course descriptions

1. compulsory international courses
2. product design courses
3. interaction design courses
4. communication design courses

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compulsory international courses

German Class

teacher: Carol Battista

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: /

Course content: In this A1 course, international students are introduced to the basics of the German language tailored to their needs. At the beginning, the focus is on the alphabet, pronunciation, and imple word-formation rules. Learners explore basic geographical terms related to Germany and build an initial everyday vocabulary, for example on topics such as food, colors, restaurants, and shopping.

Another important area includes numbers as well as handling money, prices, and means of transportation. Participants practice telling the time and use related expressions for daily routines, days of the week, etc. Next, essential grammatical structures are introduced, including personal pronouns and regular verb conjugation in the present tense. Followed by essential irregular verbs e.g. “haben” and “sein,” along with forming questions and negations.

Communication skills are developed through simple introductions, greetings, and brief interviews with others. Nouns, articles, important adjectives, and their plural forms are also covered. The course introduces basic modal verbs such as “müssen,” “können,” and “dürfen,” using practical themes like traffic signs.

Reading and listening play a role: Learners practice understanding short texts, videos and simple dialogues while expanding vocabulary related to family and possessive pronouns. At the end of the course, a short multiple-choice test helps assess the knowledge gained.

Presentation Skills Workshop

teacher: Tanya Matefi

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: /

Course content: This practice-based course offers students the opportunity to develop presentation and communication skills through direct experience, experimentation and mindful reflection. Participants present in a range of formats e.g. solo, team-based, prepared and improvised, frontal or collaborative – with the aim of increasing confidence, clarity, innovation and adaptability and to help students explore techniques outside of their comfort zones.
The focus is on practical skills for real-life applications: self-presentation, group presentations and

demonstrations, job interviews, elevator pitches, time management and teamwork. Most activities are designed to function with minimal preparation, allowing students to focus on why and how they present, rather than just what they present.

During the Welcome Week, the course also provides a safe space for cultural orientation, group-building, and settling into study life in Germany. Alongside presentation activities we also explore:
- Group reflection on cultural experiences and adaptation challenges
- Practical tips for navigating academic and everyday life as an international student

These early sessions help foster connection, confidence, and belonging – and form a strong foundation for the rest of the semester.

Content & Learning Goals:
1. The role of storytelling in presentations
2. Self-presentation (prepared & recorded)
3. Group presentations
4. PowerPoint Karaoke
5. Voice, body language & gestures
6. Job Interview Training
7. Presentation with demonstration & audience interaction
8. Giraffe Communication (based on Marshall Rosenberg's NVC)
9. Optional modules: time and group-dependent
10. Final session – Presentation Skills Board Game

The course has evolved over 10 years, shaped by student feedback and the changing realities of university life –including adaptations developed during the pandemic. The aim is to build a practical, creative and transferable set of presentation skills – with space to experiment, reflect and enjoy the learning process together.

International Seminar Week

May (spring semester)

ECTS: 2
Course content: This Lab Week is designed to give students a break from the normal schedule of lectures. The HfG invites workers from inside the university, as well as international professors and lecturers from other universities to lead workshops for a week. More information will be given after the start of the Semester.

Lab Week

November (fall semester)

ECTS: 2
Course content: This Lab Week is designed to give students a break from the normal schedule of lectures. The HfG invites workers from inside the university, as well as professors and lecturers from outside the campus to lead workshops for a week. More information will be given after the start of the Semester.

product design courses

product design 2A (PG2)

teacher: Andreas Hess

ECTS: 6

Max. number of participants: 3

Course content:

The product already exists… there are already hundreds of these products… why should anyone develop another one… someone else has already done it this way… I looked around and everything already exists… the stores are full of these products…

These are all statements that we designers often hear, or that students say again and again when they are looking for a topic.
But the fact is that the majority of products and systems in many areas of social relevance are not sufficiently or consistently thought through, developed, and designed.

Factors such as durability, recyclability, material efficiency, ease of assembly, repairability, resistance to wear, energy efficiency, separation of materials, sharing concepts, easy maintenance during use, and many more can be very important to design a better and new product that is more sustainable and therefore has a higher value for our society.

