Maastricht University

Syllabus

Design Thinking & Maker Culture
MA Media Studies: Digital Cultures

Academic Year: 2020-21

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Table of Contents

1.Course Overview

This course introduces students to the theories, methods, and principles of Design Thinking and the ethos of Maker Culture through the lens of Design Ethnography, a set of tools and methods that combines traditional ethnographic approaches with user-centred design, to understand not what users say they want (understood through tools such as focus groups and surveys) , but why they want it through empathy and understanding cultures and behaviors. Design Ethnography often embodies a social justice, ethical and responsible dimension to research practice.

Design Thinking combines what is desirable from a human point of view with what is technologically feasible and economically viable. Design thinking has become a crucial tool and mindset that enables projects, organizations and companies to think creatively beyond traditional logical and analytical approaches, helping them to be agile and critically responsive to change.

This course takes a design-derived perspective on challenge-oriented learning and problem solving and analysis. It will provide models for how to generate creative ideas for deriving solutions, in the first instance for the final assessment, but which can be used in a variety of contexts in future endeavors. It will also introduce students to the more recently theorised space of Maker Culture and Critical Making which advocates thinking with one's hands as well as with one's mind, interweaving the material and the conceptual that making involves.

The course will explore user-centred design as both a concept and a practice in the development of the final assessment, a team-based podcast based on one of the concepts covered in the course, which will be accompanied by individual blog posts on the same theme (see the assessment section below for more information). The skills component of this course will provide the necessary skills and tools to design and create the podcast. The skills sessions will be accompanied by a lecture in Week II by Edwin Brys, a journalist and radio producer, and Head of the Radio Documentary and Drama Department at the VRT-Belgium.

A portion of the self-study materials for this course will be found in the Introduction to Design Thinking and Making course on #dariahTeach, an open source platform for teaching and learning materials in the digital arts and culture.

2.Learning Objectives

In successfully completing this course you will be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced knowledge of user-centred concepts, theories and practices of design thinking and design ethnography
- Critically reflect on the theories and practices behind critical making and maker culture
- Design a podcast on a conceptual topic related to the course
- Apply the knowledge learned in the course via a multimodal and multimedia production
- Reflect on your role in a team-based project
- Evaluate the relevance, potential, and limitations of design processes in new media and technology-based productions and systems

3.Pedagogic Principles

During the course, you will participate in tutorial meetings. The course will stress the four core values of Problem-based Learning, that is, we see learning as a constructive, collaborative, self-directed and contextual process.

- Learning as a self-directed process: you are encouraged to play an active role in the content of the course and direct their learning process. Tutors are seen as facilitators and therefore you are expected to be proactive in formulating learning objectives. Furthermore, you have a lot of freedom regarding the choice of topics throughout the course (case studies, final essay etc.);
- Learning as a collaborative process: mutual and shared understanding working towards a common goal is promoted through group activities that you will have to prepare for each session;
- Learning as a contextual process: we believe in learning in meaningful contexts. This is visible in the tutorials that build on case studies and scenarios;
- Learning as a constructive process: the elaboration process is emphasized through discussions, peer and tutor feedback; critical reflection; and debates. This is particularly put into practice in group discussions, presentations, etc.

4.Research Methods & Skills Training

You will be introduced to Design Ethnography, a methodology and set of tools that combines traditional ethnographic approaches with user-centred design, as well as the practices of Critical Making, i.e., the hands-on activities used to research societal phenomena. The skills sessions will provide the technical skills you need to successfully design and create a podcast.

5.Overview of Meetings/Schedule

The course consists of seven tutorial group meetings, three lectures, and three skills training sessions. During the tutorial group meetings, we will discuss assignments which are organised around specific topics as well as provide you with a roadmap following a design thinking process in support of your final assessment/project.

Each activity (lecture, tutorials, skills) is listed in the Modules tab, here you will find what will take place and the modality (online or F2F). For all F2F activities, there is also the option to Zoom in. Groups for project work will be allocated without regard to students attending online or in person. All Zoom links can be found under the Zoom tab. Under modules, there is also a page which indicates what you need to prepare for the next week's teaching and learning activities, including any work to prepare in advance of the meeting.

This course will follow a similar approach to the courses in Period 1. This means that for some of the assignments in the tutorials under 'Modules' we have provided you with the learning goals. As a result, we expect you to read the short assignment texts as well as the indicated literature, *in advance of* the tutorial session. Tutorials will also feature problem-based, student-centred activities that will put into practice the concepts, methods and tools being studied. There may be advance preparation for these as indicated in the tutorial description. All pre-work in advance of the tutorial is clearly outlined in the description of each weekly meeting. Items that have to be prepared for the following meeting are also clearly indicated.

