Summer Semester 2026
course descriptions

compulsory international courses

German Class

teacher: Carol Battista

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: /

Course content: German language basics pursuant to A1 level (or A2 for students with prior knowledge) as well as specific university/survival vocabulary (Course may need to be split into 2 groups depending on previous levels)

Learning goals: Orientation to Schwäbisch Gmünd and German culture.
Expansion of previous knowledge of German for intermediate students.
Introduction to basic German (A1) and "survival " German

International Seminar Week
04. – 08. May 2026

ECTS: 2

Course content: The International Seminar Week offers students the opportunity to step out of the regular lecture schedule for one week and engage intensively with a specific topic. For this occasion, HfG Schwäbisch Gmünd invites guest lecturers from international partner universities, each offering a five-day workshop or seminar.

During this week, all regular classes are paused. Instead, students work in small groups and focus on a shared project or thematic exploration. Participants include students from semesters 2–6 across all three study programmes at HfG Schwäbisch Gmünd: Interaction Design, Communication Design, and Product Design.

Before the week begins, students can choose their preferred course. The resulting groups typically consist of students from different semesters and disciplines. This interdisciplinary mix is highly valued, as it often leads to new perspectives, collaborative learning, and unexpected outcomes.

The International Seminar Week concludes with a small exhibition in which the results and processes from the workshops are presented. This exhibition offers an opportunity for students and lecturers to share insights from the different courses and to reflect on the work produced during the week.

Presentation Skills Workshop

teacher: Tanya Matefi

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: /

Course content: The purpose of this workshop is for participants to practice various techniques, as well as develop self-confidence, in order to make successful presentations by practically making several presentations for a "built-in" audience, while receiving feedback and tips from the trainer and the other participants. In a safe and positive environment, participants can overcome their inhibitions and practice making different kinds of presentations. Individual presentations, team presentations, improvised and prepared presentations. The workshop has intense sessions, with many improvised presentations, followed by a break in which participants have time to work on prepared presentations. Students are encouraged to film their presentations for the purpose of self-assessment and reflection. Learning Goals: 1. To learn and practice good communication skills and public speaking techniques in order to confidently make effective and memorable presentations. 2. To develop self-confidence in presenting, overcoming inhibitions and practice and implement relaxation techniques to overcome presentation anxiety. 3. To learn and practice optimal ways to prepare and make individual and group presentations.

product design courses

Product Design 2A

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.

Process Design 1

teacher: Prof. Leif Huff/ Prof. Susanne Schade

ECTS: 5

Max. number of participants: 10

Course content:

Process Design — Care, Maintenance and Repair as Design Practice
Care, maintenance and repair play a central role in extending the lifespan of products and keeping resources in circulation. In the context of sustainability and circular economy, attention shifts toward processes that go beyond conventional product development: How can materials from maintenance and repair re-enter material cycles? Which structures support long-term use instead of early replacement? And how do emerging regulations such as Right to Repair challenge established design approaches?
The course investigates these questions from a process-oriented design perspective. Rather than developing individual repairable products, students focus on strategies, interfaces and workflows that enable care, maintenance and repair. Historical practices — such as shoe repair, tailoring or craft-based maintenance — serve as references alongside contemporary technological and social developments.

The course is methodically structured into three phases. Each phase begins with an intensive design sprint and concludes with a presentation of results.
Phase 1 — Research: Understanding Care and Use
The course begins with an object that each student brings as a starting point for observation, analysis and discussion. Methods from human-centered design research form the foundation: user interviews, observation, work with extreme users and qualitative contextual research.
A particular focus lies on examining past and existing practices that have supported long product lifetimes, including craft traditions and repair cultures. Through a structured synthesis process, students develop user insights, define the design context and formulate a clear How-Might-We question that frames the following phase.

Phase 2 — Concept Development: Designing Processes
Building on the research findings, students apply methods connected to sustainability and systemic design. Process flows, experience maps and lifecycle perspectives help shift the focus from isolated artefacts toward relationships, infrastructures and temporal dynamics.
A workshop-based sprint at the beginning of the phase opens the space for exploration through a wide range of early ideas. These are consolidated into a coherent concept that frames care, maintenance and repair as a designed process and articulates a clear design position. The outcome of this phase is a defined concept that serves as the basis for further development.