The starting point could be a toaster, a bike lock, garden shears, a razor, a bicycle helmet, a water bottle, a hairdryer, a kettle, or any other imaginable product.

Your task:
Choose a product with low or medium complexity that you want to optimize. Explain why you want to optimize it.
Analyze it with regard to handling, ergonomics, simplicity, everyday usefulness, wear, material efficiency, target group, recyclability, relevance, etc.

Ask yourself questions like:

What functional weaknesses does the product have?

Is the product self-explanatory or does it need detailed instructions?

From which and how many materials is the product made?

How many parts does the product have, how much assembly effort is required?

Is the product repairable, and can it be done with simple means?

Does the product delight the user with its design or with perfect function?

Which materials are recyclable?

Can all materials be separated into pure types?

Does the product make a positive contribution to society?

Could material be saved?

Is there a good balance between benefit and effort?

From this analysis, derive the requirements for your newly designed or optimized product.

product design 4B (PG4)

teacher: Felix Cordes

ECTS: 6

Max. number of participants: 5

Course content:

Kodak, Nokia, Tamagotchi, etc. – Many brands that were once influential and successful have now lost their relevance. They failed to keep up with technological or social developments, did not recognize new needs, or simply lost touch with the times. In this course, we take a look at such brands and their products, place them in a new context, and rethink them.

Students independently select a brand that is no longer relevant or, in their view, offers hidden innovation potential. First, they examine why the brand and its products are no longer relevant today. Then they identify the brand's core – the actual idea or emotional meaning behind the brand's origins.

Based on this core, students develop new product ideas that add value in today's social, technological, and ecological context, solve current problems, and at the same time reinterpret the character of the brand.

product design 4A (PG4)

teacher: Leif Huff

ECTS: 6

Max. number of participants: 6

Course content:

In collaboration with Nachtmann NextGen, this course explores the future of table culture. Nachtmann, a long-established German manufacturer of crystal glass based in Bavaria, invites students to develop new perspectives on social interactions, rituals, and the role of glass products. Under the motto “The table is the stage – products are the supporting actors, people are the protagonists”, students are asked to design products, content, and narratives that reflect the values and aspirations of the next generation.
The aim is to develop a holistic approach that integrates product design, circularity, brand positioning, industrial production, and social media storytelling. Questions of relevance, longevity, sustainability, and the role of tradition in a contemporary context will be central.
The course is defined by close collaboration with Nachtmann: an excursion to the company headquarters with insights into production, brand identity, and direct conversations on site (including overnight stay); regular design reviews with the company’s management and design leads; and continuous professional feedback throughout the project.

3D Design 2 (PG3)

teacher: Jessica Bulling

ECTS: 6

Max. number of participants: 2

Course content:

The curriculum focuses on practice-oriented, non-applied but application-oriented project work. Problems and principles related to the semantic impact of form-material combinations will be studied, and experiments and solutions will be presented, analyzed, discussed, and evaluated. Documentary support through text, images, and graphics will serve as complementary exercises. The students will gain a profound understanding of the significance and effect of form-material combinations. The students will be able to consciously utilize form and material to communicate a clear message of semantic impact. Additionally, they will be capable of employing various design methods and visualization techniques and will understand their possibilities and limitations. The students will enhance their design skills and acquire techniques for generating and developing semantic design concepts. The acquired knowledge of product and material semantics will enable the students to critically reflect on design solutions.

Process Design 1 (PG4B)

teacher: Susanne Schade/ Leif Huff

ECTS: 5

Max. number of participants: 10

Course content:

Process design for the circular economy: Use instead of ownership – the sharing economy as part of the circular economy.
You design processes that prioritize use over ownership, thereby contributing to the circular economy. The focus is on developing services and product systems that enable sharing, reuse, and repair. The course runs parallel to Process Design 4B, with joint presentations creating opportunities for exchange and comparison. Where possible, guests are invited to contribute their expertise on specific aspects through lectures and interim presentations (‘critiques’).

Drawing 2 B (PG2)

teacher: Eberhard Holder

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 8

Course content:

WHEN I DRAW—and this is where drawing differs greatly from writing or thinking—I sometimes feel as if I am participating in something like a physical process, something that eludes conscious will.

