

DES 2630 - 001
Spring Semester 2025

Course Description

The overall aim of Design Contexts is to develop a fundamental understanding of the design process, design as a reflective practice, and the contexts in which design is practiced. Lectures and studio projects will examine design contexts through emerging design disciplines (design for experience, service, sustainability, and for futures + speculation). Additionally, we will explore multi-disciplinary design through products (how has what we design changed?), process (how do we design change?), and people (the shift towards design justice and inclusion). Lectures will introduce students to the difference between critical and creative thinking, life-centric design, and the social and ethical responsibilities of design and designer. Studios will introduce the design studio teaching method and its importance in developing your understanding of the design process. By the end of the semester, you will understand clearly that

Credits 3 credits
University General Education Designation: Fine Arts Exploration (FF) Required for admission to the majors of Architecture, Multi-Disciplinary Design, and Urban Ecology

Course Type Lecture and Design Studio (Lab)

Lead Instructor Daniel Zwangslleitner (he/him)
Assoc. Prof. (Lecturer), Multi-Disciplinary Design
327C Architecture Bldg.
daniel.zwangslleitner@utah.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:30-12:30, by appointment

Studio Instructors Sebastian Frith (sections 002 & 008) sebastian.frith@utah.edu
Stella Liechty (sections 003) stella.liechty@utah.edu
Merel Noorlander (section 004 & 007) merel.noorlander@utah.edu
Kit Stanworth (sections 005 & 006) u0736566@utah.edu
Trinity Gross u1347178@utah.edu

Teaching Assistant

Meeting Times Lecture
Tuesdays 09:10-10:30, CTIHB 109

Design Studios
Section 002: Thursdays 12:25PM-01:45PM FLD H 202
Section 003: Thursdays 12:25PM-01:45PM FLD H 206
Section 004: Fridays 11:50AM-01:10PM FLD H 202
Section 005: Fridays 11:50AM-01:10PM FLD H 206
Section 006: Fridays 09:40AM-11:00AM FLD H 202
Section 007: Fridays 09:40AM-11:00AM FLD H 206
Section 008: Tuesdays 12:25AM-01.45PM FLD H 202

Design Foundations Program Overview

Design Contexts serves as one of a three-course set offered to design foundation students to prepare for admission into one of three program options in the College of Architecture + Planning: Architecture, Multi-Disciplinary Design (MDD), and Urban Ecology. DES 2630/Design Contexts, CMP 2010/Design Ecologies, and ARCH 2630/Design Foundations Workshop, offer a mix of lecture and discussion (thinking), engagement experiences (doing), and visual communication and literacy (seeing and representing). These courses are taught collaboratively by architecture, design, and planning faculty and provide a solid point of entry for all majors in the college.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this learning experience you will be able to:

- Demonstrate and articulate your understanding of the design process
- Understand that design is a deliberate practice of transforming the world, inherently embodying a political act
- Recognize that ethical codes influence personal, community, and global dimensions, shaping relationships and responsibilities in various contexts.
- Recognize that design choices can influence society and affect systems of power and decision-making.
- Ask insightful questions based on curiosity
- Execute a high level of craft through image-making, visual research, and prototyping
- Demonstrate an understanding of critique as a critical component of becoming a successful designer
- Work independently and in small groups to research, analyze, synthesize, and communicate concrete information and abstract ideas
- Utilize analog and digital visual tools to describe various contexts and express concepts
- Demonstrate an understanding of the contemporary contexts in which multi- and interdisciplinary design is practiced.

Teaching and Learning Methods:

This course is a combination of lecture and design studio. You will have work due weekly. The class design relies on the participation of each individual to foster lively, interesting, intellectual, and insightful dialogue. Learning in the studio is co-created by both the instructor and the students. You will be required to speak up in critique and discussion, communicate clearly about your process, and work with others in a collaborative manner. Although addressing similar topics and issues, the lecture series may not directly connect to each individual project, as it serves to support the broader learning and understanding required to successfully undertake the projects.

Required Texts

Required readings or handouts will be distributed on Canvas and/or in-class.

Course Fees

Design Contexts is a course set-up as specialized instruction requiring a lecture/lab component and intense critique. These fees cover specialized instruction, coordination and additional support where general tuition does not provide (i.e., studio instructors, teaching assistants). These fees are standard in College of Architecture + Planning courses and studios and have been carefully considered to minimize any financial burden on the student.

Course Expectations

Here is what we expect from you:

You will treat everyone in the class with the respect due to all human beings. Racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism and any other forms of bigotry are unacceptable in this class. You will give your

full attention to the material and conduct yourself in an appropriate manner. Commit to success—your own, and your classmates.