The course focuses on seven broad themes:

- Design Thinking
- Design Ethnography
- User-Centred Design
- Critical Making
- Maker Culture
- The Design Lifecycle
- Multimodality

The skills sessions will provide you with the technical skills you need to successfully design and create a podcast. These technical skills are complimented by a guest lecture in Week II by Edwin Brys which will explore various approaches to audio narrative design.

6.Weekly Tasks[1]

Week 1

Lecture: Design Thinking and Design Ethnography: Positioning User-Centred Action Research

- Brown, T. (2008). Design Thinking.
- Salvador, T., Bell, G., & Anderson, K. (2010). Design Ethnography. *Design Management Journal (Former Series)*, *10*(4), 35–41. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1948-7169.1999.tb00274.x

Tutorial: Introduction to the Course & to Design Thinking

- #dariahTeach: Introduction to Design Thinking & Maker Culture
  - 1.1.1: What is Design Thinking
  - 1.1.2: Thinking Out of the Box
  - Unit 4: A Timeline for Design Thinking
- #dariahTeach: How to Practice Design Thinking & Making
  - Unit 1: Key Principles

Articles/Other Readings

- Burdick, Anne, and Holly Willis. "Digital Learning, Digital Scholarship and Design Thinking." *Design Studies*, vol. 32, no. 6, 2011, pp. 546–556. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.destud.2011.07.005

Week 2

Lecture: Everything has been said but not by me

No readings

Tutorial: Design Ethnography and Exercise

- #dariahTeach: Introduction to Design Thinking & Maker Culture
  - Unit 2: Challenging the Humanities
    - 2.1.1: What the Arts and Humanities Bring
    - 2.1.2: The Gap, the Digital Divide and the Need for Human-Centric Design
    - 2.1.3: Digital Social Innovation (excluding the case study & exercises)
    - 2.1.4 Change Adapter / Change Maker (excluding the exercise)
    - 2.1.6: Looking Back

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[1] Only the title of each task and the core readings have been included in the weekly tasks. In the actual course handbook, each task is accompanied by a description and a more extensive reading list.

Articles/Other Readings

- Barab, S. A., Thomas, M. K., Dodge, T., Squire, K., & Newell, M. (2004). Critical Design Ethnography: Designing for Change. *Anthropology Education Quarterly, 35*(2), 254-268. doi:10.1525/aeq.2004.35.2.254
- Nova, N. (2015) Design Ethnography? Towards a Designerly Approach to Field Research
- Bihanic, D. (Ed.). Empowering Users through Design. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-13018-7 . pps 119-121.
- Salvador, T., Bell, G., & Anderson, K. (2010). Design Ethnography. Design Management Journal (Former Series), 10(4), 35–41. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1948-7169.1999.tb00274.x

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Week 3

Lecture: Introduction to Maker Culture

- #dariahTeach: #dariahTeach: Introduction to Design Thinking & Maker Culture
  - 1.14: What is Maker Culture
  - 1.1.5: Making in the Humanities for Social Justice
  - 1.1.6: Why Combine These Approaches.
  -

Articles/Other Readings

- Ramsay, S., Rockwell, G. (2012) 'Developing Things: Notes towards an Epistemology of Building in the Digital Humanities'. In M. Gold (Ed). Debates in the Digital Humanities. (pp.75-84). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Sample, M (2011). The digital humanities is not about building, it's about sharing, Sample Reality. 25 May 2011. Accessed 12 October 2020. https://www.samplereality.com/2011/05/25/the-digital-humanities-is-not-about-building-its-about-sharing/
- Staley, D. (2019) 'On the "Maker Turn" in the Humanities'. In J. Sayers (Ed.) Making Things and Drawing Boundaries: Experiments in the Digital Humanities. (pp. 32-41). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Tutorial: Post discussion: critical making and exercise

#dariahTeach (2020). What is Maker Culture. Available at https://youtu.be/frynXFJbXaY.

Articles/Other Readings

- Hertz, G. (nd). What is Critical Making. Available at: https://current.ecuad.ca/what-is-critical-making. Last accessed 17 October 2020.
- Ratto, M. (2011) Critical Making: Conceptual and Material Studies in Technology and Social Life, The Information Society, 27:4, 252-260, DOI:10.1080/01972243.2011.583819

- Ratto, M. (2012) Open Design Now. Available at: http://opendesignnow.org/index.php/article/critical-making-matt-ratto/. Last accessed 31 May 2019.
- Ratto, M (2020). Why We Make. #dariahTeach. Available at https://youtu.be/Zm0-15mtXr4. Last accessed 15 October 2020.

