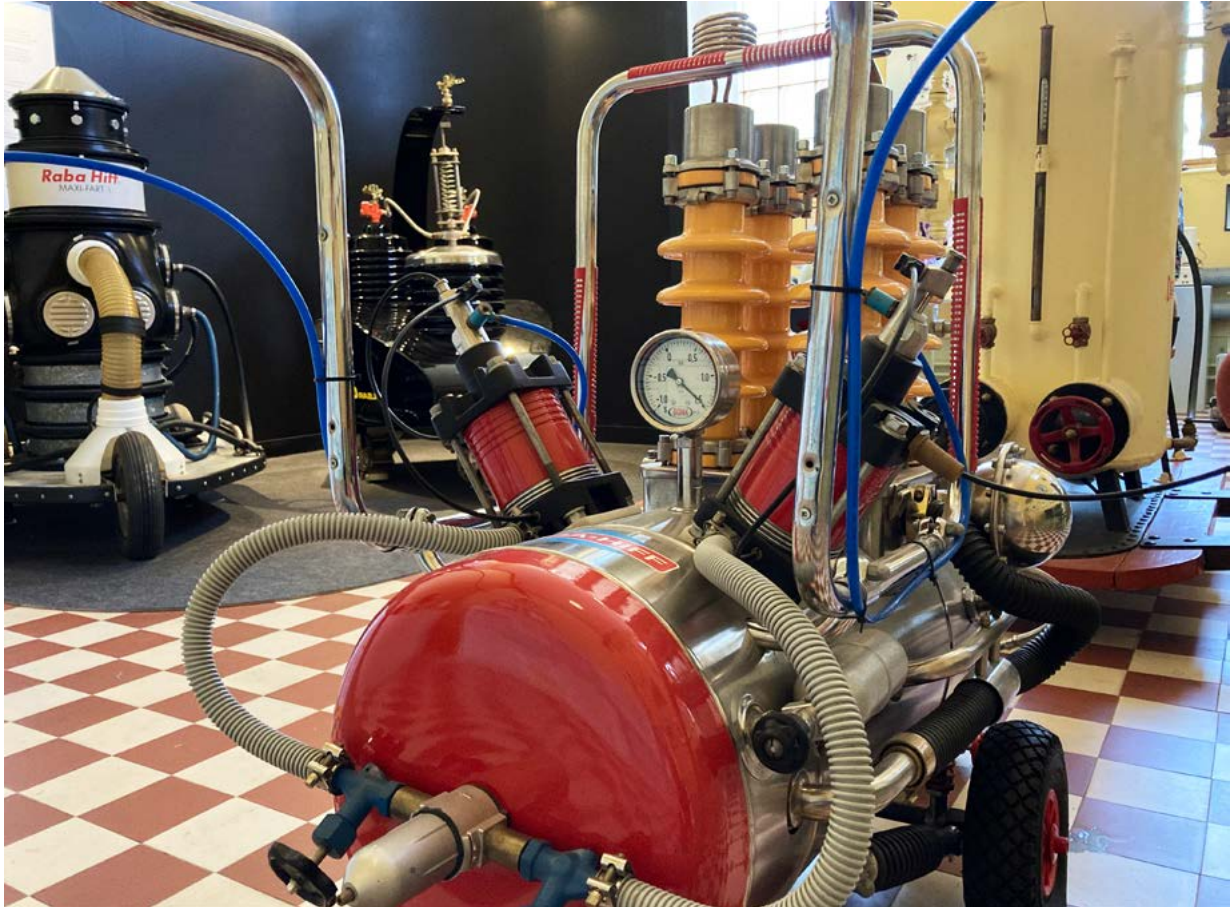


# Values in Design Futures

MUO-E8023, 2022. STUDENT HANDBOOK



Bonk museo, Uusikaupunki. photo by Eeva Berglund

**5 ECTS (approx. 135 hours)**

**9:15 to 12:00 Wednesdays 21.4. – 26.5. Väire M202.**

**Taught by Eeva Berglund (teacher in charge) and İdil Gaziulusoy.**

**Teaching assistant, Mariela Urra Schiaffino.**

**We are all best available directly before or after classroom meetings.**

**On email, [firstname.lastname@aalto.fi](mailto:firstname.lastname@aalto.fi) please allow time for responses.**

# Overview

The course gives students tools to attend critically to the values, ethics and politics of designing futures, through exploring discourses and practices regarding “futures” and “societal change”. Design has always been profoundly engaged in shaping society through ideas and visions of the future. Today, as method and visual/material practice, it is increasingly used to imagine, explore, communicate and steer societal change. In so doing, design involves judgements about what is desirable and for whom, it requires working in contexts of potentially conflicting values and surfacing salient aspects of change-making. This course prepares students to be more sensitive to the values, ethics and politics of design by pointing to such frontiers in design.