Phase 3 — Development and Communication: Making Processes Visible
The final phase begins with a storytelling sprint in which students define the narrative and communication strategy of their work. The aim is to translate complex processes into accessible and comprehensible forms.
Students then develop visualizations, prototypes or interventions that articulate their concepts. The course concludes with the submission of the final work and the preparation of an exhibition presenting processes, insights and design positions.

Assessment
Assessment is based on continuous evaluation throughout the semester, including interim presentations, active participation in the process and the overall design quality of the developed work. Particular emphasis is placed on the application of methods, the development of content across phases, the ability to reflect critically and the clarity of execution and communication.

Please Note: There is a connection to the Sustainability Lecture, Students of this course need to participate in the bi-weekly lecture.
The course is linked to the parallel sustainability lecture and translates selected perspectives from the lecture into a process-oriented design practice. While the lecture provides a theoretical framework, the project course focuses on the application and testing of methods, strategies and design approaches. The aim is to investigate questions discussed in the lecture through concrete design processes related to use, care, maintenance and repair.

Ergonomic Project A & B (PG3)

teacher: Prof. Jürgen Held

ECTS: 5

Max. number of participants: …

Course content:

Group A (Mondays 9:00 - 12:45):
Luminous Seat Belt Design (Automotive) - Cooperation with ZF Lifetec https://zf-lifetec.com/group and with Institute of Textile and Fiber Research DITF https://www.ditf.de/en/index/ditf/

> Project aim:
To develop a novel solution for the design: and handling of a luminous / illuminated seat belt.
The new solution is intended to:
- have an improvement in terms of ergonomics, comfort and appearance compared to the existing systems.
- consider the possible use of novel materials and manufacturing processes (smart textiles, e-textiles).
- be developed for a target group that is as large as possible and with the inclusion of e.g. people with disabilities and the elderly.

> Organisation:
- Teamwork, Teams of 2-3 students
- Buddy concept: Teams of Incoming-student plus HfG-students
- Cooperation partner (company) explicitly welcomes Incoming-Students
- Travel and prototyping/model building costs are covered
- Language mixed: English/German
- Two excursions (1/2 day) to cooperation partner

Group B (Tuesdays 9:00 - 12:45):
Industrial Design of Enclosures for Packaging Machines - Cooperation with Koch Pac Systeme GmbH https://koch-pac-systeme.com/en/

> Project aim:
Development of new concepts of machine enclosure, taking into account:
- Safety and ergonomics,
- Sustainability,

- Cost (material, production),
- Consistent design language and value,
- as well as recognition of the machines.

> Organisation:
- Teamwork, teams of 2-3 students
- Buddy concept: Teams of Incoming-student plus HfG-students
- Cooperation partner (company) explicitly welcomes Incoming-Students
- Travel and prototyping/model building costs are covered
- Language mixed: English/German
- Two excursions (1 day) to cooperation partner

_____

If you want to know more in detail about the course of group A and B: Please send your questions to juergen.held@hfg-gmuend.de

Product Design 3 (PG3)

teacher: Prof. Leif Huff

ECTS: 6

Max. number of participants: …

Course content:

