Design and its Discontents: Design, Society, Economy and Culture is a mid-career lecture + studio course in the Graphic Design program. It is designated as a “Writing Intensive” course, and meets those requirements. It is a thesis preparatory experience that will provide students with the opportunity to complete a series of in-depth research papers and supporting design projects. The success of these comprehensive graphic design projects will depend on good research, reasoned and well conceived proposals, a rigorous design process and impeccable presentation skills.

This Writing Intensive course will be a combination of lecture, research and studio production. Through our work we will redefine the boundaries of what it means to write, seamlessly integrating writing processes with hands-on studio production in the form of project proposals, project reflections, process blogging and first person phenomenological research.

COURSE ACTIVITIES & LEARNING MODELS
The research papers and resulting projects will be of the complexity and magnitude to warrant assignment in a rigorous, mid-career, college level course. It is expected that the design projects will be of high quality, both in concept and technical execution. The content of both the papers and the projects will relate to current societal issues with the intent of positioning the student as an active force within the design profession, within the beliefs and values of our society and as producers and ‘consumers’ of our culture.

Written and verbal criticism, analysis, documentation and reflection, with the goal of assessing the roles visual communications play in our economy, society and culture, will be incorporated into the course.

Students will read essays, articles and excerpts from books and other sources that discuss design, culture, politics and history from a variety of critical perspectives. The nature of the readings will range from the topical to the historical. The writing styles encountered will range from breezy and conversational to esoteric and philosophical. All of the readings are intended to enhance the student's understanding of their personal relationship within our economy, our culture in all its forms and the consumercentric society which we help propagate through our work.

Following the dialectical model of exposition the themes, theories and ideas explored in the readings will be discussed at great length in the classroom. In addition each student, either individually or with a group, will have the opportunity to lead the discussion for the readings on a given day and topic.

Design offers quite extraordinary opportunities to serve the community, to enhance our living environment and to advance humankind. The successful designer needs to overcome these pitfalls however and to start earning some serious money.

—Anonymous
Writing is an important component of this course. There will be a series of three to four writing assignments that will require the student to use penetrating cognitive and analytical skills as well as insightful emotional and volitional processes. Some of the writing will be “low-stakes” assignments that will engage one’s intuition and ability to deconstruct and “read” their environment. At least one writing project will be much more in depth and require the student to gather data, resources and experiences over a prolonged period of time and synthesize that information into a cohesive and compelling research paper and presentation. The students will be expected to maintain a blog centered around the themes of the class. The student will be expected to subscribe to, read and comment on the blogs of classmates.

There will be a series of research activities that will be performed both in class and in the field. The duration of some activities will be a few hours while others will last several weeks. Throughout the semester students will be required to analyze, internalize, synthesize and realize2. Meaning, most class activities will eventually lead to or be used to inform the production of some type of deliverable; whether it be a written paper, a presentation, an exhibition or even an object.

The course structure and content are framed using a holistic3 approach wherein all activities are intended to develop sensitivity and build awareness of the student’s own personal relationship within a consumer-centric economy and culture as well as their roles and responsibilities within society as designers. Students will be required to think critically and analytically to make broader connections exploring the personal via the universal and the universal via the personal experience. With this in mind, the phenomenological4 model of research and exposition will be vigorously embraced in all assignments.

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME**
- Develop and implement an integrated research and design project
- Deepen students’ awareness of their role as creators and consumers of visual and material culture
- Investigate issues of both professional and personal ethics including broader global contexts of environment, economy and culture.
- Examine the role of the designer as a citizen in society, including rights and responsibilities
- Demonstrate ability to integrate investigative, analytical, and creative
- Demonstrate problem solving and critical thinking skills in assessment and analysis of course content in the form of assigned readings, presentations and lectures.

**MATERIALS**
It is expected that students have all the tools and supplies that are needed for the design and execution of studio projects and will purchase additional materials and processes as necessary. However as a part of your information gathering process the following items will be of great use:
- Digital Camera
- Large plastic storage bin (assignment 2)
- Plastic zip-lock storage bags (assignment 2)
Although some studio time will be provided to address technical, aesthetic and developmental issues in your projects, GDES 2399 is not a studio class—you will do the vast majority of your project outside of class time. Also, keep in mind that the course workload is commensurate with a 3 credit, senior-level class. Due to class size and number of expectations required there will be no extra-credit for this class.

