

**DESCRIPTION** Design Systems encourages a deeper consideration of components and relationships within networks of people, products, services, infrastructures and the environment through the lens of design. This course scratches the surface of the broadened scope of design that includes issues related to globalization, climate change, communication, technology, and politics. Individual research agendas will be developed by thinking critically and strategically about these topics.

**OVERVIEW** The first project is about understanding and visualizing various elements, connections and functions within a complex system or network. The second project provides an opportunity to intervene within an existing, inefficient service system. The third project encourages you to frame your own research question about a product line and to develop a strategy to address your question utilizing systems thinking. The course should not be considered in isolation, but holistically as a building block in your design education. Themes negotiated in Design Systems will become part of a collection of ideas and experiences that will coalesce over time to inform your future work.

This studio course is structured to engage you in three ways:

- by presenting design precedents and pertinent theoretical frameworks for classroom discussion
- by encouraging rigorous research and formal exploration through open-ended projects
- by offering critical feedback from faculty and peers during critiques

*“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.” –John Muir*

**REFERENCES** *Thinking in Systems, A Primer* / Donella Meadows  
*In The Bubble : Designing In A Complex World* / John Thackara  
*Living with Complexity* / Donald Norman  
*Sustainable by Design* / Stuart Walker  
*Visual Complexity* / <http://www.visualcomplexity.com/vc/>

SCHEDULE	WEEK	MONDAYS	WEDNESDAYS	
	01 JANUARY	14 Course Intro, Project 1 Intro	16 Work Day	PROJECT 1
	02	21 Martin Luther King, Jr.	23 Desk Critique	
	03	28 Work Day	30 Project 1 Critique	
	04 FEBRUARY	04 Project 2 Intro	06 Work Day	PROJECT 2
	05	11 Desk Critique	13 Work Day	
	06	18 Project 2 Pre-Critique	20 Work Day	
	07	25 Small Groups	27 Work Day	
	08 MARCH	04 Project 2 Critique	06 Soft-Intro Project 3	
	09	11 Spring Break	13 Spring Break	
	10	18 Project 3 Intro	20 Work Day	PROJECT 3
	11	25 Desk Critique	27 Work Day	
	12 APRIL	01 Project 3 Pre-Critique	03 Work Day	
	13	08 Small Groups	10 Work Day	
	14	15 Work Day	17 Project 3 Critique	
	15	22 REVIEW PREPARATION	24 REVIEW PREPARATION	
	16 MAY	29 REVIEWS	01 REVIEWS	

**MATERIALS** Materials will be specified with each project. Costs are a function of time and selection. The cost of materials can be effected somewhat by decisions you make (resource pooling and bulk ordering, careful sourcing). Be prepared to spend what is required to effectively execute your work. Make smart choices. No textbooks or packets are required.

**Process Book**

Purchase a nice sketchbook for doodling ideas, sketching concepts, compiling research and notes, recording your project development and process. This notebook will be collected for grading at the conclusion of the semester and will be used as one means of assessing your design process and general performance throughout the semester.

**GRADING** Grade distribution, as follows:

Project 1 : 25%

Project 2 : 25%

Project 3 : 25%

Process notebook and digital documentation: 10%

Participation : 15%

There will be no final exam.

Receiving an 'A' in this course requires that each project demonstrates personal relevance and perspective, a critical analysis of the material and subject, an understanding of precision and craftsmanship. Earning an 'A' requires a significant amount of time and effort. I am looking for work that presents your perspective, with a high-degree of material resolution.

*Individual work and presentations, studio projects and written assignments will be graded as follows. Remember plus/minus grades are now in effect for both graduate and undergraduate courses.*

*A / A- (100–90 points) Excellent. Surprise yourself and the instructor; prolific work ethic; conceptual precision; investigative agility; honed and refined material resolution.*

*B+ / B / B- (89–80 points) Very Good. Strong development and dedication; prolific work ethic; clear intentions; rigorous development; quality material resolution.*

*C+ / C / C- (79–70 points) Average. Complete work; solid work ethic; predictable development; fair material resolution.*

*D+ / D / D- (69–60 points) Pass. Complete work; poor work ethic; preconceived intentions; unresolved material resolution.*

*F (59–00 points) Failure. Insufficient work and commitment to the requirements of the studio.*

*Additional policy information can be found online at: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/grades/>*

A practice of on-going assessment is employed in this class, as follows:

- Continual assessment of performance during weekly desk critiques
- Performance at pin-ups, interim critiques [visual/verbal].
- Performance at final review [visual/verbal]
- High quality documentation of semester's work.

General Evaluation Criteria will be based on some, if not all of the following:

- Risk taking and pushing the boundaries of the assignment.
- Thoroughness and effectiveness of research undertaken.
- Clarity of concepts expressed both visually and verbally.
- Skillful, detail-oriented execution of concept, artifact and supporting materials.
- Utilization and incorporation of processes, methods and theoretical materials presented in class.

**CLASS POLICIES** This course takes place in a design studio, which is your home base this academic year. Please clean up after yourselves, especially in preparation for critique days.

**Studio time on work days:** you are expected to use studio time to the fullest, working independently at your desk for much of each class period.

**Desk critique:** weekly or biweekly meetings with faculty at your desk to discuss the on-going progress of your work. This is one of primary means of teaching in this program – an on-going conversation that functions as means of continual assessment. The sessions usually last 15-20 minutes, so it is important to be prepared, have a list of questions, problems or discussion points and, most importantly, visible evidence of work.

**Presentations (faculty):** slides or other material typically presented at the beginning of a project to orient students as to the intent of the project.

**Presentations (student):** there will be three forms of student presentation 1) research presentations (verbal/written), 2) pin-up (informal critiques between major presentations) and 3) major (formal) presentations of final projects.

**Discussion sessions (group):** discussion of reading, text, or topic led by faculty or students.

With the exception of the grade and attendance policies, parts of this syllabus are subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor. The Design Faculty has many other commitments to the University in addition to their teaching responsibilities. The faculty is available to you during class hours every week as well as during posted office hours. You should try to conduct your class business during these regularly scheduled hours. Arrangement to meet with faculty outside of these hours should occur only in unusual circumstances.

*I will use Dropbox to collect work and disseminate information for this class.*

#### **Use of Email For Official Correspondence**

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

**ATTENDANCE** Attendance and participation in all classes, group critiques, and individual meetings is very important. However, three absences will be excused. Each absence, for any reason, beyond three will result in a reduction in the final grade by ½ a letter grade. It is suggested that you save your three excused absences for times when they are actually needed. Students are allowed to be late 3 times (15 minutes or less). Each late arrival beyond three, for any reason, will count as an absence. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class. If you are late to class, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor of your arrival and to verify that they have changed the absence mark to a late arrival in the attendance record.

All late work will drop one full grade for each class day it is late. All late projects must be turned in during class time. Some projects (such as site specific work) may require more stringent attendance and grading policies. An incomplete will be given only in rare cases, and for non-academic reasons.

A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible (14 days), so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

#### UT POLICIES Accessibility

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259 or via <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

#### Academic Integrity

According to the General Information catalog, "the value of a university degree depends on the absolute integrity of the work done by each student for that degree, a student should maintain a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work" (page 98). Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

#### Behavior Concerns Advice Line (Bcal)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

#### Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation: (1) Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building. (2) If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class. (3) In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors. (4) Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

#### University Of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

#### Resources For Learning & Life At Ut Austin

The University of Texas has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning.

The UT Learning Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/>

Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

Counseling & Mental Health Center: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>

Career Exploration Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/careercenter/>

Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>