"Light in Public Space"
A Hanukkah Menorah for Schwäbisch Gmünd

This project course focuses on the design of light installations in public space and combines cultural research with a concrete, implementable design task. In collaboration with the City of Schwäbisch Gmünd and a yet-to-be-defined manufacturing partner, students will develop concepts for a Hanukkah menorah intended to be installed annually in the urban environment during the Jewish holidays.
The starting point is an open exploration of light, rituals, and temporary interventions within an urban context. Students will begin by engaging with the Jewish history of Schwäbisch Gmünd as well as Hanukkah as a cultural practice. Diversity, remembrance culture, and a sensitive approach to symbolism form an essential framework. Design is understood here as a mediating practice — positioned between social responsibility, cultural meaning, and contemporary product design.
At the same time, public space is examined as a real framework for action. The menorah is not only considered a symbolic object but also an element of Schwäbisch Gmünd's urban furniture. Questions of orientation, spatial quality, visibility, and atmosphere are addressed alongside technical and regulatory requirements. These include safety considerations, public lighting standards, energy supply, maintenance, material durability, and strategies for vandalism prevention. Students learn to develop concepts under real conditions and to align design intentions with constructive and infrastructural demands.
The course is structured around several teams exploring different approaches to "Light in Public Space." Some groups will design a Hanukkah menorah that carries cultural meaning while remaining technically viable and sustainable within the urban context. At the end of the semester, one concept will be selected for realization. A student team may continue working with the city and the manufacturing partner beyond the semester — including the challenge of articulating and preserving design intent outside the academic environment.

Course Focus
- Research on Hanukkah, Jewish history, and diversity within the local context
- Light design and temporary installations in public space
- Urban furniture between symbolism, use, and urban infrastructure
- Collaboration with external partners from municipal and industrial sectors
- Compliance with safety and public lighting regulations

- Consideration of vandalism prevention, stability, and material durability
- Technical aspects such as energy supply, light quality, glare control, and maintenance access
- Integration into existing urban settings, circulation paths, and spatial qualities
The project course presents design as a process that connects cultural content, social responsibility, and technical realities. The goal is to develop a design that extends beyond the semester context and can become a lasting part of public life in Schwäbisch Gmünd.

Didactic Approach and Structure
The course is divided into four phases:
1) Research & Context
Introduction to Hanukkah, the Jewish history of Schwäbisch Gmünd, and analysis of light installations and urban furniture in public space.
2) Concept Development
Team-based work focusing on narrative, usage scenarios, diversity aspects, and spatial impact.
3) Design & Technical Development
Creation of an implementable design addressing constructive, safety-related, and lighting-specific requirements, including exchange with the city and potential manufacturing partners.
4) Selection & Further Development

One concept will be chosen for realization. A student team may continue development with external partners beyond the semester. Engaging with selection processes and shared authorship forms part of the learning objectives.

Learning Objectives
- Designing at the intersection of cultural meaning, diversity, and public space
- Understanding urban furniture and lighting as integrative design challenges
- Translating conceptual ideas into technically feasible solutions
- Collaboration with municipal and industrial partners
- Reflection on design processes, responsibility, and long-term use

Perspective
The long-term goal is the realization of a Hanukkah menorah (implementation starting in autumn 2026), to be installed annually in the public space of Schwäbisch Gmünd, with the first installation planned for Hanukkah 2026.

Sustainability PG 4 (This course is part of the Process Design Course.)

teacher: Prof. Leif Huff

Course content:
Sustainability — Roles and Methods in Design
This course introduces sustainability as a systemic design practice that connects human needs, technological development and planetary resources. Rather than treating sustainability as an abstract principle, the course explores the evolving roles of designers within complex transformation processes. Students work with six perspectives — Systems Thinker, Facilitator, Steward, Visionary, Moderator and Ethicist — to understand how design can operate across disciplines and scales.
Through lectures, discussions and applied exercises, the course provides methodological tools for research, analysis and strategic thinking, including systems mapping, lifecycle perspectives and scenario-based exploration. The aim is to develop a design position that integrates environmental awareness with social and technological contexts, and to build a foundation for responsible decision-making within contemporary product and process design.

3D Design 2

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.

CAD Blender

teacher: Evripidis Lalissidis

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 7

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.

Product Photography

teacher: Jens Werlein

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 8

Independent photography of products in and outside the photo studio. The course covers idea generation, product selection, background selection, development of a photographic concept, and professional implementation in terms of composition, design, lighting, and exposure. Students will also learn professional image editing and presentation for web and print. The aim is to enable students to independently photograph their own future products in a professional manner.

Course Assessment:
Printed outcomes of the photographed project.

Claymodeling

teacher: Peter Lehrke

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 8

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.

