EINA

**Eina Centre Universitari
Fundació Eina
Disseny Art Barcelona**

**Passeig Santa Eulàlia 25
08017 Barcelona T+34 932 030 923
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STRATEGIC DESIGN

Jorge Rodriguez Nieto

Supervising Teacher: Jorge Rodriguez Nieto

Content: 1

Code: 105742

Credits: 6 ECTS

Course:

Semester: 1

Typology: Optative

Subject: Business

Schedules:

Content	Schedules	Teacher
1	Dijous 08:30 - 11:30	Jorge Rodriguez Nieto

Subject Presentation

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Learning outcomes of the subject

Skills

Determine how design is integrated into the organisational structure of business entities and analyse its role within them. (ST10)

Competencies

Develop a structured and viable business plan for design-related products, services, or initiatives, integrating the values of social equity, diversity, and gender perspective, in line with fundamental rights and the promotion of a democratic society. (CT03

Learning outcomes of the degree program

Knowledge

Respond to global issues related to the fields of design and art, cultural industries, their institutional environments, and the agents involved.

Skills

Identify design problems through the analysis of objects, graphic communication elements, and spaces, from a perspective rooted in contemporaneity, universal accessibility, and equal opportunities.

Propose design solutions (or solutions in related areas) clearly and precisely, using appropriate vocabulary and techniques of expression and representation.

Use digital tools and technologies according to creative and production processes in the field of design

Make value judgments about design projects by interpreting data and justifying critical analysis using knowledge of graphic communication, space, objects, and reference texts.

Conduct research with a critical spirit in the field of design and related disciplines, considering innovation, experimentation, and the ongoing renewal of the cultural industries, while promoting equality and democratic values.

Synthesize knowledge from diverse sources—studies, fieldwork, literature, direct observation, or practical experience—in the field of design and related disciplines within the cultural industries.

Evaluate the social, economic, environmental, and technological feasibility of a design project, incorporating gender and diversity perspectives, and ensuring respect for sustainability, democratic values, and fundamental rights.

Competencies

Manage the development of design projects—individually or in teams—with adaptability, within the organisational context of companies and institutions.

Apply acquired knowledge to the execution of design and art projects with professional standards, considering user and audience diversity.

Formulate viable business plans for the development of design-related products, services, or initiatives that incorporate sustainability, inclusion, and gender perspectives, and align with democratic and fundamental rights.

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Content: 1

Brief Description:

Strategic Design introduces students to a new way of thinking and practising design—one that goes beyond aesthetics to become a powerful tool for navigating complex, systemic, and transformative challenges within organisations and society. This course positions design as a strategic discipline that plays a central role in the creation and evolution of products, services, user experiences, and communication models, while also contributing to positive social and environmental impact.

Students will broaden their skillsets by developing capabilities such as complex problem-solving, empathy, service and systems thinking, and real-world teamwork. They will be inspired to understand design as one of the most influential forces shaping our world today and to assume their role as critical, human-centred, and ethically responsible agents of change.

The course provides the foundational frameworks of strategic design and innovation, alongside immersive, systemic approaches to reading and responding to real-world contexts. Through practical design research, prototyping, and storytelling techniques, students will learn to work with uncertainty, understand user needs, and co-create value with communities and stakeholders. They will gain the tools to synthesise research into actionable insights, frame meaningful challenges, and prototype implementable solutions—all while developing a strong ethical compass and a sustainability-orientated mindset.

Training Objectives:

Learning Objectives and Outcomes:

1. Understand the fundamentals of strategic design and innovation.

2. Read and analyse social, business, and organisational contexts systematically.

3. Develop critical, creative, and ethical responses to complex challenges.

4. Apply design-based research methods to gain deep user insights.

5. Frame and reframe problems to identify opportunities for transformation.

6. Prototype and visualise solutions to communicate, test, and refine ideas.

7. Use storytelling and narrative techniques to articulate project value.

8. Work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders in real-world scenarios.

9. Integrate project management tools and practices.

10. Promote responsible, ethical, and sustainable growth through design.

11. Apply systems thinking to real-world complexity

12. Use AI tools for insight generation and creative strategy

13. Develop critical thinking for strategic decision-making

14. Co-design actionable, future-oriented strategies with real companies

Recommendations

Be open to working in teams and keep resilience

Be curious about how design can be powerful and strategic for companies

Be patient, trust the process, and understand that results don't show up in the first week

Develop active listening when meeting with the client and other members of the team

Be open to failure and understand it as a means to learn rather than an obligation to succeed.