DRAWING AS AN ACT, QUESTIONING SOMETHING WITH THE EYES. Through the moment of looking, the act of questioning something with the eyes, we become aware of where and to what the act of drawing leads us. When drawing, one loses all sense of time.

All concentration is focused on the scale of the space. The drawing collects answers.

Drawing is correcting.

DRAWING AS A REDUCTION TO THE ESSENTIAL. Drawing is as much about omission as it is about addition. And I cannot rush. I take my time, as if I had all the time in the world.

Drawing 3 B (PG4/PG6)

teacher: Eberhard Holder

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 7

Course content: like Drawing 2 B

Rendering 4 (PG4/PG6)

teacher: Benjamin Baumhauer

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 10

Course content:

Conception and development of design-relevant image content, compositions, and objects with the aim of achieving a coherent and intuitive presentation.

CAD Blender (KG4/PG6)

teacher: Evripidis Lalissidis

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 8

Course content:

Introduction to 3D modeling, animation, visual design, photorealistic rendering, and project preparation for internships and portfolios with Blender.

Basics of the interface, 3D modeling, texturing and materials, lighting techniques, photorealistic rendering with Cycles, working with cameras, rendering optimization, and color grading.

The course provides practical skills in 3D modeling and photorealistic rendering with Blender. Students will learn to create realistic scenes and effectively prepare their projects for portfolios. They will also be able to navigate the interface and utilize various lighting and texturing techniques.

Students are required to create a complete scene using the knowledge acquired during the course. They have the freedom to choose whether to work on a self-initiated project or implement an existing concept. The goal is to present at least one rendering or multiple renderings that clearly reflect the learning objectives. The final submission must include the Blender file, along with the renderings or animations and all post-processing edits.

Keramic (KG4/PG6)

teacher: Peter Lehrke

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 2

Course content:

The ceramics course focuses on design (suitable for production) for industrial casting processes. This will be learned through a practical assignment.

The course consists of two parts: learning about the industrial process and the associated technical knowledge and craft skills in order to be able to reproduce this in a university context. The second component is the design aspect. Once again, we will be designing a tile, but with a twist—stay tuned!

The materials gypsum and ceramics are our protagonists here. Working with gypsum will be the shaping part of the positive mold creation. We will encounter ceramics at the end when we make the ceramic impressions of our gypsum positives. I look forward to seeing you!

Clay Modeling (Incomings)

teacher: Peter Lehrke

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 10

Course content:

This course is designed specifically for international students. The primary focus is on working with (Staedtler's) „Marsclay", a high-quality professional styling clay (not to be mistaken with clay for ceramics) commonly employed in transportation design. However, its versatility also makes it an excellent tool for industrial design and other creative fields.
Students will receive an introduction to essential clay modeling techniques, learning how to shape, sculpt, and refine forms using this flexible medium. The course emphasizes training the eye to recognize and replicate freeform surfaces, a crucial skill in many areas of design.
At the heart of the course is a project-based assignment, involving hands-on work with the material and developing three-dimensional thinking in the real world. This hands-on course offers a unique opportunity to engage with physical modeling and refine our design instincts in a collaborative, creative environment. No prior experience in clay modeling is required.

Product photography (Incomings)

teacher: Jens Werlein

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 8

Course content: not yet known

interaction design courses

Interactive Communication Systems 1 (IG2)

teacher: Martin Wehl

ECTS: 6

Max. number of participants: 5

Course content:

The course deals with the design and prototyping of an interactive application in the context of exhibition, museum, or trade fair that makes a chosen topic accessible to beginners.

The goal is to learn fundamental relationships within the field of human-computer interaction and information design.

Students engage with basic forms of interaction and media-specific design problems, information architecture, information and data visualization, the relationship between text, image, and animation, and prototypical implementation or simulation.

Interface 2 (IG4)

teacher: Carmen Hartmann-Menzel

ECTS: 8

Max. number of participants: 10

Course content:

With many products – in private as well as professional or industrial surroundings – people interact multimodally. User interfaces contain aspects of haptic interaction, exchange of visual and audible information and feedback as well. Furthermore, physical products are increasingly combined with or embedded into digital services.