**GRADING POLICIES**

**Permanent Grades for Academic Work: The University of Minnesota Senate “Uniform Grading Policy”**

1. There are five permanent grades given for a single course for which credit shall be awarded, which will be entered on a student’s official transcript. A-B-C-D-F grades include pluses and minuses, as follows, and carry the indicated grade points. The S grade shall not carry grade points but the credits shall count toward the student’s degree program if allowed by the college, campus, or program.

   - **A = 4.00**
   - **A- = 3.67**
   - **B+ = 3.33**
   - **B = 3.00**
   - **B- = 2.67**
   - **C+ = 2.33**
   - **C = 2.00**
   - **C- = 1.67**
   - **D+ = 1.33**
   - **D = 1.00**
   - **F**

   Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.

2. These definitions apply to grades awarded to students who are not enrolled in graduate programs, but the grade points are the same no matter the level or course of enrollment.

   - **A = 4.00**
   - **A- = 3.67**

   Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.

   - **B+ = 3.33**
   - **B = 3.00**
   - **B- = 2.67**

   Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.

   - **C+ = 2.33**
   - **C = 2.00**
   - **C- = 1.67**

   Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.

   - **D+ = 1.33**
   - **D = 1.00**

   Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.

For more information about Grading Structure please visit: [http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADINGTRANSCRIPTS.html](http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADINGTRANSCRIPTS.html)

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is required to learn the course material and will be taken daily. Two unexcused absences are the maximum allowed before the final grade is lowered by one letter grade. Excused absences are for substantiated medical and personal emergencies only, with documentation. Tardiness beyond ten minutes counts as an absence.
Punctuality Policy: Please arrive on time and plan to stay the entire session, unless notified otherwise. Tardiness in excess of ten minutes counts as an absence. Leaving class early will be counted as an absence. Final grades will be negatively impacted by excessive absences. We will take a brief break during the class session, usually around the halfway point. Assignments are also due on the specified date; late assignments will be lowered a letter grade.

Assignment Policy: Assignment sheets will be handed out for each project, describing the project parameters in detail and providing interim and final due dates. Pay attention to the constraints of the assignment, so that your time and effort are used effectively.

Late Projects: The student is required to complete all class assignments, and present them on time. Projects, which are one class period late, will be marked down one letter grade point (i.e., an A becomes a B). After that time, projects will not be graded except for extraordinary circumstances. Work not presented at critique will be considered late. Late work will be accepted at the class meeting immediately following the initial deadline only. Please note that thumbnail sketches, digital comps, journal entries, or other work that is not presented on time will also be deemed late.

If you have a problem completing the work on schedule, please see your instructor about alternative means of meeting your course obligation. Should such arrangements be made, it does not release you from any of the assignments required by this course. You will be given as much class time as possible to work on your assignments with your instructor in class.

Performance issues can influence your grade. These include active engaged participation in discussions, attendance, and timeliness. As a participant in this class you are expected to attend all classes and be on time. Class participation includes contributing to all discussions and in-class activities.

Policy for Missed Exams: Going into this class I want to avoid giving exams. In lieu of testing I have assigned weekly reading presentations. These will be group activities assigned and scheduled on the first day of class. It is the student responsibility to participate in the these presentations. If you are absent on the day of your group presentation there is no alternative for make-up and you will forfeit a large part of your participation grade.

Make Up for Legitimate Absences: If you are not able to attend class on presentation dates you must present me with a doctor’s note (or other official notice) and a make up project will be determined.

http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html

Release of Work Statement: Students understand that enrollment in this course grants consent for their work to be selected for inclusion in college or departmental publications (online or in print). Your instructor may select to use your work to represent her/his skills as an instructor in a teaching portfolio (online or in print).
GDes 2399W
Design and its Discontents
Design, Society, Economy and Culture

Spring
Tuesdays 8:30 AM - 11:00 AM
McNeal 10
1985 Buford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108

3 Credits

No Final Exam

Ron Ott
Graduate Instructor
E-mail: ottx0027@umn.edu
Office: McNeal 217
Office Hours: Tues 11pm - 12pm
and by appointment.