What can you expect of us?

We believe that you are capable of great things, therefore, we will accept nothing less from you. We will be working to provide you with experiences to which you can bring your best self and take advantage of the opportunity to explore, learn, and grow. We will be encouraging dialogue—so that you can take those ideas and questions that arise from the course material, verbalize them, develop them further, and we can all learn more. We will seek to test you, challenge you, encourage you, and hear you out - and we will have an expectation of you that you can develop your best self and contribute in a way that aids others in developing their best selves. We will strive to be fair. We will provide you with timely and quality feedback. We will be honest with you. Your grade will reflect the quality of your work and nothing else.

Required Materials

To successfully complete the assignments for this course, it is essential to have a productive workspace. You will need access to a computer/laptop for project work and course materials, as well as a camera. As the course advances, some projects may require additional materials to help bring your ideas to life, this may include arts and craft supplies, such as paper, drawing tools, and other creative materials. We will make every effort to ensure that any associated costs remain reasonable.

Course Components

The lecture part of the course will take place once a week, attendance is mandatory. At the end of each lecture, you are required to complete an exit card, which is a brief written reflection. In this reflection, you should summarize key takeaways from the lecture, share any questions or insights, and provide feedback if applicable. These exit cards are part of your participation grade and help demonstrate your engagement with the course material.

The design studio part of the course will be broken up into FOUR projects with specific deliverables due each week in design studio that help you to complete them. You are expected to come to class (both lecture and studio) prepared every day to engage in critical and creative reflection. Critique is an opportunity for you to receive feedback from both the instructor and your classmates. These crits of your process work are not optional and will play a major role in your final course grade. Multiple iterations at every stage of the project will ensure a higher quality final project.

There will be studio days where you will be expected to work in-class. On those days you must come prepared to work or you will be marked absent for the day. You will know ahead of time if the next class session is a work in-class day. You will compile your work as a PORTFOLIO at the end of the semester which gives you the opportunity to revise / refine the 4 projects.

Grading breakdown

25% Lecture attendance and participation

50% Design Studio Projects

25% Portfolio with reflection on your work

Levels of Course Performance:

The meaning of letter grades are defined as follows:

A Work demonstrates consistently superior scholastic performance; thorough comprehension; ability to correlate the material with other ideas, to communicate and to deal effectively with course concepts and new material; and careful attention to assignment requirements.

B Work demonstrates strong scholastic performance overall and good attention to assignment requirements; may demonstrate excellence but is less consistent than A work.

C Work demonstrates satisfactory performance overall and basic attention to assignment requirements; work meets expectations but does not exceed them.

D Work demonstrates minimal, barely passing performance overall; limited knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.

E Work demonstrates unsatisfactory performance and comprehension or unfulfilled requirements.

Merely doing an assignment does not mean at least a satisfactory grade—doing the work allows us to assign a grade.

Late Assignment Policy

Formal (graded) evaluation of your work occurs for each of the due dates listed on the assignment sheets. The late policy is simple: unless other arrangements are made in consultation with your instructors prior to the deadline, projects turned in late will have the grade deducted by 10% (one full letter grade). After 2 class periods, the late project will no longer be accepted and no credit will be given. All projects, unless noted, are due at the beginning of class in the condition set by the assignment sheet and your studio instructor. Clarifications made to the assignment sheet either in the lecture or the studio become part of the official assignment sheet.

Attendance

You are expected to attend every class meeting for as long as the class is in session. Roll will be taken during each class period. Being late demonstrates a lack of respect and responsibility to both your peers and your instructor—please be on time.

You may miss three (3) classes during the semester. You are responsible for managing your absences. Any days missed beyond three (3) will result in a final course grade deduction of 10% (one full letter grade). Absences of six (6) or more will result in failing the class. Absences for medical reasons (including mental health), family emergencies, participation in U athletics, military deployment, or religious events will be considered as excused absences and will not count toward the three classes that you are allowed to miss. However, you are expected to provide documentation for all accommodations. Please let us know as soon as possible if you will be missing class. Work commitments are not excused absences.

Given the nature of this course, attendance is required and adjustments cannot be granted to allow non-attendance. If you need to seek an ADA accommodation to request an exception to this attendance policy due to a disability or medical condition, please contact the Center for Disability and Access (CDA). CDA will work with us to determine what, if any, ADA accommodations are reasonable and appropriate.

Devices

We kindly ask that all cell phones be silenced during class to maintain a focused and respectful learning environment. Please refrain from texting, using visible phones, or having conversations on your phone during class. Additionally, we ask that you avoid browsing the web, checking emails, using social media, or listening to music with headphones. These activities can be distracting to both your classmates and the instructor. Let's work together to create a space where everyone can stay engaged and make the most of their time in class. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation!

