

Design for Social Change (Strategy)
MUO-E3040 - 6 credits
Period II, Oct 23 – Dec 4, 2023



Photo: © Guy Julier 2011

no process

no client

no toolkit

no guru

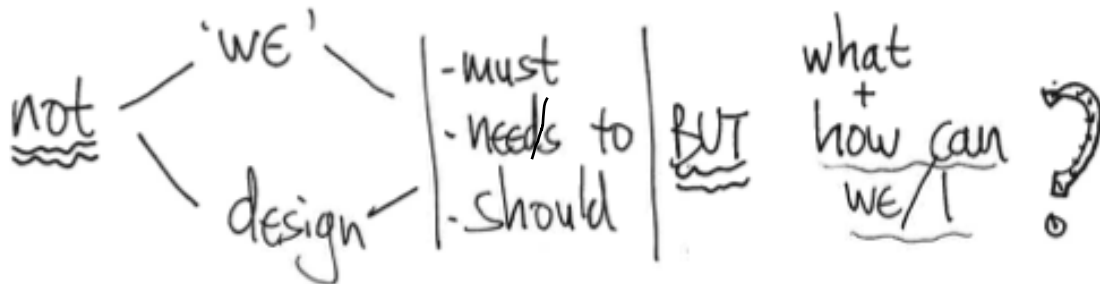
What possibilities exist for designers to create social change? What kinds of politics might their interventions engage? How does design activism differ from social design? How might a design for social change be configured, rationalised and its impacts be anticipated? And how is a designerly approach to social change different from other approaches?

Through this 6-week course we will explore these and other questions. It will also provide an opportunity for you to develop your own creative approaches to design for social change and expand your knowledge of design practices.

You will participate in lectures, assignments, readings and discussions. These will prepare you to define and develop a project proposal that cultivates ways of intervening for social change.

Course Leader: Professor Guy Julier
Course Tutors: Nathaly Pinto and Brenda Vertiz

Design for Social Change (Strategy)
MUO- E3051 – 6 ECTS



Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- understand how design can facilitate social change in different socio-techno-economic settings;
- critically assess potentials and pitfalls of different design activist strategies to social change in particular contexts;
- plan projects so that the merits and downsides of different ways, combinations, intensities and resources for fostering change are adequately addressed;
- develop and assess a design activist strategy for social change and gain experience in doing so.

Objectives

You will:

- participate in lectures, reading groups and workshops that explore design for social change and a range of frameworks for these;
- undertake exercises that gather data, explore practices and analyse their significance in different contexts;
- carry out research through primary and secondary sources to critically explore approaches to design for social change;
- develop a strategy and/or design intervention in relation to a self-defined context or problematic, understanding its potentials and limitations in terms of impact and feasibility as well as its critical context;
- articulate a coherent and reasoned exposition of the above, in accessible and self-critical formats;
- engage in peer-supportive learning and evaluation.

Q. "Where is it appropriate to start?"

A. "Just get out there and do stuff"

Commitment

The course consists of 162 working hours, being, approximately:

- lectures, seminars and presentations 25 hours;
- assignments, 15 hours;
- project, including tutorial support, leading to final presentation and report, 95 hours;
- thinking time, 27 hours.

You must enrol in this course to be permitted to attend any of its activities. The course requires a commitment to engaging through all 7 weeks. If you continue to attend after week 3 but subsequently drop out of the course and do not submit your final project, your grade will be 0.

Attendance

Passing the course requires attending 80% of contact teaching sessions (see separate timetable). Absence during contact teaching may be made up by completing an assignment agreed upon with the teacher. Students unable to meet the required level of attendance (for example due to exceptional circumstances such as health or residence issues), should contact the teacher as far as possible in advance to explain and discuss completion.