UX Design / Application Design 2 (IG4)

teacher: Philipp Brucker

ECTS: 8

Max. number of participants: 5

Course content:

The subject area is free to choose in context of physical products being combined with digital services. We will focus on optimisation of user experience: how users can execute tasks and achieve their desired goals in working processes effectively, efficiently, and satisfactory.

Usability Lab (IG6)

teacher: Matthias Peissner

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 3

Course content: not known yet

communication design courses

Digital Maps (KG4/KG6)

teacher: Marc Guntow

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 5

Course content:

Students discuss historical map series in the seminar and receive an introduction to the creation of dynamic maps using the Mapbox framework.

Maps as instruments of knowledge transfer and generalization of location information are one of the oldest forms of communication design. On the basis of some important or in individual aspects particularly meaningful historical map works, important parameters of cartography such as scale, symbolism, projection, coloring, etc. are discussed.

In the second part of the course, students use the framework "Mapbox" to create dynamically zoomable maps on self-selected topics and test the styling of maps for the screen depending on the intended purpose and related to respectively reasonable zoom levels.

Furthermore, the creation of own or integration of publicly available data sets into digital maps is introduced, as well as the publication of dynamic maps on the web and their interactive usability using the JavaScript library "Mapbox GL JS".

Course structure

Collaborative discussion of historical cartographic works based on student presentations
Lecture on the history of cartography from Mercator to Google Maps
Lecture on the parameters and functions of cartographic conventions
Lecture on map projections relevant to design professionals

Learning objectives

Processing of location-based content, ability to evaluate and design meaningful static and dynamic maps, basic knowledge of Mapbox and Mapbox GL JS.

Assessment criteria

Paper and presentation of a self-designed dynamic map prototype.

Let’s Talk Business (KG4/KG6)

teacher: Vera Glahn

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 10

Course content:

A hand-to-heart reality check for your post-graduation plans, with insights, tools, and real money talk – Let’s Talk Business is a course for designers and covers three focus areas:
In a Career Options Reality Check, we will look into a wide range of career choices for designers, both independently and in employment, from freelancing to small studio or big agency employment, product idea to startup, design to advertising. From independent practice to artistic studio, from hands-on creative roles to strategy and management. And how these choices typically inform your role, your creative freedom and your financial independence.
In How to sell an idea we will discuss what makes a good pitch, and workshop around your own ideas.
In How to make money we will look into how dayrates are defined, projects are budgeted, and what designers need to know about budgeting in agencies. Plus a brief foray into the importance of contracts.

Whilst the course revolves around very practical things, those will be affecting your ideas and emotions – regular check-ins and opportunities for one-to-one mentoring leave room for exploring them.

Course leader Vera-Maria Glahn will inform the seminar with reference points from her own experience ranging from studio founder to marketing director, from consultant to employer, and the examples of designers, artists and studios worldwide.

The course will be held in english.

Learning Methods
Lectures, group discussions, short exercises, student presentations, and one-to-one mentoring.

Learning Objectives
The course aims to provide students with a foundational understanding of potential career trajectories, as well as the business dynamics that will affect their work, to equip them with knowledge and tools for protecting their creative freedom as they start their careers after graduation.

Assessment Criteria
Attendance, active participation in discussions, exercises and presentations.

Literature
To be shared during the course for further study.

Orientation Systems (KG4/KG6)

teacher: Jürgen Hoffmann, Marc Guntow, Lena Heim

ECTS: 8

Max. number of participants: 6

Course content:

Left, right, straight ahead, around the corner – or maybe up or down?
In this course, we explore signage and wayfinding systems in both two- and three-dimensional spaces. Together we will design a wayfinding and information system that makes complex instructions clear and intuitive, and that connects information to its spatial context.

User Experience (KG4/KG6)

teacher: Dominic Witzke

ECTS: 8

Max. number of participants: 6

Course content:

1. Short Description

A great idea alone does not make a great product. In this course, we analyze everyday problems and processes to develop a user- and experience-centered mobile application using various methods, creating solutions that elevate small daily challenges in an extraordinary way.