The course draws from several disciplines, including but not limited to design research, history, anthropology, sustainability science, futures studies and science and technology studies (STS).

The topics covered in the sessions and the readings primarily relate to the material dimensions of (un)sustainable lifestyles, but students are encouraged to explore relevant literature across other domains too. Do remember that assignment success will depend in part on demonstrating familiarity with course content.

- 1. 20.4. Introduction to the course, brief for assignment 1**
- 2. 27.4. Futures thinking and practice**
- 3. 4.5. Theories of change in critical perspective (interim presentations)**
- 4. 11.5. Fictions and alternative futures, brief for assignment 2**
- 5. 18.5. Utopia, dystopia and social change**
- 6. 25.5. Final presentations**

# Teaching sessions

Teaching sessions consist of lectures, work in small groups and pairs. Student preparation and reflection work will take place as individual and/or group work before and after the joint sessions. Students should read required [R] texts before each session, including a set of readings before the first meeting. This will be uploaded 2 weeks before the start of the course.



Photo by Eeva Berglund

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## Workload Approximately 135 hours

- Lectures, seminars and discussions 18 hours
- Group assignments 15 hours
- Reading 69 hours
- Individual coursework: written reflections and final essay 33 hours, where 10-20% of this time (reading and coursework) considered time to think

## Completion of the course requires

- Attending the first teaching session.
- Participation in contact teaching sessions (at least 80% unless otherwise agreed).
- Completion of preparation and reflection work (reading and writing).
- Progress in critical thinking, as evident in class participation and coursework.
- For written work, presentation of work in academic style and demonstration of familiarity with course materials (use references).

## Readings

Readings will be provided on MyCourses unless they are freely available online and/or in the library. Readings are in three categories:

**R** = required

**S** = supplementary

**A** = advanced (e.g. for doctoral students).

Read the required (R) texts before the session, and as much of the supplementary texts as you wish and have time for. More of these will be added to the online platform as the course progresses.

## Deliverables & deadlines

The course relies on doing substantial and careful reading (make notes), with one piece of joint work and a final individual essay to be submitted as written work. Submit assignments for grading on MyCourses as a pdf file. Include your name(s) and other details of the submission in the document itself, and include a surname in the file title (your own for the essay, one name is enough for group work).

### **Group project, Assignment 1: Vizualizing 1.5-degree lifestyles**

A visualization with interim submission and presentation in class 4.5. (peer feedback, formative assessment). Full presentations 25.5. with final submission including the visual, a caption and a supporting statement, due 27.5.2022 at 23:59. Full brief given in session 1.

### **Final essay, Assignment 2: Machines, passions and designed futures**

An essay of about 2000 words. The full brief and materials required to write the essay will be provided in week 3 (04.05.). The essay should be submitted as a PDF through MyCourses not later than 1.6. at 23:59.

## Grading

Grading is on a scale from 0 - 5 with all tasks as well as active class participation contributing to the final mark.

### **Generic coursework assessment criteria:**

- 1)** evidence of familiarity with the contents of readings and lectures and of how these connect to sociotechnical change generally. Includes evidence of using and referencing sources appropriately (40%).
- 2)** evidence of analytic, critical and creative engagement with the topics (40%).
- 3)** quality and clarity in the articulation and communication of what has been learned (20%).

**Key criteria on a scale from 0 - 5:** a 5 will normally be granted to work that demonstrates excellence in all areas; a 4 will be granted to a work that is excellent if uneven or slightly lacking in some area; a 3 suggests the work is good but the issues are not very developed, or that there are shortcomings in structure, critical insight or presentation; a 2 may contain good contents but is weaker, possibly superficial or mechanical; a 1 is normally granted to a piece of work that shows little effort or understanding of the course content. It is also possible to fail. Submitting work late incurs an automatic penalty of one grade.