Class Communication and Canvas

All official class communication will be conducted in class and through Canvas. **Please note that this class will have two tiles on your Canvas: 2630-001 is the site for lecture only. Your design studio will be 002–008 depending on the section in which you are enrolled. Make sure that you check both tiles weekly.** We will use Canvas to provide additional course readings, share information regarding assignments, and give access to grades. Turn on the notifications in Canvas. It is crucial that you set up notifications on your device(s) so that you are receiving messages through Canvas. We will assume you have received information posted to the site, and that you take responsibility for the consequences if you choose not to check the site regularly. Modules will open throughout the semester and will contain the lecture slide decks and sketchbook exercises along with due dates. Studio assignments will be posted in the studio Canvas site. If you have any questions about where something is located on Canvas, ask your instructors.

Student Mental Health Resources

Rates of burnout, anxiety, depression, isolation, and loneliness noticeably increased during the pandemic and after. Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. If you need help, reach out for campus mental health resources, including free counseling, trainings and other support.

Contact the Center for Student Wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 801-581-7776.

Land Acknowledgment Statement

I acknowledge that this land, which is named for the Ute Tribe, is the traditional and ancestral homeland of the Shoshone, Paiute, Goshute, and Ute Tribes. The University of Utah recognizes and respects the enduring relationship that exists between many Indigenous Peoples and their traditional homelands. We respect the sovereign relationship between tribes, states, and the federal government, and we affirm the University of Utah's commitment to a partnership with Native Nations and Urban Indian communities through research, education, and community outreach activities.

Fostering a supportive learning environment

I am dedicated to fostering an environment that respects and values all individuals, embracing the richness of varied backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. My goal is to create a learning space that is welcoming and supportive for every student, ensuring equal opportunities for success.

In this course, I aim to serve students from all backgrounds, recognizing that the diversity each student brings is a valuable asset. I strive to provide materials and activities that respect and reflect a variety of identities and experiences. If there are ways I can better support your learning or improve the course for you or others, please feel free to share your feedback.

University Policies

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the [Center for Disability & Access \(CDA\)](#). CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. Prior notice is appreciated. To read the full accommodations policy for the University of Utah, please see Section Q of the [Instruction & Evaluation regulations](#). In compliance with ADA requirements, some students may need to record course content. Any recordings of course content are for personal use only, should not be shared, and should never be made publicly available. In addition, recordings must be destroyed at the conclusion of the course. If you will need

accommodations in this class, or for more information about what support they provide, contact: Center for Disability & Access 801-581-5020 disability.utah.edu 65 Student Services Building 201 S 1460 E Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Safety at the U

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more safety information and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, contact: Campus Police & Department of Public Safety 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677) dps.utah.edu 1735 E. S. Campus Dr. Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Addressing Sexual Misconduct

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status, or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to university officials: Title IX Coordinator & Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action 801-581-8365 oeo.utah.edu 135 Park Building 201 Presidents' Cir. Salt Lake City, UT 84112 or the Office of the Dean of Students 801-581-7066 deanofstudents.utah.edu 270 Union Building 200 S. Central Campus Dr. Salt Lake City, UT 84112. To file a police report, contact: Campus Police & Department of Public Safety 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677) dps.utah.edu 1735E. S. Campus Dr. Salt Lake City, UT 84112. If you do not feel comfortable reporting to authorities, the U's Victim-Survivor Advocates provide free, confidential, and trauma-informed support services to students, faculty, and staff who have experienced interpersonal violence. To privately explore options and resources available to you with an advocate, contact: Center for Campus Wellness 801-581-7776 wellness.utah.edu 350 Student Services Building 201 S. 1460 E. Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Academic Misconduct

It is expected that students comply with University of Utah policies regarding academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one's work, and/or inappropriately collaborating. This includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools without citation, documentation, or authorization. Students are expected to adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession/discipline for which they are preparing. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty or who violates the professional and ethical standards for their profession/discipline may be subject to academic sanctions as per the University of Utah's Student Code: Policy 6-410: Student Academic Performance, Academic Conduct, and Professional and Ethical Conduct.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, and/or failure in the course. Academic misconduct, according to the University of Utah Student Code: *"...Includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information...It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct."*

For details on plagiarism and other important course conduct issues, see the U's Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

And finally...

This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for the course. Please note that the instructor may modify it at any time so long as reasonable notice of the modification is provided to students. The instructor may also modify the General Course Outline at any time to accommodate the needs of a

particular class. Should you have any questions or concerns about the syllabus, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor for clarification.

See Canvas for the complete syllabus.