Intersections

Module	MACD102	Intersections
Study block	Deconstruction
Briefing	Monday 23 October 2023
Interim Deadline	Friday 24 November 2023
Assessment Deadline	Friday 12 January 2024 14h00

Module Introduction

In the first module, you have examined a variety of process models from different designers and disciplines. In this next step, you will explore applying these, and new methodologies, to an external design challenge.

This challenge explores collaboration and audience engagement, to build insight into personal practice, through a user centred design challenge. Observing current and potentially difficult human stories, you will begin to also sharpen personal views and conscience around the role design has to play in responding to human need. It seeks to focus on 'intersections' that exist both in a communication design problem and the interface where a message is exchanged.

You will be introduced to a variety of research methodologies to help interpret and understand a community based problem; examining the role of empathy, ethnography and more recently developed research tools, such as IDEO's Designkit or Gaver Dunne Pacenti's Cultural Probes to 'define' core insights. Importantly, you will be encouraged to embrace 'tension' and the 'unknown' between the components and 'actors' within a design question to help access more radical observations.

Understanding how communication relationships 'talk' is central to the first project; whether between client and designer, form and function, emotion and experience, behaviour and technology, you will test your ability and courage to confront a challenging research scenario. You will therefore work directly with a given audience, in an act of co-discovery to understand the needs and potential opportunity for a design response. This will form the first part module. Having drawn out potential questions and insights, the next phase asks you to generate an interface in response to your findings that may solve or comment on the story, whether analogue or digital.

Critical theory around 'humanness' will build insights into behavioural psychology and belief systems, anthropology and more emotive, sensorial, haptic or political drivers that could impact on understanding a user and the insights that can be gained for design interactions.

Importantly and ahead of the following module, you will be expected to gradually reinforce your technical skills and also to develop stronger links between your theory, practice, and emergent insights. All work and critical and contextual evaluation will be recorded in your Design Research Journal.

Structure

This is a 4-week experience that will contain studio practice projects and theoretical insights. Many of these are set and you will be required to attend these, keep notes and join in debate with your peers.

Lectures

Introductory lecture; structure and themes

Design for Social Change

User experience design

IDEO

Module and project briefings

Assessment preparation

Theory

Belief Systems

Behavioural Science

Design Anthropology

Technical support

Skills sessions

Tutorials

Individual Tutorials

Group tutorials

Self-study

Studio practice

Library research

External research

Guidance through group and individual tutorials will be given across the study period. Formative reviews, targeted theory lectures/tutorials and self-reflection mechanisms will encourage ongoing criticality throughout the various stages of the Study Block.

Within this module you will:

- Gain an understanding of contemporary user centred design principles and design methodologies
- Reflect on the theories and constructs of the behavioural science effecting the human condition today
- Build your reflective and critical theory skills and record insights in you design research journal
- Develop a design interface in response to an identified need

Assessment

The module contains one methods of assessment, which is based 100% on your studio practice. You should also note that your Design Research Journal and on-going critical reflection will also be assessed as part of your development and analysis work.

Please ensure that you always cross-reference your work with the Learning Outcomes and their assessment criteria.

Project 1; At the heart

The role of design today has many focus points as media, socio-political and culture changes continuously shift; responding to, and defining human need at an ever-increasing speed. Designers too have played their part in defining their role in this, of note being Ken Garland's 'First things first' manifesto and recently the development of service design companies and research centres like the Helen Hamlyn Centre at the Royal College of Art. Human

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centred design therefore becomes a catalyst for an exciting and important area of work for us. Understanding the 'human condition' and the methods used to access qualitative insights into social drivers and constructs is a critical part of a designer's skillset today.

We also see many organisations embracing human centred design principles, developing the need to actively engage with social scientists to develop their brands and products. Designers work alongside, psychologists, anthropologists and clinicians to share adaptive methods of research, integrating insights, generating and collaborating on projects together. Brands like Nokia, Apple, Nestlé and Government organisations being early adaptors of this approach; it is now an essential component to business and social innovation projects.

You will have already had some insights into understanding the stories and psychology behind human thinking through your workshops and theory lectures. You will now embark on engaging with an audience directly to define the starting point for a design initiative.

At the Heart asks you to engage in user centred design research to identify a critical issue within your _own_ community in order to make it smarter, safer, healthier and/or more sustainable for everyone in it. From your research, you are asked to define a *'How might I … '* question in response to a specific issue or challenge in your community. This could encompass day-to-day challenges ('how might I improve the pedestrian experience on Falmouth High St?') or larger social issues ('how might I design an accessible election experience for everyone?'). Based on this question, you are asked to articulate a brief with background, clearly defined aims and objectives, target market, and timeline.