Learning Outcomes:

- Master basic clay modeling techniques
- Develop the ability to visualize and create and enhancing the understanding of freeform surfaces, curves, transitions, etc.
- gain practical experience in transportation and industrial design application

Drawing 2

teacher: Eberhard Holder

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 8

Drawing 3

teacher: Eberhard Holder

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 7

Performance assessment: Participation
Tasks successfully completed, no grades.
Topics
Drawing as a research tool
Drawing as a thinking tool
Drawing as a presentation tool
Course content
DRAWING AN ACT OF SEEING
Learning objectives
Drawing representation

Flow
An experience in which, when drawing, one movement follows another, as if by itself, as if something were acting through it: being in flow.
A state of consciousness in which we forget space and time, are maximally happy, motivated, and productive—as if in a trance.

Rendering 4

teacher: Benjamin Baumhauer

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 10

Course Content:

Digital Drawing and Rendering for realistic Concepts in Photoshop.

Introduction to the basics of 2D digital rendering
(perspective, light/shadow, color).

The goal is development of image content, composition, and objects with the aim of achieving a coherent and pleasing presentation.

Ring modeling

teacher: Gerd Schmidt

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 6

Course Content:

Making rings/ Theme Ring course/ aggressive vs peaceful
-You design a ring for your finger which is then cast in sterling silver-

"...before you sign up for this course, you should read this carefully
in order to be able to make a well-informed decision..."

This ring course has several aspects. Firstly, the design of the ring is influenced by the sandcasting manufacturing technique. This technique shapes, but can also limit, the design. The design o he ring must do notice the casting process and will therefore have to have a certain volume. This Rings will be made for the finger, which are therefore a manageable size. You will design a ring that should fit the given theme. Consider the ring in the design like a sculpture on the finger.

We will meet as a group a few days before the course starts. I will discuss the exact content and give you homework that is necessary for the rest of the course. If you do not and this appointment, you will may have difficulty following the course properly over the course. You will learn how to use tools.

You will learn in a practical way by making the ring why undercuts in the model make demolding impossible. You may get dirty. Hopefully you will have a lot of fun and enjoyment making your rings. See below for more information.

Theme
- will be decided
- There should be a maximum of two rings.

Design
- Drawings- visualize ideas
- Oversized clay model to check sizes and proportions o he design.

Master model
- Clay model is filed analogously to a fingersize-appropriate wax model.
- Serves as a master model that is transformed into a silverring.
- Work must be done precisely. (Size, surface, dividing line)

Technology
- Sand casting process, two-part mold, no undercuts, demolding.
- Casting box, sand, separation, pouring.
- This technique shapes the mold!

Casting
- After pouring - remove the casting from the sand, burnt sand is removed.
- Rings that have been cast must be removed.
- Rings are weighed, weights noted.
- There may be casting errors.

Rework
- Casting residues are removed.
- - Surfaces filed, ground, polished.

I accompany the entire process step by step.
The student will pay for the silvermaterial.

Design and media history

teacher: Mark J. Freyer (& Michael Burke)

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 6

Course Content:
Studying design also means engaging with the history of design and media. Those who study history learn to present it in a way that others can understand. Studying history means opening the door to the world. History prepares us for our future—not as a simple blueprint, but as an awareness that we are open to future developments. The course is divided into two basic components.

Lectures by Michael Burke and Mark J. Freyer outlined important milestones in the history of design and media. In part two of the course, PG1 will venture into a real piece of design history in groups. The task: to design a cuboid (20 x 10 x 5 cm) from the perspective of a randomly assigned design personality. However, this course is not only aimed at furthering historical education. The design task aims to encourage teamwork, expressive skills, getting to know the HfG, using the workshops, venturing into model making, and laying a good foundation for further courses at the university.

interaction design courses

Interactive Communication Systems 1

teacher: Kai - Magnus Müller

ECTS: 6

Max. number of participants: 2

Course content:

The course is about designing and prototyping an interactive application/exhibit in the context of an exhibition, museum or fair. The aim is to get to know the fundamental interrelationships within the field of human-computer interaction and information design.
The students deal with basic forms of interaction forms and media-specific design problems, information architecture, information and data visualization, relationship of text, image and animation, and prototypical implementation or simulation.