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2. Learning Content

Theoretical and practical introduction to design methods of an iterative, user-centered design process, starting from problem definition, user research, and requirements analysis to simulating a potential solution
Basic and advanced knowledge in User Experience Design and User Interface Design
Development of information architectures, interaction models, interaction principles, and graphical user interfaces

Exploration and evaluation of design variants (visual design, information architecture, and interaction design) as well as methods for prototypical implementation
Introduction to design, visualization, and simulation tools and their theoretical and practical application (e.g., Figma, ProtoPie, etc.)

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3. Approach

User Experience (UX) is the key success factor for a great product, going beyond just User Interface (UI) design. That is why this course follows an iterative and user-centered UX design process using design methods.

Students will choose a topic and analyze existing applications or processes. After a contextual analysis and research phase, ideas for potential solutions will be generated. Using user research methods, requirements for the application will be developed, and user groups will be defined. The User Interface will be designed and prototypically implemented in the final phase using intuitive simulation tools. The type of implementation may vary depending on the concept and medium.

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4. Learning Objectives

The primary goal is to teach design methods that are fundamental for developing user- and experience-centered software. Additionally, the course focuses on providing theoretical and practical tools for analyzing, developing, and designing user interfaces.

Students will gain knowledge of key factors in User Experience and User Interface Design, incorporating conceptual, technical, and design methods for developing digital products.

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5. Assessment

The evaluation will be based on:
The developed software concept applying the taught design methods
The design quality of the user interface and prototype
The final presentation and project documentation

Corporate Identity (KG4/KG6)

teacher: Daniel Utz

ECTS: 6

Max. number of participants: 8

Course content:

What makes the HfG special? Where are we going? What are our central contents and messages? How can we communicate these in a crisp and precise manner? To prospective students … but also to politicians, companies and the general public?

We will be dealing with the identity and visual appearance of our university. From this we will develop communication concepts: anything is possible between social media, campaigns and "branding".

If the topic of HfG is too self-centered for you, you can alternatively choose another non-profit organization as a fictitious client for your project work. This could be a museum, an association, a NGO, a scientific institute, etc.

Learning Content

At the beginning, the status quo is analyzed in order to derive goals for new communication strategies:

Which target groups are addressed?
Which media and formats are used for communication?
Are the available communication channels used efficiently?
Which aspects stand out positively, where are there deficits? What
requirements arise for a new visual identity?

On this basis, different new design approaches are developed. The focus is initially on the design of the basic design elements, later other parameters such as color and imagery are included.

As the project progresses, possible combinations of the individual elements are examined and a modular system of coordinated components is developed. To better assess the designs, the adaptation options in various media and applications are examined. The focus can be on the following areas:

Digital media: Website, animation sequence
Communication in space
Printed matter: leaflets, brochures, advertisements, posters

Procedure

Conception
Research
Creating a briefing from the perspective of the (fictitious) client

Design
Drafting different design approaches: wordmark or logo, key visual, typography

Comparison of adaptations for different formats, media and applications

Elaboration
Development of design parameters: typography, colors, formats, grids, layout principles
Design of different media and applications
Overview of the basic design elements
Presentation of the results

Teaching objectives

The primary teaching objective is to gain experience in dealing with the design elements that make up a visual identity system: in addition to the wordmark or logo, these are primarily typography, color, form and imagery.

During the design process, the interaction of these elements is developed within different applications and media.

Proof of performance

Overview of the visual identity system in the form of a poster series (DIN A1)
Animation sequence / project film
Documentation
Criteria for evaluation the range of designs and the willingness to seek unusual solutions the consistent development of different design approaches typography, layout, precision in detail the presentation of the results the documentation: completeness, traceability of the design steps

Interactive Design (KG3)

teacher: Ulf Harr

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 5

Course content:

Fundamental knowledge in designing digital products.

Information Design (KG3)

teacher: Daniel Utz, Stefan Kraiss

ECTS: 6

Max. number of participants: 6

Course content: not known yet

Audiovisual Design (KG3)

teacher: Michael Götte, Ulf Harr

ECTS: 6

Max. number of participants: 5

Course content: Not known yet