Project 2; Connect

For the second part of this module, you will explore solutions to your design brief towards the creation of a design interface.

The 'interface' in broad terms, is a point of interaction between two component parts. We define this loosely, as you will be exploring interface design in the context of a user centred need, as outlined from your first project.

We also acknowledge the need for relevance in your choice of interface and media, so whether analogue or digital, it should deliver a message or service in the most appropriate way for the intended audience. This may support a particular need or service or highlight an issue in an informative or potentially provocative way. However, where in depth and sensitive stories are involved, it needs to be done with significance, thought and dignity. Therefore,

research and reading in and around the theme of 'humanness' is a core requirement of this phase in your learning. In line with the course's ethos, this should be seen to be a continuing building block of future creative thinking.

Strong ideas generation will help define approach and help you to go onto define a series of options before the final choice is made. The final concept will then be made and/or visualised.

Critically, throughout the project, you are encouraged to work closely with the community (research / prototyping) and to collaborate with peers and practitioners from different fields in order to articulate the interface.

Project Schedule

Week 1; Module Briefing and research
Week 2; Development of brief and self-directed development
Week 3; Ideation and development
Week 4; Work in progress presentation (including visualisation and story of the project).

Module Deliverables

- On-going research Journal (including development work)
- Boards charting the project journey: research & development work, brief, ideation, scamps, final project, and reflection. This should be ready for discussion in the final week, although it will not be handed in until week 14 for the module assessment.
- The design interface itself

Module learning outcomes

No	Assess. Method	Description of Assessment Method	%	Learning Outcomes Assessed					Compulsory or Compensatory
				1	2	5	9	10	
1	SP	**Design outcomes, development work and critical reflection**	100	•	•	•	•	•	Compulsory

PHASE	LEARNING OUTCOME	FAIL *0-49%*	PASS *50-69%*	DISTINCTION *70-100%*
DISCOVER	*1. Use relevant strategies and process to evaluate and select from a range of research methodologies (procedure for identifying needs)*	*A poor understanding of project needs and a uniformed, largely linear process have led to an inadequate or inappropriate choice of research methods. Lack of confidence or conviction in personal methodology*	*Identified project needs define a range of appropriate research methods and a confident understanding in the inter-relationship between research stages enables a clear sense of purpose and direction.*	*Comprehensive understanding of project needs informs the choice of highly appropriate and discretely selected research methods. Lateral thought and highly creative and innovative process is evident throughout.*

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	2. *Evidence a systematic understanding of knowledge and critical judgement in relation to issues at the forefront of contemporary debate (analysis)*	*Analysis lacks clear critique or is unfocused. Generalised conclusions and inadequate or misplaced description of the design problem.*	*Competent analysis supports conventional practice, theoretical perspectives and/or methodologies leading to a clear and effective description of the design problem.*	*On-going and rigorous analysis challenges conventional practice, theoretical perspectives and/or methodologies, leading to a clearly focused definition of the design problem.*
SPARK	**5.** *Integrate diverse social, cultural and technological concepts in the development of ideas (context and inspiration)*	*Concepts are either limited in scope, in quantity, or have been integrated unsatisfactorily within ideas that fall short of project ambitions.*	*Relevant concepts have been brought together from a wide-range of sources with care & imagination, resulting in highly informed and appropriate ideas.*	*Methodologically diverse concepts from a wide-range of sources have been integrated into highly successful ideas, challenging the nature of the discipline.*
RESOLVE	**9.** *Evaluate and select relevant tools & methods of production (craft and technical competence)*	*Production methods are limited to existing skills or by availability, with inappropriate and misinformed use of tools.*	*Production methods are clearly informed by the needs of the project, and are highly suitable for the task in hand. New methods adopted as appropriate.*	*Production methods are innovative, utilising new or unintended tools in a creative & controlled manner. High level of production awareness and suitability for project needs.*
PERFORM	10. *Evidence applied planning, organisational and reflective skills in personal practice and of a given outcome (evaluation)*	*Learning is predominately reliant on external guidance. Evaluation lacks conviction or is inaccurate. Planning and organisation is undervalued.*	*Independent learning is self-managed with confidence and with minimal guidance. Reflection is accurate and honest, leading to a persuasive and helpful evaluation.*	*Independent learning is pro actively self-managed at a professional level, with confidence and conviction. Reflection is accurate, contributing to the success of personal learning goals.*