Week 4

Tutorial: Multimodality: Theory & Exercise

- #dariahTeach (2016). Multimodal Literacies
  - Unit I: What are multimodal literacies: an introduction
  - Unit II: Multimodal Literacies - discover, read, experiment'

Articles/Other Readings

- Frank Serafini, *Reading the Visual: An Introduction to Teaching Multimodal Literacy* (New York 2014), pp. 11-19.
- Berit Hendriksen and Gunther Kress, 'What is multimodality?' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt5wPIhhDDU&feature=emb_logo. Last accessed 20 October 2020.

Week 5

Tutorial: User-centred design: theory & exercise

- #dariahTeach: #dariahTeach: Introduction to Design Thinking & Maker Culture
  - 1.1.3 User-Centred Design
  - 3.1.2. Human-Centred Design. A New Iteration in Design Methodology?

Articles/Other Readings

- Abras, C., Maloney-Krichmar, D., & Preece, J. (2004). User-centered design. *Bainbridge, W. Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications*, *37*(4), 445–456.
- This article on user-centred design in the cultural sector: Anne Torregiani, 'Audience Development is dead. Long live Audience Centred Design', TAA 12 March 2020.

Week 6

Tutorial: Designing and delivering a user-centred workshop

- #dariahTeach gathers a number of toolsets. Look through your options and be sure to choose activities that are appropriate for this stage of feedback.

Articles/Other Readings

- 'Tips for Running A Design Thinking Workshop with Your Team'
  https://www.uxpin.com/studio/blog/design-thinking-workshop/ (last accessed 1 November 2021)
- 'How To Plan An Effective Design Thinking Workshop: A Step-By-Step Guide'
  https://medium.muz.li/how-to-plan-a-design-thinking-workshop-with-the-7ps-framework-4a87c513480a (last accessed 1 November 2021)
- 'How To Host An Online Hackathon': https://medium.com/@dsprint1 (last accessed 1 November 2021)

Week 7

Tutorial: The Design-Thinking Life Cycle: Theory and Exercise

- #dariahTeach: #dariahTeach: Introduction to Design Thinking & Maker Culture
  - 3.1.5. The Design Process as a Double Diamond
  - 3.1.6. A Conceptual Dig into the Double Diamond
  - 3.1.7. Reflecting on your Practice. The Post-Mortem or Final Reflection Paper

Articles/Other Readings

- Watch this clip on divergent and convergent thinking:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lz1cK54G3CY%C2%A0 (last accessed 1 November 2021)
- Kirby, J. S. (2019). How NOT to create a digital media scholarship platform: the history of the Sophie 2.0 project. *IASSIST Quarterly*, *42*(4), https://doi.org/10.29173/iq926
- Dombrowski, Q. (2019) Towards a Taxonomy of Failure.
  http://quinndombrowski.com/blog/2019/01/30/towards-taxonomy-failure
- extra free download for those who like reading about failing *by successful scholars*: Shawn Graham. *Failing Gloriously and Other Essays*. With a foreword by Eric Kansa and afterword by Neha Gupta. 2019. https://thedigitalpress.org/failing-gloriously/

Week 8

Exam Week - No Activities

7. Assessments

The final assessment is in three parts:

- A team-produced podcast (teams will have 3 or 4 members) (30%)
- A 2000 word blog post or posts (individual mark) (60%)
- A self-assessment (10%)

The first part (30%) is a group podcast of c. 10-12 minutes on one of the concepts discussed in the course:

- Design Thinking
- Maker Culture
- Critical Making
- Design Ethnography
- User-Centred Design
- The Design Lifecycle
- Multimodality

The second part (60%) is 2000 words written for the blog. This can be one long post or two shorter posts on the same theme as the podcast. The third part is a self-assessment of how you performed as a member of the team.

The goal of the podcast and blog posts is to create a multimodal introduction to your group's topic of choice. The target audience is people like you: MA or PhD students. The level of knowledge you assume of your target group is up to you. It can be pitched at students who do not know much about the topics we are covering in the course, but would like an intelligent, engaging, and informative introduction. It may, on the other hand, be geared to more advanced students in terms of their knowledge of the topics.

The podcast should be the central pillar of the multimodal production, with the individual blog post

- providing further contextualization
- presenting and analysing related case studies
- and/or delving deeper into contexts, theories, and concepts that the podcast could only briefly touch upon
- provide further literature and readings
- focus on the work of specific theorists and/practitioners

In other words, as the figure demonstrates, the podcast should be looked at as the central node with the blog posts providing further contextualisation and examples. The blog posts within each group should be additive and not repetitive. So that if a reader listens to the podcast and then reads all the posts, she should have a thorough grounding on the chosen theme. Within the team, blog posts should not cover the same exact subject matter, but should complement each other. The posts should be multimodal: eg utilising text, images, infographics, and video. Secondary sources should support the blog posts, with each post

9

containing appropriate citations and a bibliography in APA style. All content not developed within the team must be copyright cleared (or open source) and so indicated.

Your self-assessment should clearly address the items on the self-assessment form.