Interface 2

teacher: Carmen Hartmann-Menzel

ECTS: 8

Max. number of participants: 4

Course content:

Based on a given project topic, we develop product service systems that comprise both a physical product and a digital service. This means developing two interfaces: one physical and one digital, and combining them in a consistent design. From concept development and information architecture/flows to visual design and model building to evaluation with users, all activities of human-centred design are carried out. In addition, multimodal interaction is taken into account, i.e. the combination of haptic, visual and auditory feedback.

UX Design / Application Design 2

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

teacher: Matthias Peissner

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 3

Course content:

The course »Usability Lab« teaches the fundamentals of user participation in all stages of human-centered design and innovation. Students learn to understand the strategic goals and benefits of actively involoing users and stakeholders in their design and innovation activities. They gain an overview of best practices and established methods and learn how to create project plans and select and apply appropriate methods in realistic settings.
Based on a general understanding of the quality criteria of empirical research, the students can actively train their research skills in deep-dives into two selected methods. One of the two methods for hand-on experiments is user testing. The other method is selected according to the students' prior knowledge and interests.
Today's human-centered design and user testing are increasingly influenced by AI technologies. The course discusses the potential benefits of AI support in all phases of human-centered design and examines how modern AI tools can improve the user research and testing capabilities of future-oriented designers.

Programming Languages 1 (IG1)

teacher: Benno Stäbler

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 3

Course content:

3-dimensional fundamentals in medial space (IG2)

teacher: Prof. Dr. Franklin Hernandez Castro

ECTS: 4

Max. number of participants: 8

Course content:

This intensive course on data visualization, developed in JavaScript, lasts four weeks and is structured as a hands-on workshop at the university level. Throughout the course, students independently select a topic of interest and an associated dataset, which serves as the basis for developing a meaningful visualization. The emphasis is placed on understanding the relationship between the data, the narrative structure that can be built from it, and the design decisions necessary to communicate the information clearly and effectively.

The course is based on a learning-by-doing methodology, in which the design and development process takes place iteratively. Students experiment with different strategies of visual representation, implementing them using JavaScript tools for interactive visualization. By the end of the workshop, each group of students produces a functional and conceptually justified visualization designed specifically for the type of data and the questions they wish to explore.

Invention Design (IG4)

teacher: Prof. David Oswald, Prof. Mark Meyer

ECTS: 4

Max. number of participants: 5

Course content:
In Invention Design we conceive and design new digital products, tools, and services with a strong focus on the future. Emerging technologies are researched and evaluated in order to inspire and develop useful applications based on a research and experiment driven approach. This semester we will focus on AI as an umbrella topic.

Interface Technologies (IG4)

teacher: Carmen Hartmann-Menzel

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 6

Course content:

In the seminar Interface Technologies, we explore the wide range of possibilities for designing interactions between humans and machines. We examine different input and output technologies, consider their potential and technical requirements, and apply them in small experiments. The aim is to enable students to deliberately select, combine, and critically reflect on technologies in order to create rich and meaningful interactions within their projects.

communication design courses

Digital Maps (KG4/6)

teacher: Prof. 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 (KG4/6)

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/Signage Systems (KG4/6)

teacher: Prof. 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?
Signage systems in a 2-or 3-dimensional environment.
We will develop a wayfinding/information system with the goal to simplify multi layered instructions and information, to make it easily understood and projected into a spatial context.

User Experience (KG4/6)

teacher: Dominik Witzke

ECTS: 8

Max. number of participants: 6

Course content:

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.

Corporate/Visual Identity (KG4/6)

teacher: Prof. Daniel Utz

ECTS: 8

Max. number of participants: 6

Course content:

Short Description

Interactive Design (KG3)

teacher: Prof. Ulf Harr

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 5

Course content:

1. Short Description
Fundamental knowledge in designing digital products.

_____

2. Learning Content
- Principles of interactive design
- Designing interfaces and creating variations in Figma

- Developing functional prototypes in Figma
- Patterns
- Information architecture / Hierarchy
- Navigation
- Color palettes
- Typography
- Icons
- Use of light, shadow, and perspective
- Animation and transitions
- Design systems
- Libraries in Figma
- Accessibility

_____

3. Approach

Through a series of systematically structured exercises of increasing complexity, students will practice applying principles of interactive design. Various solution approaches will be discussed in group settings.