All submitted work as well as active class participation contribute to the final mark. All coursework will be examined holistically, with assessment criteria applied as appropriate to each exercise.

We hope the coursework helps you to attend critically to the values and political choices involved in designing futures. The course is planned so as to encourage value-sensitive discussion and practice through principled and informed imaginative exercises.

The course involves group work throughout. The groups will be assigned in week 1 and confirmed in week 2. After that, you are expected to remain in the group and on the course as withdrawal after that point may negatively influence others in your group, which is unfair.

**Read these required (R) texts before the course begins:**

R: Appadurai, A. (2013) 'The Social Life of Design', chapter 13 in *The Future as Cultural Fact*.

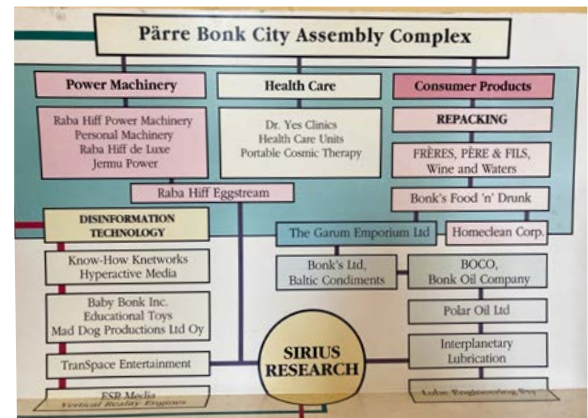
R: Broms, Looove & Jonas Runberger (2021) 'Design-driven explorations are relevant in tackling societal challenges', in Wangel, J. & E. Fauré (eds) *Beyond Efficiency*.

## Weekly schedule & readings

### Week 1 20.4.2022: Introduction to the course

In which we meet each other and get an overview of what the course offers and what it requires; do in-class exercises; discuss value; and hear guest Michael Lettenmeier guide us towards the first assignment, a piece of group work on group work on 1.5-degree lifestyles.

Read the texts mentioned above. They are required reading (R).



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S: den Ouden, Elke (2012) Chapter 3, 'Value from Different Perspectives', *Innovation Design*.

S: Julier G (2017) 'Introduction: contemporary capitalism and the rise of design', *Economies of Design*.

A: de La Bellacasa, M. P. (2017). *Matters of care: Speculative ethics in more than human worlds* (Vol. 41). Especially 'Introduction: The Disruptive Thought of Care'.

A: Schwartz, S. H. (2012) An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1116>

### Week 2 27.4.2022: Futures thinking and practice

In which we learn about the emergence of futures as an intellectual pursuit; discuss futures in the light of sustainability; and get practice using the futures wheel.

R: Son, H. (2015) The history of Western futures studies: An exploration of the intellectual traditions and three-phase periodization. *Futures*, 66, 120-137. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2014.12.013>

R: Daffara, P. (2020). Applying the Futures Wheel and Macrohistory to the Covid19 Global Pandemic. *Journal of Futures Studies*, 25(2), 35-48. [https://doi.org/10.6531/JFS.202012\\_25\(2\).0006](https://doi.org/10.6531/JFS.202012_25(2).0006)

S: Milojević, I., & Inayatullah, S. (2015). Narrative foresight. *Futures*, 73, 151-162.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2015.08.007>

S: Inayatullah, S. (2008). Six pillars: Futures thinking for transforming. *Foresight*, 10(1), 4-21

A: Sardar, Z., & Sweeney, J. A. (2016). The Three Tomorrows of Postnormal Times. *Futures*, 75.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2015.10.004>

A: Blythe, J., Silver, J., Evans, L., Armitage, D., Bennett, N. J., Moore, M. L., ... Brown, K. (2018). The Dark Side of Transformation: Latent Risks in Contemporary Sustainability Discourse. *Antipode*, 50(5), 1206–1223. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12405>

### **Week 3 4.5.2022: Theories of change in critical perspective**

In which we compare different ways of imagining transformational change; reflect on how ideas about the future, progress and technology became so intertwined; present group work progress so far.