Synoptic Assessment

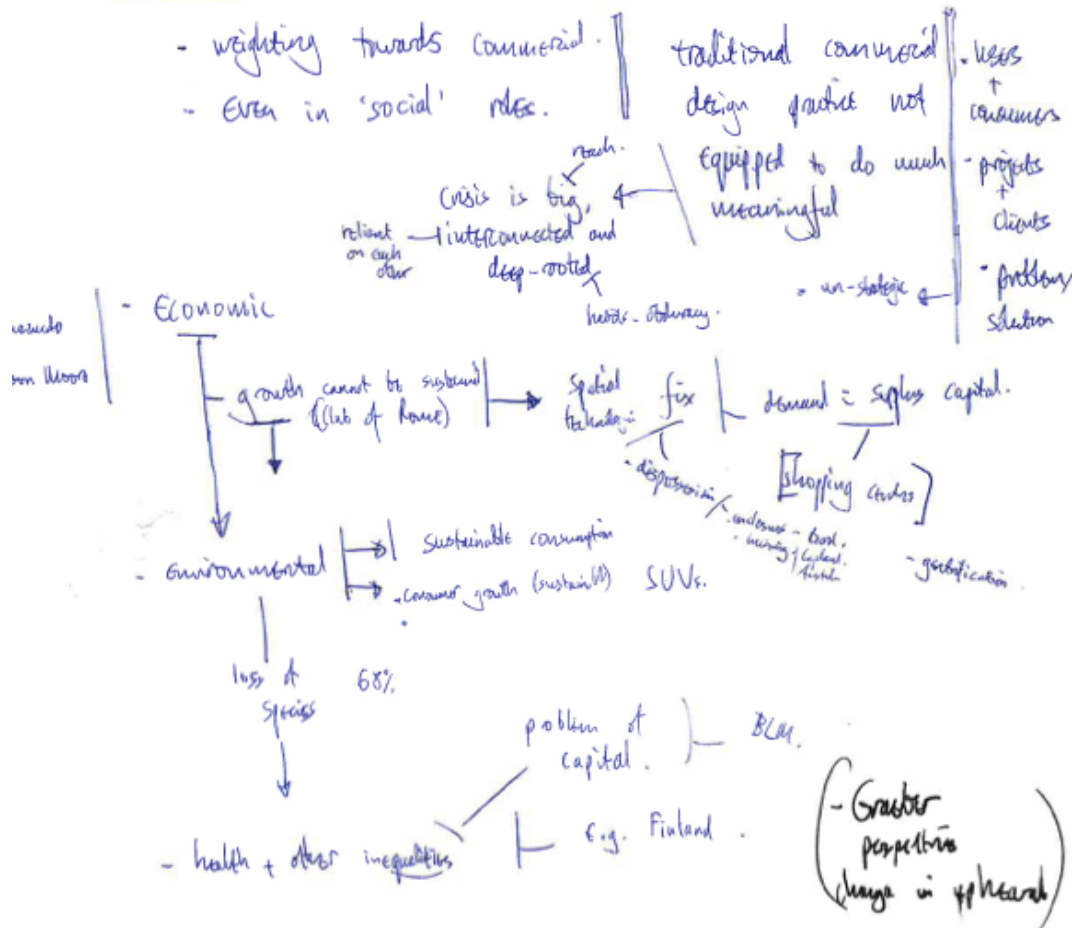
The course is assessed synoptically. In practice, this means that the main weight of your grade will be on the Project. However, in cases where the grade is borderline between two levels, then Attendance and the submission of other components is taken into account.

Submission Components

You must submit **five** components for this course:

Reading Assignment 1,	presentation and A4 summary.	Due: Thurs 26 Oct.
Reading and Research Assignment 2	Pecha-Kucha presentation	Due: Thurs 2 Nov.
Reading Assignment 2,	presentation and A4 summary.	Due: Thurs 9 Nov.
Reading/Viewing Assignment 4,	discussion and A4 summary	Due: Mon 14 Nov.
Project Proposal and Strategy	Presentation Report	Due: Mon 27 Nov/Thur 30 Nov Due: Mon 5 Dec.

Why do we need DSC?



What kind of DSC?

- many different interpretations + objects.

- change of everyday practices. | social change

- persuasion - design as having polarizing power = design activism.

Assignment I (max 4 hrs)

Familiarise yourself with:

Chatterton, P., & Pickerill, J. (2010). Everyday activism and transitions towards post-capitalist worlds. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 35(4), 475-490

Follow up some of the references, if you like.

Do not be put off by 'towards post-capitalist worlds', if that's not your thing. That might be one of many motivations in Design for Social Change. And, in any case, the article discusses lots of other activist aims. It is interesting to read of experiences outside design. So we'll be discussing the article and its relevance to design in class.