CLASSEROOM EXPECTATIONS GUIDELINES

Credits & Workload Expectations: For undergraduate courses, one credit is defined as an average of three hours of learning effort per week (over a full semester) necessary for an average student to achieve an average grade in the course. For example, a student taking a three credit course that meets for three hours a week should expect to spend an additional six hours a week on course work outside the classroom.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be grounds for awarding a grade of 'F' or 'N' for the entire course.

Academic Misconduct: Academic misconduct is defined as any act that violates the rights of another student with respect to academic work or involves misrepresentation of a student's own work. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to: cheating on assignments or examinations, plagiarizing pieces of work, depriving others of necessary course work, and sabotaging another's work. Discovery of academic misconduct is grounds for an 'F' or 'N' for the course.

Harassment: The University of Minnesota is committed to providing a safe climate for all students, faculty, and staff. All persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation. Reports of harassment are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help.

Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action: The University will provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/administrative/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.html

Access & Disability Accommodations: The University is committed to providing quality education to all students regardless of ability. Determining appropriate disability accommodations is a collaborative process. You as a student must register with Disability Services and provide documentation of your disability. The course instructor must provide information regarding a course's content, methods, and essential components. The combination of this information will be used by Disability Services to determine appropriate accommodations for a particular student in a particular course. For more information, please reference Disability Services: https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/

Mental Health Services: As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu
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GDes 2399W

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

» Students are responsible for all class meetings and materials, including any information contained in the syllabus.

» Students are responsible for being on time and preparing for all class sessions.

» Students are responsible for seeking help when needed. Students who need special accommodations are responsible for working with the instructor and the relevant University offices.

» Students may not make commercial use of their notes or lectures or University provided materials without the express written consent of the instructor.

» You are expected to be attentive during class, ask questions if you do not understand something, and to offer your opinion. You are also expected to listen respectfully to other students and your instructor when speaking. Racism, sexism, homophobia, classicism, ageism and other forms of bigotry are inappropriate forms of expression in this class.

» Students understand that enrollment in this course grant consent for their work to be selected for inclusion in college or departmental publications (online or in print). Your instructor may select to use your work to represent her/his skills as an instructor in a teaching portfolio (online or print).

Approved by the University Senate, April 20, 2000. To view the entire ‘Classroom Expectations Guidelines’ go to: http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTWORK.html

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Personal Electronic Devices in Classrooms: Please be respectful with laptops, tablets and smart phones. Put them on silent and refrain from use during lecture, discussion and presentations.

http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/CLASSROOMPED.html

Use of Class Notes and Materials:
http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/CLASSNOTESTUDENTS.html

Scholastic Dishonesty and Student Conduct Code:
http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf

Sexual Harassment:
http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/SexHarassment.pdf

Statement on Climate of Inclusivity:
You are expected to be attentive during class, ask questions if you do not understand something, and to offer your opinion. You are also expected to listen respectfully to other students and to me when speaking. The
University of Minnesota is committed to providing a safe climate for all students, faculty, and staff. All persons shall have equal access to its programs and facilities without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation. Racism, sexism, homophobia, classicism, ageism and other forms of bigotry are inappropriate to express in this class. Reports of harassment are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. (or refer to http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/administrative/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf)

Academic Freedom and Responsibility:
http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Academic_Freedom.pdf

Availability of Disability and Mental Health Services:
If you have any special classroom requirements please contact one of the offices listed below. They will work with you and, if necessary, they will contact the instructor to work out the details for any necessary accommodations.

Student Academic Success Service 340 Appleby Hall, Mpls 612-624-3323
Counseling/Consulting Services 199 Coffey Hall, St. Paul 612-624-3323
Disability Services 180 McNamara, Mpls, 612-626-1333
Center for Writing 10 Nicholson Hall, Mpls 612-626-7579

Or refer to http://www.ds.umn.edu/student-services.html and http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu

Tentative Course Schedule: Please refer to the Course Schedule as it appears on Moodle. Occasionally situations may arise (weather, illness) where scheduled events need to be changed. If this happens the Course Schedule will be updated and a new schedule will be e-mailed to each student as well as a change posted on Moodle.

Grading: Percentages
RP1 & 2 = 10%
RP3 = 15%
RP4 = 10%
RP5 = 20%
RP6 = 20%
RP7 = 15%
Participation through Reading Presentations and Discussions = 10%
Assignments may be subject to change.

One Last Thing . . .
I will communicate any information about the course, updates, changes, points of emphasis, etc., through University of Minnesota email. Please check your email regularly.