 3: Who Are We Designing For? Topic: TEDtalks as a Research Tool presentations Participation assignment: Presentation and feedback, no submission needed Module assignment due: TED Talks as a Research Tool presentation FINAL Lessons for Designers assignment given/due: On “Who We are Designing For”</p>

13	Tues 4/26	<p>Module 4: How Can Design Help? How Can I Help? Topic: Design for Social Good Class discussion: What exactly <i>IS</i> design for social good? Presentation: Case studies in design for social good Participation assignment: Examples of design for social good, no submission needed Module assignment given: How Design Can Help / How I Can Help</p>
14	Tues 5/3	<p>Module 4: How Can Design Help? How Can I Help? Topics: Designing for the End of Life How Design Can Help poster discussion groups Class discussion: Can we “design for death” at the same time as we “design for life”? Read/Review/Watch for class: Lulu Wang podcast “What You Don’t Know” (2016) Selections from <i>Arcade Journal</i> (Summer 2020) Reimagine End of Life website - https://letsreimagine.org/ Presentation: Case studies in design for the end of life Participation assignment: Concerning the End of Life response Module assignment due: How Design Can Help / How I Can Help poster DRAFT</p>
15	Tues 5/10	<p>Module 4: How Can Design Help? How Can I Help? Topic: Final How Design Can Help poster presentations Participation assignment: Presentation and feedback, no submission needed Module assignment due: How Design Can Help / How I Can Help poster FINAL</p>
FINAL	Thurs 5/19	<p>Lessons for Designers assignment given/due: On “How Designers Can Help” No meeting during final exam time, just complete the final Lessons assignment.</p>