**R:** Wangel and Fauré (2021) 'The future is always in the making and the scope for action is greater than we think', in Wangel, J. & E. Fauré (eds) *Beyond Efficiency*.

**R:** Cowan, Ruth Schwartz (1976) 'The Industrial Revolution in the Home: Household Technology and Social Change in the 20th Century', *Technology and Culture* 17, 1: 1-23.

S: Morgan D R (2015) 'The dialectics of utopian images of future within the idea of progress', *Futures*, 66: 106-119.

S: Tonkinwise, C. (2011) 'Design away'. *Design philosophy politics*. (Also 'Design Away', in Yelavich S and B Adams (eds) *Design as Future Making*.)

S: Jasanoff S (2015) 'Future Imperfect: Science, Technology, and the Imaginations of Modernity, in Jasanoff, Sheila & Sang-Hyun Kim (2015) *Dreamscapes of Modernity: Sociotechnical imaginaries and the fabrication of power*.

A: Mazé, R (2019) 'Politics of designing visions of the future' *Journal of Futures Studies*, 23(3), 23-38.

A: Winner, L. (1980) 'Do artifacts have politics?' *Daedalus*, Vol. 109(1): 121-136.

### **Week 4: 11.5. Fictions and alternative futures**

In which we hear guest Nina Janasik talk about 'Models and narratives in articulating environmental futures'; we consider how, particularly under covid and other crises, social imaginaries get generated and how they operate; and we link these questions to the senses. The brief for the final essay is given.

**R:** Heise, U. K. (2012) 'The Invention of Eco-Futures'. *Ecozon@: European Journal of Literature, Culture and Environment*, 3(2), 1-10.

**R:** Browse the online collection of short stories on the website of the journal *Nature* and read at least one story: <https://www.nature.com/nature/articles?type=futures>

S: Latour, B. (2019) "'We don't seem to live on the same planet...'-a fictional planetarium'. Philadelphia: *Beyond the Horizon: Designs for Different Futures-Catalog of an Exhibition*. Philadelphia Museum of Art.

S: Essebo, M. (2022). 'Storying COVID-19: fear, digitalisation, and the transformational potential of storytelling'. *Sustainability Science*, 17(2), 555-564.

A: Davoudi S and R Machen (2021) 'Climate imaginaries and the mattering of the medium', Geoforum.  
A: Davies, W. (Ed.) (2018) Economic science fictions.

### **Week 5: 18.5. Utopia, dystopia and social change**

NOTE: Students are invited to join a viewing of the Sustainability Science Days keynote by Laura Pereira (Utrecht and Stockholm Resilience Centre) starting at 9:05

After the keynote, we will take a brief tour of the history of utopia; learn about modernism and its anarchist roots and glimpse some alternative histories and futures of design.

**R:** Wright, E. O. (2007) 'Guidelines for envisioning real utopias', Soundings, Issue 26. (Also available via Wright's home page <https://www.ssc.wisc.edu/%7Ewright/ERU.htm>)

**R:** da Fonseca, A. H. and B. Szaniecki (2020) 'Dissent, Design of Territory, and Design of Memory: The Museum of Slavery and Freedom at the Valongo Wharf, Rio de Janeiro', in Traganou J. (ed.) Design and Political Dissent.

**S:** Graeber, D. (2012) Of flying cars and the declining rate of profit. The baffle, (19), 66-84.

**S:** Drazin, A. (2019) 'Brokenness and Normality in Design Culture'. In Martínez, F., & Laviolette, P. (Eds) Repair, brokenness, breakthrough: ethnographic responses.

**S:** Levitas R (2017) 'Where there is no vision, the people perish: a utopian ethic for a transformed future', Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity.

**A:** Usenyuk-Kravchuk S (2020) 'Made in the Russian North: Narratives of Inventiveness from the Geographic Periphery', Digital Culture and Society, Vol. 6(1), Special issue on Alternative Histories in DIY Cultures and Maker Utopias, C Kohtala et al. (eds).

**A:** Sadler, S. 2012. 'The Dome and the Shack: The Dialectics of Hippie Enlightenment', in Boal I et al. (eds) West of Eden: Communes and Utopia in Northern California.

### **Week 6: Student presentations and envoi**

When we share the results of our group projects and discuss what we have learned. Detail to follow



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