You have a half-day dedicated to considering your text. During this you are asked to spend:

1. 3 hours maximum reading it. Read selectively so that you understand the main arguments and position of its author. Read actively: take notes in your sketchbook.
2. 1 hour putting together a 1 page of A4 summary of key points that you found interesting (this can include drawings, diagrams, pictures etc.) to bring to the class.

For DSC (Strategy) your A4 summary should be uploaded in Assignments on MyCourses. It will then be made available to your peer students on the course.

In class, we will discuss:

- a) what were the key insights that the article gave you;
- b) how does it impact your thinking about designing.

Extension Work

A really interesting text that explores the ambiguities of design activism (using an example in Denmark) is:

Markussen, Thomas (2019) The impure politics of design activism. In Tom Bieling (ed) *Design (&) Activism: Perspectives on design as activism and activism as design* (pp. 35-46). Mimesis Edizioni.

You may wish to read this as well, especially if you read the other article already. This is a useful text for two chief reasons: it summarises some of the main interventions by other authors in the field; it explores the ambiguities that are often found in design activism and design for social change.

History

4 historical moments

<p>reflexive privilege but anti- mass</p>	<p>William Morris: dignity in craft. → craftsmanship.</p>
<p>Proper Modernism International Style.</p>	<p>Bauhaus - Isotype: mass prod</p>
<p>Cooption of avant-garde (but roots of art. des.)</p>	<p>Radical Design: Superstudio. / Noble D. Appropriate Tech ↳ Hippie Modernism.</p>
<p>Autonomy Design Social Activism Design.</p>	<p>Occupy indigenas design activism. - Scientific growth warfare - deindustrialization</p>
<p>2008</p>	<p>Decolonizing. Eg. Z/S.</p>

critique of
design itself.

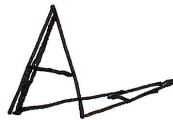
Assignment II (3 hrs)
Please undertake this in pairs.

Read Alastair Fuad-Luke's discussion of Five Capitals of Design Activism in his book:

Fuad-Luke, Alastair (2013). *Design activism: beautiful strangeness for a sustainable world*. Routledge. pp.5-17

In particular, pay attention to the diagrams on pages 11-16.

Prepare a Pecha-Kucha Presentation (2 powerpoint slides, 4-minute presentation) of a design for social change project that you have discovered. Tell us why it is interesting and any limitations you see in it. In your second slide, show which of the Five Capitals your example corresponds to most. Be prepared to share something about how you feel inspired, or otherwise, by the example. Your slides will be made available to other students on the course.



...mapping

...event

...labelling

...prefiguration

...B-framing

...disruption

...commemoration

...platform

...infrastructure

Assignment III (max 4 hrs)

Familiarise yourself with:

Julier, G. (2017). *Economies of Design*, London: Sage. Chapter 7 (Informal and Alternative Economies), pp. 134-40 only and Chapter 8 (Public Sector Innovation).

This is a useful text for two chief reasons: Chp.7 provides a critical discussion of two examples of 'creative' activism; Chp.8 provides a critical overview of some key concepts in public sector management and encourages you to think about your own positioning in relation to such demands. Follow up some of the references, if you like.

You have a half-day dedicated to considering your text. During this you are asked to spend:

1. 3 hours maximum reading it. Read selectively so that you understand the main arguments and position of its author. Read actively: take notes in your sketchbook.
2. Choose one key concept from the reading (e.g. taken from the sub-headings like horizontalism, timebanking, New Public Management, behaviour change etc.) that you can see actually working in practice – an example, in other words. This should preferably be your own example, not one already provided in the text. Create an A4 summary illustrating this relationship between the concept and the example, thinking about how design is operating in it. Think critically about the drawbacks of or hindrances to the concept.

Your A4 summary should be uploaded in Assignments on MyCourses. But bring a printed version to the class as well.

Extension Work

A discussion of a more 'activist' driver and set of conditions can be read here:

Unsworth, R., Bauman, I., Ball, S., Chatterton, P., Goldring, A., Hill, K. and Julier, G (2011) 'Building resilience and wellbeing in the Margins within the City: changing perceptions, making connections, realising potential, plugging resources leaks' *City*, 15: 2, 181-203

Reading/Viewing Assignment IV (3 hrs)

On the following page you will find some resources of interviews, animations and lectures that challenge orthodox concepts of the (social) economy. Note: some of the links may be out of date or not work, but you should be able to find the material in any case.

