

MASTER'S DEGREE IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION (MUEIDC)

SYLLABUS

PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS OF DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2026-27

SUBJECT TYPE: Elective

SEMESTER: 2nd

ECTS: 6

TEACHING HOURS: 45

HOURS OF SELF-EMPLOYMENT: 105

TOTAL HOURS: 150

LANGUAGE/S: Spanish

CODE: 16933

TEACHING TEAM: Dr. Ariel Guersenzvaig aguersenzvaig@elisava.net

PRESENTATION OF SUBJECT / GOALS

This course seeks to explore the ethical-political challenges faced by designers in the framework of contemporary material culture. Often design projects in all areas are related to issues such as consumerism, the generation of waste and ecological damage, the exploitation of human beings and other species, manipulation or injustice. In addition, as it is a professional practice closely linked to industry and the market, there is a precarious balance between personal, social and business values. This subject seeks to stimulate critical reflection and provide students with the skills to carry it out.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

This subject does not specifically incorporate any SDGs.

CONTENTS

Block I: Design Philosophy

- What is design? Theories and models.
- Epistemological problems: wicked-problems.
- Designerly ways of knowing.
- Connections between design and philosophy of technology: from technological determinism to Postphenomenology.
- Design as politics and collective action.
- Designing the future: Anthropocene, Capitalocene and Chthulucene.
- Design fiction and speculative design.

Block II: Design Ethics

- Introduction to Ethics
- 60 years of design and ethical concern in design: from First things first to xenodesign.
- Persuasion and manipulation.
- Sustainability, consumerism and the Anthropocene.
- Unintended consequences and effects of design.
- Applied ethical frameworks.

Block III: Emerging paradigm in design and communication

- Design as a profession.
- The purpose of professional design.
- Design and responsibility.
- Ethics and ethics for professional design.
- Profession as individuation.

TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

- P1-Work sessions with the whole class group with the teacher.
- P2-Work sessions in small groups with the teacher.
- P5-Sessions of individual autonomous work.

COMPETENCIES

- Students are able to integrate knowledge and face the complexity of formulating judgments based on information that, being incomplete or limited, includes reflections on the social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments. (CB8)
- Students must possess the learning skills that allow them to continue studying in a self-directed or autonomous way (CB10)
- Projecting the values of entrepreneurship and innovation in the exercise of the personal, academic and professional trajectory, through contact with different realities of practice and with motivation towards professional development (T2)
- Mastering multiple sources of information related to technical or academic research or an applied project (E5)
- Carrying out an individual projection and exploration of the future in a specific technical-academic field through a high degree of self-knowledge and reflection to respond to challenges in personal life and in the demands of the world of work (E8)

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Taking responsibility for their own professional development and specialisation in the field of design and communication. (M3-1)
- Showing sufficient autonomy to participate in research projects and scientific or technological collaborations with a high component of knowledge transfer. (M3-2)
- Showing an attitude of motivation and commitment to personal and professional improvement. (M3-4)
- Defining their own learning objectives, and designing coherent and realistic development processes (individual and collective) with the same objectives and the time available. (M3-5)
- Defining the guidelines for action that underpin a creative activity in a design process. (M3-8)

TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Each subject will present at the beginning of the course its WORK PLAN where the didactic activities per week / session / autonomous work are recorded.

EXAMINATION SYSTEMS

The evaluation of the subject will be based on continuous monitoring of the student's academic work throughout the course.

EXAMINATION SYSTEM	MINIMUM WEIGHTING	MAXIMUM WEIGHTING	FINAL WEIGHTING
P1-Observation of participation	0	20	10
P2-Follow-up of the work done	10	20	10
P3-Reports from the students themselves, external tutors, tribunal	0	10	10
P5-Completion of required work or projects	45	80	70

EXAMINATION CRITERIA

The final grade of the subject will be the weighted average of the grades of the assessable activities according to the following table:

EXAMINATION ACTIVITY	WEIGHT	RECOVERABLE (up to 50%)	EXAMINATION SYSTEM
Class participation and follow-up	20%	NO	P-1 / P-2
Presentation	40%	NO	P-3 / P-5
Presentation dossier	40%	YES*	P-3 / P-5

Students will have the option of retaking the retake tests. The retake tests will be carried out in the period of the semester allocated to this function, not being able to recover more than 50% of the subject.

* If the Recoverable Assessable Activities exceed 50%, the student body may choose up to a limit of 50%.

The unjustified non-submission of any assessable activity implies a grade of 0, even if the activity has been classified as Recoverable.

The Recoverable Activities can only be recovered when the student delivers them on the indicated date and with a grade higher than 3.

If access to the retake test is waived, the grade achieved in the first instance will be maintained.

In case of taking the recovery, the grade obtained will be the last, even if it is lower than the first.

To obtain a grade in the subject, attendance at 80% of the scheduled teaching-learning activities is required. Otherwise, it will be evaluated as "Not presented".

Plagiarism or copying of other people's work is penalised in all universities and, according to the Rules of Coexistence of the University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia, they constitute serious or very serious offences. That is why in the course of this subject any indication of plagiarism or misappropriation of texts or ideas other people ([What is considered plagiarism?](#)) as well as the improper or undeclared use of Artificial Intelligence in an activity, automatically translates into a suspension and/or other disciplinary measures ([Normes de Convivència de la Universitat de Vic-Universitat Central de Catalunya](#)).

For any questions or queries, see the Academic Regulations for the Master's Degree at UVic-UCC <https://www.uvic.cat/es/normativa/FEC/master#general>

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND TEACHING RESOURCES

- Benjamin, R. 2019. *Race after technology: Abolitionist tools for the new Jim Code*. Polity.
- Baym, N. 2015. *Personal Connections in the Digital Age: Digital Media and Society*. Polity.
- Cortina, A. 2013. *What is it really for...? Ethics*. Paidós.
- Costanza-Chock, 2020. S. *Design Justice: Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need*. The MIT Press. Available at: <https://design-justice.pubpub.org/>
- Dorst, K. 2017. *Notes on Design: How Creative Practice Works*. Bis Publishers.
- Gertz, N. 2018. *Nihilism and Technology*. Rowman and Littlefield.
- Guersenzvaig, 2021. A. *The Goods of Design*. Rowman and Littlefield.
- Kiran, A. H., Oudshoorn, N., and Verbeek, P.-P. 2015. "Beyond checklists: Toward an ethical-constructive technology assessment." *Journal of Responsible Innovation*, 2(1), 5-19. Available in: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23299460.2014.992769>
- Papanek, V. 1984. *Design for the Real World*. (second revised edition). Academy Chicago Publishers.
- Parsons, G. 2016. *The Philosophy of Design*. Polity.
- Vallor, S. 2016. *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting*. Oxford University Press.
- Verbeek, Peter-Paul. 2011. *Moralizing Technology: Understanding and Designing the Morality of Things*. The University of Chicago Press.

The teaching staff will provide a specific bibliography at the beginning of the subject, if applicable.

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