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Contents and Methodology

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Teaching methodology:

1. Intro to Strategic Design – Teams/roles
2. Debriefing and Visit to Client
3. Systems Thinking 101
4. Deep Dive into Complexity
5. Critical Thinking in Strategy
6. Introduction to AI Tools and Their Ethical Use
7. AI in Business & Society, Creative Strategy, Strategic Communication
8. Strategic Foresight, Speculative Design and participatory research
9. Mid-Semester Sprint
10. Strategic Planning Models
11. Strategy Testing + Feedback Loops
12. Strategy Iteration
13. Strategic Roadmapping
14. Final Design Studio
15. Executive Presentation to client
16. Reflection & Retrospective

Training activities:

In-person Lectures and Forum
Hybrid sessions (In-person workshops + online collaboration)
Guest lectures by industry experts
Visit to the Client
Client Meetings
Deliverable Presentations
Executive Presentation

Team Reflection and Learnings

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Evaluation

General evaluation regulations

A student will be considered "Not Assessable" (NA) if they have not submitted all the learning evidences or have not attended 80% of the classes without justifying their absences. In case of a justified absence, the student must contact the teacher at the time of rejoining to determine the recovery of the activities they missed.

If the student commits any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade of an evaluation act, that evaluation act will be graded with 0, regardless of the disciplinary process that may be initiated. If several irregularities occur in the evaluation acts of the same subject, the final grade for that subject will be 0.

Continuous evaluation system

The evaluation system of EINA and UAB is a continuous assessment system, the objective of which is for the student to know their academic progress throughout their educational process to allow them to improve it.
The continuous assessment process must include a minimum of three evaluative activities, of two different types, distributed throughout the course, none of which can represent more than 50% of the final grade.

A series of deliverables and project items has been established along the course:

Key Deliverables
1. Reflection journal, Project briefing and canvas
2. Context map
3. Draft: Empathy map/system map
4. Persona Profiles + Causal Loop Diagram (online)
5. Problem Statement Canvas (online)
6. AI Insights Lab (online)
7. AI Ethics Debate (online)
8. Scenario Map
9. Concept Prototype
10. Draft Strategic Plan
11. Revised Prototype Iteration Plan
12. Design System for Strategy
13. Roadmap Canvas, metrics
14. Final Roadmap 20%
15. Strategy Pitch Deck 10%
16. Learning Portfolio

Review process

Project items materialise learnings from the academic and project processes.

Project briefing
Meeting with Client
Project Plan 20%
Buyer persona Profile deliverable presentation + Feedback for reframing 30%
Meeting with Client
Deliverable for Client First Strategy Draft 20%
Executive Meeting with Client – Final Strategy presentation 30%

Bibliography and Resources

Books

"The Designful Company" - Marty Neumeier

"Thinking in Systems" – Donella Meadows

"The Fifth Discipline" – Peter Senge

"Design Unbound" – Ann M. Pendleton-Jullian & John Seely Brown

"Critical Thinking" – Richard Paul & Linda Elder

"Superintelligence" – Nick Bostrom

"Competing in the Age of AI" – Marco Iansiti & Karim R. Lakhani

"The Art of the Long View" – Peter Schwartz

Articles & Reports

Meadows, D. (1999). "Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System"

IDEO. (2015). "The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design"

McKinsey (2023). "The State of AI in 2024"

Stanford HAI (2024). "AI Index Report"

Nesta. (2020). "Systems Thinking: An Introduction for Policymakers"

Tools & Platforms

Kumu.io for systems maps

Perplexity and Gemini for research

Figma + plugins for AI prototyping

ChatGPT for ideation, analysis

Midjourney or Runway ML for creative futures

Miro for collaborative design boards

Trello project development,

Strategic Design Canvas: roles, weeks, meetings, deliverables.