



## **DS 223 ITALIAN DESIGN: THEORY AND PRACTICE**

IES Abroad Milan

### **DESCRIPTION:**

This course introduces students to the history and evolution of Italian Design and the design process methods, with a focus on product, service, and strategic design. We will explore the reasons and context that gave rise to the worldwide phenomenon of Italian Design, as well as its evolution. Italian Design will be presented through the lives and works of the greatest designers and the most innovative Italian companies. During the course, field trips will be organized to allow students to visit the former studios of two of the most famous Masters of Design in Milan, such as Fondazione Franco Albini and Fondazione Vico Magistretti.

Then we will focus on the product-service system dimension of design, which can govern and channel change and innovation evolutionarily in line with our world's changing context and sustainability challenges. In particular, in the second part of the course, students will develop a product-service design project, focusing on the evolving retail experience, affected by trends like digitalization, globalization, and sustainability. Students will be asked to analyze the proposed topic and propose a new product-service solution for a specific target living in Milan.

**CREDITS:** 3

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** English

**PREREQUISITES:** none

### **METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**

Lectures, discussions, creative sessions, case studies, field studies, student presentations.

### **REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**

- Course Participation, course related trips included - 10%
- Midterm Exam - 20%
- Final Exam - 50%
- Individual presentations - 20%

#### **Course Participation**

An important part of the learning will be done in class through discussions and presentation of case studies. Students are expected to take an active part in these discussions by contributing their own experiences as well as concepts learned from assigned readings, homework, and lecture materials.

#### **Midterm Exam**

The exam is a written test of closed and open questions, based on the readings, lectures, and on learnings during the course related trips.

#### **Final Exam**

During the course, students will work in small teams to develop a product-service project. The final exam will be the opportunity to present the design process, the choices taken, and the final result. Team presentations will be supported by slides and by the prototype of the developed object.

#### **Group presentations**

During the course, students will work in small teams. Each group will be responsible for developing the final design project and doing research during the course. Every research will be presented to the rest of the class; each team member will be required to take an active role in both the research and the presentations.



### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand the role of Italian design in influencing design practice
- Learning the peculiar nature of the Italian design culture and the new directions of the design practice today
- Know how to innovate using design methodologies and phases by applying a trial-and-error approach
- Design a working prototype of their final object
- Test their creative skills and become familiar with design basic skills and mindset
- Be aware and able to imagine a product-service solution.

### ATTENDANCE POLICY:

As a member of our class community, you are expected to be present and on time every day. Attending class has an impact on your learning and academic success. For this reason, the IES Abroad Milan attendance policy allows for the following number of absences, which are intended to be used for physical and mental health reasons:

THREE (3) absences in each Italian language course,  
TWO (2) absences in each Area Studies course,  
ONE (1) absence in each seminar course or course meeting 1 day a week,  
ZERO (0) absences in each course of individual music instruction.

Every absence beyond this allowance will automatically result in a penalty of 2 percentage points off the final grade. SEVEN (7) absences will result in a failing grade in Italian language and Area Studies courses. FOUR (4) absences will result in a failing grade in seminar or 1-day-a-week courses. Failure to attend a scheduled exam, test, quiz, or presentation will automatically result in an F grade on that assessment.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students are expected to abide by the **IES Abroad Code of Academic Integrity**. All work submitted by a student for academic credit should constitute the student's own original work. Any work submitted for academic credit may be subject to review by a textual similarity detection service for the detection of plagiarism and AI usage.

### CONTENT:

| Week   | Content                                                                                                                                                                                       | Assignments                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 1 | <b>Introduction to the course</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Syllabus &amp; Course Overview</li><li>• The main content of the course and students' expectations</li></ul>        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|        | <b>Design Evolution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The evolution of Design Practices</li></ul>                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading: Laura Giacalone, "What does Italian design mean to you?"</li><li>• Reading: "What is Italian Design? A look to history for ideas," Giampiero Bosoni</li></ul> |
| Week 2 | <b>Historical background</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction to the Italian historical context and the reasons behind the worldwide success of Italian design.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assignment: research assigned designer or entrepreneur (evaluated individual work)</li></ul>                                                                           |

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|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Week 3</b> | <b>Strategic Design and Service Design</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guest Lecture with Design Professional</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading: Arquilla, Venanzio (2022). "The value of design today." In <i>Transformation by Design: Planning design strategies and services for the next generation digital challenges</i>. Maggioli Spa (The pdf is uploaded in Moodle)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Week 4</b> | <b>Course-related trip 1: Fondazione Franco Albini</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire knowledge about the methodology and projects of this Master of Italian Design.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|               | <b>Course-related trip 2: Fondazione Vico Magistretti</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire knowledge about the methodology and projects of this Master of Italian Design.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Week 5</b> | <b>Master and Entrepreneur of Italian Design presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students present the research about the assigned Master of Italian design</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|               | <b>Project Launch of the group work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of the design project and the start of the discovery phase</li> <li>Prepare discovery plan and begin analysis of the project topic (group work)</li> </ul> <b>Quiz!</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get ready for the midterm exam</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Week 6</b> | <b>Midterm Exam</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|               | <b>Design Project: Discovery phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue the analysis of the project topic and of the assigned brand using the product system canvas and the service design tools start the Trend Research and analysis (group work)</li> </ul>                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue Brand analysis (Group work)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Week 7</b> | <b>Design Project: Discovery phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present the As-is analysis</li> <li>Start the Trend research</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct Trend research (Group work)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Week 8</b> | <b>Design Project: Discovery phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who do we design for?</li> <li>What problem are we trying to solve?</li> <li>Review the trend research</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct User research (Group work)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Week 9</b> | <b>Design Project: Synthesis and Definition. From insights to problem definition and idea generation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mapping the opportunity space</li> <li>Problem Definition</li> <li>Idea Generation</li> <li>Idea Selection</li> </ul>                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize the Idea Selection and Definition (Group work)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                               |

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| Week 10     | <b>Design Project: Development</b><br>Project presentation: the groups present to the class the state of the art of the research and of the project                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|             | <b>Design Project: the New Product-Service system</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to visualize the idea: Service design tools and methods</li> <li>Activity in class and review</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the Service Design Tools to visualize your idea (Group work)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                               |
| Week 11     | <b>Design Project: Prototyping</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project review</li> </ul>                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get ready for the final! (Group work)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                          |
|             | <b>Design Project: Testing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final phase of the design process: test your project</li> </ul>                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect test feedback. What can you learn from it? (Group work)</li> <li>Prepare the final presentation (Group work)</li> <li>Peer review (Individual)</li> <li>Course evaluation (Individual)</li> </ul> |
| Finals week | <b>Final Exam, date T.B.D.</b>                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

#### COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Fondazione Franco Albini
- Fondazione Vico Magistretti

#### REQUIRED READINGS:

- Arquilla, Venanzio (2022). "The value of design today." In *Transformation by Design: Planning design strategies and services for the next generation digital challenges*. Maggioli Spa.  
<https://www.fujitsu.com/downloads/DESIGN/document/transformationbydesign-en.pdf>
- Bosoni, Giampiero "What is Italian Design? A look to history for ideas,". (New York: MOMA, 2008). <https://italianjournal.it/what-is-italian-design-a-look-to-history-for-ideas/>
- Giacalone, Laura, "What Does Italian Design Mean to You? The design world answers the Italian Journal's question," *Italian Journal*, <https://italianjournal.it/what-does-italian-design-mean-to-you-the-design-world-answers-the-italian-journals-question/>
- Hanlon, Mike, "The Scooter – The Short History of a Cultural Icon," *New Atlas—New Technology & Science News*, New Atlas, Apr 18, 2005, <https://newatlas.com/the-scooter-the-short-history-of-a-cultural-icon/3954/>
- Manzini, Ezio "Design" RSA Event, 2016 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6WQNZWAYVc&ab\\_channel=RSA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6WQNZWAYVc&ab_channel=RSA)
- Marengoni, Elena (2022). "Designing the Intangible: Services and Service Design Methodologies and Tools." In *Transformation by Design: Planning design strategies and services for the next generation digital challenges*. Maggioli Spa.  
<https://www.fujitsu.com/downloads/DESIGN/document/transformationbydesign-en.pdf>

#### RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Carella, G., & Zurlo, F. (2024). *Strategic (Multiform) Design—The wide spectrum of applications of Strategic Design*. Maggioli Editore.
- Castelli Giulio, Antonelli Paola, Picchi Francesca, *La fabbrica del Design. Conversazioni con i protagonisti del design italiano*. Skira 2006
- Mignolo, Andrea "Completing the Four Orders" , Medium <https://medium.com/the-design-of-things/completing-the-four-orders-3ee0dcb34053>
- Munari Bruno "Da cosa nasce cosa", Laterza, Bari, 1981
- Norman, Don "The term UX", NNgroup, 2016 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BdtGjoIN4E&ab\\_channel=NNgroup](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BdtGjoIN4E&ab_channel=NNgroup)

- Prestero, Timothy “Design for people, not awards”, TEDxBoston, 2013  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpldYJ3sSlo&ab\\_channel=TED](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpldYJ3sSlo&ab_channel=TED)
- Sudjic, Deyan “How Could We Stop The Future Even If We Wanted To?” TEDxHousesofParliament, 2013  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFRRB8ijcL8&ab\\_channel=TEDxTalks](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFRRB8ijcL8&ab_channel=TEDxTalks)
- Shostack, L. (1984). “Designing services that deliver”. Harvard business review, 62(1), 133-139.
- Vercelloni Matteo *Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni*, - Minimum design – English edition