Spend 1 hour watching or reading the resources. if you finish one resource move onto another.

1. Choose **one** of the online videos or interviews listed in this handbook.
2. Write some notes and produce a one-side of A4 summary that provides:
 - a brief summary and some points on what you found most interesting and surprising in it;
 - any thoughts on what design opportunities arise for you from the reading.

Be prepared to present your thoughts to a small group.
Please also submit your A4 summary via MyCourses.

Rationale

This assignment gets you thinking about some of the big questions regarding current economic challenges in the world. It is important not just that you produce an elegant brief in your course project, but also that you have some understanding of the larger contexts in which it exists. Why? Because, with that understanding you can have a sense of the broad trends that partly shape the problem space that you are dealing with. This assignment is just to whet your appetite. It is also to provoke a broader conversation about what design is often doing.

Andy Stirling and Adrian Smith: Communities, Technologies and Democratic Innovation	Why is the democratisation of technology more important now than ever?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UGbxH NiMR0&feature=youtu.be
Akseli Virtanen: Financial Activism	Is It Art? Is It A Hoax? Hedging Precarity And Protecting the Commonfare: An Interview with Akseli Virtanen	http://www.journalofculturaleconomy.org/is-it-art-is-it-a-hoax-hedging-precarity-and-protecting-the-commonfare-an-interview-with-akseli-virtanen/
Kate Raworth: Doughnut Economics Animations	Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist	https://www.kateraworth.com/animations/
David Harvey: The Crisis of Capitalism Animation	Marxist geographer David Harvey asks if it is time to look beyond capitalism, towards a new social order that would allow us to live within a responsible, just and humane system.	https://www.thersa.org/discover/videos/rsa-animate/2010/06/rsa-animate---crisis-of-capitalism
Mariana Mazzucato: Government—investor, risk-taker, innovator	Why doesn't the government just get out of the way and let the private sector—the “real revolutionaries”—innovate? It's rhetoric you hear everywhere, and Mariana Mazzucato wants to dispel it.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3r1IPsldbBg
Michael Sandel: Why we shouldn't trust markets with our civic life	In our current democracy, is too much for sale?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nsoN-LS8RQ
Joseph Stiglitz - Problems with GDP as an Economic Barometer	Joseph Stiglitz proposes alternatives to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a measurement of national economic success.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUaJMNtW6GA
Yanis Varoufakis: Capitalism will eat democracy—unless we speak up	Have you wondered why politicians aren't what they used to be, why governments seem unable to solve real problems?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GB4s5b9NL3I

Design for Social Change: Strategy

Mapping: Charles Booth vs. Kingsley
 - LIISI
 - WDS
 Isotype.

Week 1

World on fire!

Introduction: Key Issues

Histories

Reading

Foundational Texts

- Markkussen
 - Belting
 - Julie

Week 2

Toukiss
 Harres

Mapping of
 conceptions of
 Social Change Design.

- Manzini
- Fay
- Thoppa
- Di Salvo
- Thackara

- WDS
- Esobar
- Petrescu
- Kurgan

- critiques
- Cottan
- Elm - Melio
- Ken Bailey
 Design Studio
 for Social Intervention

Week 3

Betsy + Anna talk
 Xin talk.
 LIISI
 Alria talk.

Intermediating / Reframing
 Molloy. Doost.

Week 4

Interesting / Promising Scenarios
 Critique of Action.
 Intervention.

Weeks 5-6

Proposal for a Design Project

- what: intervention. Scale. longevity
- how
 - money
 - collaboration
 - resistances
 - impacts.

Critical contextualising.

Project (95 hrs) to be undertaken individually, in pairs or in a group (no more than three – see special note below).

Building on the work you have done for Assignments 1, 2 and 3, weeks 3 to 7 are devoted to your developing a personal project. The core aim of this project is for you to develop a **project proposal**. You may find this brief more open-ended than you are perhaps used to. But your project proposal must be grounded in a defined reality. No design fiction, please.