_____

4. Learning Objectives

- Proficient use of Figma for designing digital products
- Understanding and applying design principles in digital design
- Creating variations
- Prototyping
- Articulating design decisions and providing constructive critique

_____

5. Assessment

Completion of exercises, presentation of results, and active participation in discussions.

_____

Information Design (KG3)

teacher: Prof. Andreas Pollock, Stefan Kraiss

ECTS: 6

Max. number of participants: 5

Course content:

Building on the fundamentals of typography and layout, this course will focus on the basics of information design. Typography forms the necessary framework, but the emphasis is on learning about and applying different visualization models:

– Diagrams and data visualizations

– Infographics, illustrations, and functional representations

– Icons and pictograms

– Maps and timelines

As part of the project work, complex topics will be presented in an exciting way with the help of graphic representations, and abstract data will be processed and clearly presented using interactive information systems. The resulting medium should convey content in a compact form. This gives the viewer faster and more immediate access than with purely text-based information transfer.

A clear focus on information design is important to us: your projects will center on conveying content with the help of diagrams, data and infographics, illustrations, pictograms, etc.

Audiovisual Design (KG3) (This course has to be selected together with one simulation course.)

teacher: Prof. Michael Götte, Prof. Ulf Harr, Selina Dick

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 5

Course content:

Audiovisual Design
In this course, students work in teams using a selected musical sequence as a structured framework. You will reconstruct dramaturgy, tracks, hierarchies, and interactions, translating these through notation, morphologies, and iterative character shaping into a coherent, legible time-based work (including documentation, poster, and presentation).

Core Pedagogical Value

This module serves as a critical foundational component: you will learn that design in dynamic media is not primarily about "looks," but rather about rules, timing, and relationships—and that behavior conveys meaning.

Consequently, the process of "making animation" evolves into a methodologically grounded design discipline. This provides a fundamental framework that remains applicable and scalable for all subsequent projects, including motion design, UI/UX, and generative systems.

Simulation 1 (KG2) (This course is part of the Audio Visual Design Course.)

teacher: Claudius Schulz

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: …

Course content:
AfterEffects class – only in combination with Audiovisual Design, for absolute beginners.

Simulation 2 (KG3) (This course is part of the Audio Visual Design Course.)

teacher: Claudius Schulz

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: …

Course content:
AfterEffects class – only in combination with Audiovisual Design, for more advanced students.

AI in communication design

teacher: Prof. Mark Meyer

ECTS: 2

Max. number of participants: 3

Course content:

Generative AI systems are fundamentally transforming the professional and conceptual field of communication design. This seminar approaches AI not merely as a productivity tool, but as a medium that raises fundamental questions about authorship, aesthetic agency, and the role of designers. Students will develop a critical and practical understanding of AI-assisted workflows, from image generation and typography to brand communication and editorial design, and situate these tools within cultural, ethical, and design-theoretical contexts. The course combines hands-on experimentation with theoretical reflection, equipping students to apply and critically evaluate AI in professional contexts.

Learning Methods
A combination of theoretical input and practical exercises.

Learning Objectives
By the end of the seminar, students will be able to:
Critically assess the aesthetic and ethical implications of AI-generated communication artifacts
Integrate AI tools purposefully and reflectively into design workflows
Situate current AI developments within the history and theory of communication design

Assessment Criteria
Documentation of practical exercises throughout the semester.

Literature
Joanna Zylinska: AI Art: Machine Visions and Warped Dreams (2020)
Kate Crawford: Atlas of AI (2021)
Lev Manovich: The Language of New Media (2001)

3-dim. Design (KG2)

teacher: Prof. Marc Guntow
ECTS: 2
Max. number of participants: 3

Course content: