

COLLEGE OF DESIGN

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Syllabus Overview

Course Title	Design and its Discontent: Design, Society, Economy, and Culture
--------------	--

Course Designator	GDes	Section Number	001
Course Number	49758	Semester and Year	Spring 2020

Class Meeting Days & Time	Tuesday and Thursday 3:00PM-4:15PM
Classroom	10 McNeal
Number of Credits	3
Final Exam Date & Time (also state if there is NO final)	No Final Exam

Instructor's Information

Name	Ron Ott
Office Location	346 McNeal
Office Phone	N/A email is best contact
Email	ottx0027@umn.edu
Office Hours	Tuesday and Thursday 2pm – 3pm (walk-in), and by appointment

Course Information and Instructor's Expectations

Course Description:

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. This experience 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, reflections, process blogging and first person phenomenological research.

Course Prerequisites: DES 1101W: Intro to Design Thinking

Required and Recommended 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 depending on your project needs, any smart phone camera will be sufficient
- Large plastic storage bin (assignment 2 & 5)
- Plastic zip-lock storage bags (assignment 2 & 5)

Established Course Objectives:

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.

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.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO): following course completion (required for undergraduate courses only): GDes 2399W identifies all seven of the Student Learning Opportunities as a part or portion of this course through the successful delivery of all assignments, individual and group.

1. Can identify, define, and solve problems
2. Can locate and critically evaluate information
3. Have mastered a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry
4. Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies
5. Can communicate effectively
6. Understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression across disciplines
7. Have acquired skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning

GDes 2399W identifies the following as SLO's specific to the course that also fulfill those stated above:

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

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.

Students will read essays, articles and excerpts from books and other academic 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 consumer-centric 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.

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 visually embraced in all assignments.

1. *Dialectical Mode*: A method of argument or exposition that systematically weighs contradictory facts or ideas with a view to the resolution of their real or apparent contradictions.
2. *Analyze*: discover or reveal through examination.
Internalize: make part of one’s nature by learning.
Synthesize: combine a number of things into a coherent whole.
Realize: give actual or physical form to.
3. Emphasizing the organic or functional relation between parts and the whole.
4. The discipline of phenomenology may be defined initially as the study of structures of experience, or consciousness. Literally, phenomenology is the study of “phenomena”: appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience. Phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view.

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).

Attendance:

Attendance is required to learn the course material and will be taken daily. Two (2) unexcused absences are the maximum allowed before the final grade is lowered by one letter grade. Excused absences are for substantiated medical issues, illness, and unexpected and personal emergencies only, with documentation. Religious observation, family obligations, and other issues should be discussed with the instructor.

Please arrive on time and plan to stay the entire session. Tardiness in excess of 15 minutes may count as an absence. Leaving class early without alerting the instructor, will be counted as an absence. Final grades can be negatively impacted by excessive absences. If you have obligations that interfere with this class, it is the student’s responsibility to communicate with the instructor. Students are responsible for this class before jobs, athletics, campus organizations, or other campus events.

Final grades can be negatively impacted by excessive absences. Assignments are due on the specified date; late assignment grades can be lowered based on the turn in date.

Workload:

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 (C-, C, C+). For example, a student taking a three credit course that meets for three hours a week should expect to spend an additional six – ten hours a week on course work outside the classroom. Whether that grade is average, above average, or exceptional is up to the student’s ability to meet the deliverables outlined in the assignment and/or the rubric.

Grading Structure:

Please be aware that this course is structured on the A-F Grading Scale and issues (+/-) to letter grades A-F to determine specific levels of a letter grade. Please familiarize yourself with the A-F Grading Scale as determined by the University of Minnesota’s policies and GPA standards. This course does not issue A+ grades, the highest grade a student can receive is A.

Use of Rubrics for Grading and Feedback:

GDes 2399W uses rubrics to relate a score of 1 – 5 on project categories to arrive at a total average which has an equivalent of a letter grade your grade for that project. Rubrics are used for grading in this course and uses percentages not a point system. Each rubric is usually made up of 3 to 6 categories.

Feedback will be indicated on the rubric with short comments and a point score. If a student wants more feedback on writing, strategies to increase grades, or for more guidance you must come to office hours or schedule a time with myself or the Teaching Assistant to assess your work one/one. Because APA is a formal style of writing there are clear guidelines between the rubric and the stylistic rules where grades will be indicated by a score and brief comments.

A typical rubric category will have a score between 1 – 5 including a decimal system. The categories are added and then averaged to come to a grade score. The final rubric score will indicate grades A – F and grades in between as +/- . For example an average rubric score of 3.8 = B+.

- 5.00 – 4.5 = A
- 4.49 - 4.0 = A-
- 3.99 – 3.7 = B+
- 3.69 – 3.4 = B
- 3.39 – 3.0 = B-
- 2.99 – 2.7 = C+
- 2.69 – 2.4 = C
- 2.39 – 2.0 = C-

- 1.99 – 1.7 = D+ Unsatisfactory to pass the class
- 1.69 – 1.4 = D Unsatisfactory to pass the class
- 1.39 – 1.0 = D- Unsatisfactory to pass the class

A breakdown of project weights that make up the final grade along with participation and attendance:

- Research Project 1 & 2 = 15%
- Research Project 3 = 15%
- Research Project 4 = 10%
- Research Project 5 = 20%
- Research Project 6 = 20%
- Research Project 7 = 10%
- Reading Presentation = 10%

Grading Percentages:

Grading is something that I will refer to often and I will provide you with enough information both in class and on Canvas to make you successful in this course. It is one of my first priorities in teaching is to support students in their efforts to succeed.

Research projects will be introduced along with a rubric that will focus on the project’s deliverable. Please review the rubrics whenever an assignment is introduced. There are 7 projects and other deliverables such as participation in discussion and peer review, as well as reading presentations that make up the total grade.

GDes 2399V is an honors section of the course. Those students who are delegated honors status will have a separate set of deliverables and a separate grading rubric. If you are an honors student please introduce yourself to me and we will meet at the onset of each new research project to review your set of deliverables and rubrics.

[University Grading and Transcript Policy](#)

This policy establishes the allowed grading scales, grades, and symbols that appear on the University transcript. It also establishes the GPA calculation for the University transcript. Colleges and campuses may not use any other grades or symbols unless approved by SCEP and the University Senate as described in section E.8.

University Grading Scales for GPA

The University has two distinct grading scales: A-F and S-N. The A-F grading scale allows the following grades and corresponding GPA points:

Grade	GPA Points	Definitions for undergraduate credit
A	4.000	Represents achievement that significantly exceeds expectations in the course.
A-	3.667	
B+	3.333	
B	3.000	Represents achievement that is above the minimum expectations in the course.
B-	2.667	
C+	2.333	
C	2.000	Represents achievement that meets the minimum expectations in the course.
C-	1.667	
D+	1.333	
D	1.000 -	Represents achievement that partially meets the minimum expectations in the course. Credit is earned but it may not fulfill major or program requirements.
F	0.000	Represents failure in the course and no credit is earned.

- The F does not earn grade points and the student does not earn University credit. The credit hours for the course count in the grade point average.
- The F is assigned when the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit, or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be given an I.
- Instructors are not required to use pluses and minuses when grading on the A-F scale. Grade points are the same regardless of the level or course of enrollment (e.g., graduate or undergraduate level).
- D- grades are not permitted.

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 discussions and in-class activities. Each week will provide new readings, presentations, and quizzes. The expectation is that each student will:

- » Ask questions
- » Actively participate in class discussions
- » Present readings on assigned topics in small group on the scheduled date
- » Engage and prepare for critiques and peer reviews

Accepting and Returning Assignments:

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. If a student is absent on a day a new assignment is introduced it is the student's responsibility to get this information from Canvas, review the assignment and if there is uncertainty, reach out to ask questions. Know the class schedule and maintain a professional relationship to the assignments and student obligations.

Graded Assignments will be returned to students no later than 10 days following the due date. Mid-term alerts will be provided to those who request them and to students earning less than a C average, have an excess of more than 2 unexcused absences, or to those students who are missing an assignment before the 8 week midterm.

Grading Late Work:

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 only be accepted at the class meeting immediately following the initial deadline. 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 the class schedule, please see your instructor about alternative means of meeting your course obligations. 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 use this class time for clarification, to ask questions, and to get feedback from the instructor or teaching assistant, we are here for you and want to observe a supportive atmosphere. **It is always better to communicate in person, in-class, or during office hours than it is via email; however, either form of communication are acceptable.**

Make-up Work for Late Assignments:

In addition to the course policies mentioned above, please familiarize yourself with the University's policy found here and further along in the course syllabus: [Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences](#)

Policy for Missed Exams: There are no exams in this course.

Extra Credit Options: There are no extra-credit options in this course.

University Policies

Personal Electronic Devices in Classroom:

No electronic device or laptop use during presentations by guest lecturers or other students. Students may be directed to turn off personal electronic devices during lectures if the devices are not being used for class purposes. Students are not permitted to record any part of a class/lab/other session unless explicitly granted permission by the instructor. If the student does not comply, the student may be asked to leave the classroom.

[Using Electronic Devices in Class](#)

Use of Class Notes and Materials:

[Using Class Notes](#)

Scholastic Dishonesty and Student Conduct Code:

[Student Responsibility and Scholastic Dishonesty](#)

Sexual Harassment:

[Sexual Harassment Policy](#)

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, classism, 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 download the policy at [Equity and Diversity](#)*

Academic Freedom and Responsibility:

download the policy at [Academic Freedom](#)

Availability of Disability and Mental Health Services:

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact the DRC at 612-626-1333 to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

For additional information please visit: <https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/>

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 or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via www.mentalhealth.umn.edu or contact Counseling/Consulting Services at 612-624-3323.

Academic Services:

If you would like additional help, please contact one of the offices listed below:

Student Writing Support

<http://writing.umn.edu/sws/index.html>

Student Academic Success Service

<http://www.uccs.umn.edu/>

Plagiarism:

As defined by [The Office of Community Standards](#), *plagiarism* shall mean representing the words, creative work, or ideas of another person as one's own without providing proper documentation of source.

Plagiarism is a serious offense in academia and is not tolerated by the College of Design. It is the responsibility of students to understand the standards and methods of proper attribution and to clarify with each instructor the standards, expectations, and reference techniques appropriate to the subject area and class requirements, including group work and internet use.

The College of Design holds students accountable to the standards set forth in the [Student Conduct Code](#) regarding plagiarism. Students are encouraged to seek out information about reference methods from instructors and other resources and to apply this to all submissions of academic work.

The above information was adapted from the University of Minnesota Office of Community Standards.

Teaching and Learning: Student Responsibilities

This policy clarifies and outlines student responsibilities and expectations for enrollment and participation in a course. Faculty and students need a common understanding of their responsibilities for the learning process. This policy implements criteria and requirements for accreditation established by the Higher Learning Commission.

Satisfying prerequisites. Students should not register for courses in which they lack the prerequisites unless they have permission from the instructor.

Responsibility for class work. Students are responsible for knowing all information contained in the syllabus. Students are responsible for meeting all course requirements, observing all deadlines, examination times, and other course procedures.

Attending class. Students are expected to attend all meetings of their courses. They may not be penalized for absence from class, however, to participate in religious observances, for approved University activities, and for other reasons in accordance with the policy on Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences. Students should notify instructors as soon as possible about such absences. (See Administrative Policy: *Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences: Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris, Rochester*).

Students must attend the first class meeting of every course in which they are registered unless(1) they obtain approval from the instructor before the first meeting or (2) they provide notice to the instructor they must miss class because of a recognized religious holiday (see the policy on Mandatory Attendance at First Class Session and Consequences for Absence). Otherwise, they may lose their places in class to other students. (See Administrative Policy: *Mandatory Attendance at First Class Session and Consequences for Absence: Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris, Rochester*).

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

Maintaining academic integrity. Students are expected to maintain academic integrity, including doing their own assigned work for courses. If it is determined that a student has engaged in scholastic dishonesty, the instructor may impose an academic consequence (e.g., giving the student a grade of "F" or an "N" for the course), and the student may face additional sanctions from the University. (See Board of Regents Policy: *Student Conduct Code*, Section VI, Sub. Div. 1, Scholastic Dishonesty, and Administrative Policy: *Grading and Transcripts: Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris, Rochester*).

Seeking help and accommodation. Students are responsible for seeking academic help in a timely fashion. Students who need special accommodations are responsible for working first with the relevant University offices and then with the instructor at the beginning of the course.

Respecting intellectual property. Students may not distribute instructor-provided notes or other course materials, except to other members of the same class or with the express (written) consent of the instructor. Instructors have the right to impose additional restrictions on course materials in accordance with copyright and intellectual property law and policy. Students may not engage in the widespread distribution or sale of transcript-like notes or notes that are close to verbatim records of a lecture or presentation.

Keeping classroom in good order. Students may be responsible for helping straighten up a classroom at the end of a class period, if requested to do so by the instructor. Keeping a classroom in good order includes taking away or disposing of everything one came in with, such as pop cans/bottles, food containers/wrappers, newspapers, etc. Students must also not deface or damage classrooms or classroom furniture or equipment.

Use of personal electronic devices in the classroom (see Use of Personal Electronics above). Students may be directed to turn off personal electronic devices if the devices are not being used for class purposes. This is particularly important during lecture and student presentations. Students are not permitted to record any part of a class/lab/other session unless explicitly granted permission by the instructor.

Guests may not be brought to class without permission from the instructor.

Updated January 2020