1. Present a project proposal and strategy that re-contextualises and adapts an already-existing design for social change intervention, process or event into a different setting.
2. This will require you to demonstrate: a) a thorough understanding of the original project and b) a reasoned analysis of the conditions into which you are re-locating it and the adaptations that are necessary.
3. Your project proposal and strategy can critically demonstrate an awareness of challenges in both a) and b) above such as:
 - key stakeholders/publics
 - material components
 - duration and possible impacts
 - power relations
 - resource limitations and possibilities
 - social and material infrastructures
 - financing
 - higher level social, political, policy and economic drivers and obstacles.

You are encouraged to build on and cite other precedents as well.



Self-organisation

You may undertake this project individually, in pairs or in threes. Don't forget that while working as a pair or three has the advantages of bringing a wealth of different experiences and knowledge together, you will also have to manage the collective effort. The amount of work you undertake and the outcomes should reflect the extra 'personpower' of the group. If you are working as a group of three, you will be expected to produce a social contract for the group. This is a mutually constituted agreement of how you are going to work together. The social contract should be submitted with the report. Material on this is provided in MyCourses.

The project proposal and strategy should not be about what the end result might look like. You won't know this. Thus, the focus is on its processes, limits and affordances more than producing the optimal solution. You are assessed on the quality of your research and analysis of the feasibility, rather than making it 100% feasible.

Focus

You are strongly encouraged to build on what you have learnt in the first two weeks. This course aims to get you thinking about how design may be used to provoke social change. But – and this is a big but – your proposal must engage with a clearly defined, realworld issue that is of concern to you. This may be a very focused material issue and/or it may engage with a very clearly defined social group. You could read the article by Fran Tonkiss to provoke some thinking about this.

The course is also designed to get you thinking about what impacts you might have and what limitations exist for these.

So, on *this* course, optimisation of a perceived solution is less important than exploring the socio-material implications of a design strategy.

THINKING
READING
DISCUSSING
OBSERVING
CREATING

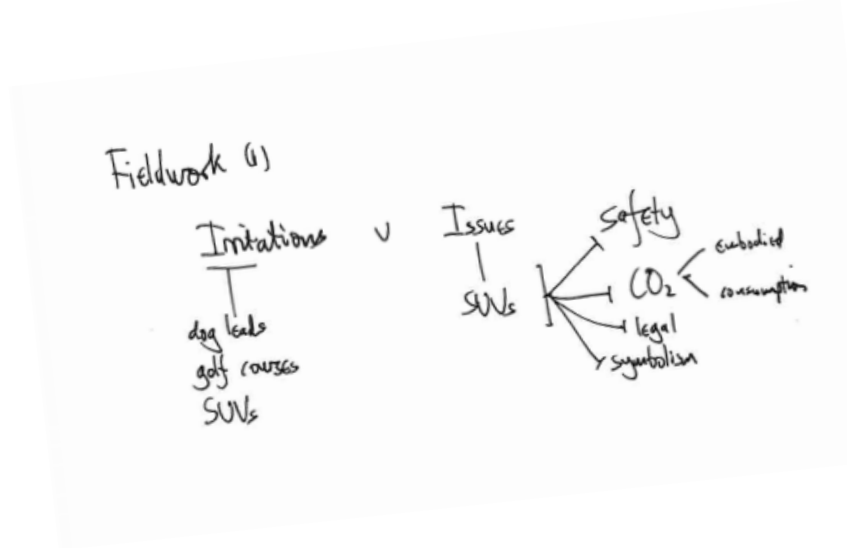
CERTAINTY : actuality
reproducible

RISK : potentiality
prototype

Summary

As an extended project brief, and as a form of design strategy for social change, your outcome can deal with four issues as follows:

1. **Opportunity.** What are the challenges and issues that you are addressing? What evidence exists for these?
2. **Precedent.** What intervention are you drawing on and how did this function? What enablers and constraints was it working with?
3. **Feasibility.** What conditions exist for making the intervention, process or event in the new context?
4. **Strategy.** How would your work be carried out? What are the key challenges?
5. **Reflection.** How does this project change your way of thinking and acting? What are its limitations or further possibilities? What implications does it have (e.g. economic, political, social etc.)?



Presentation

There will be two presentation points:

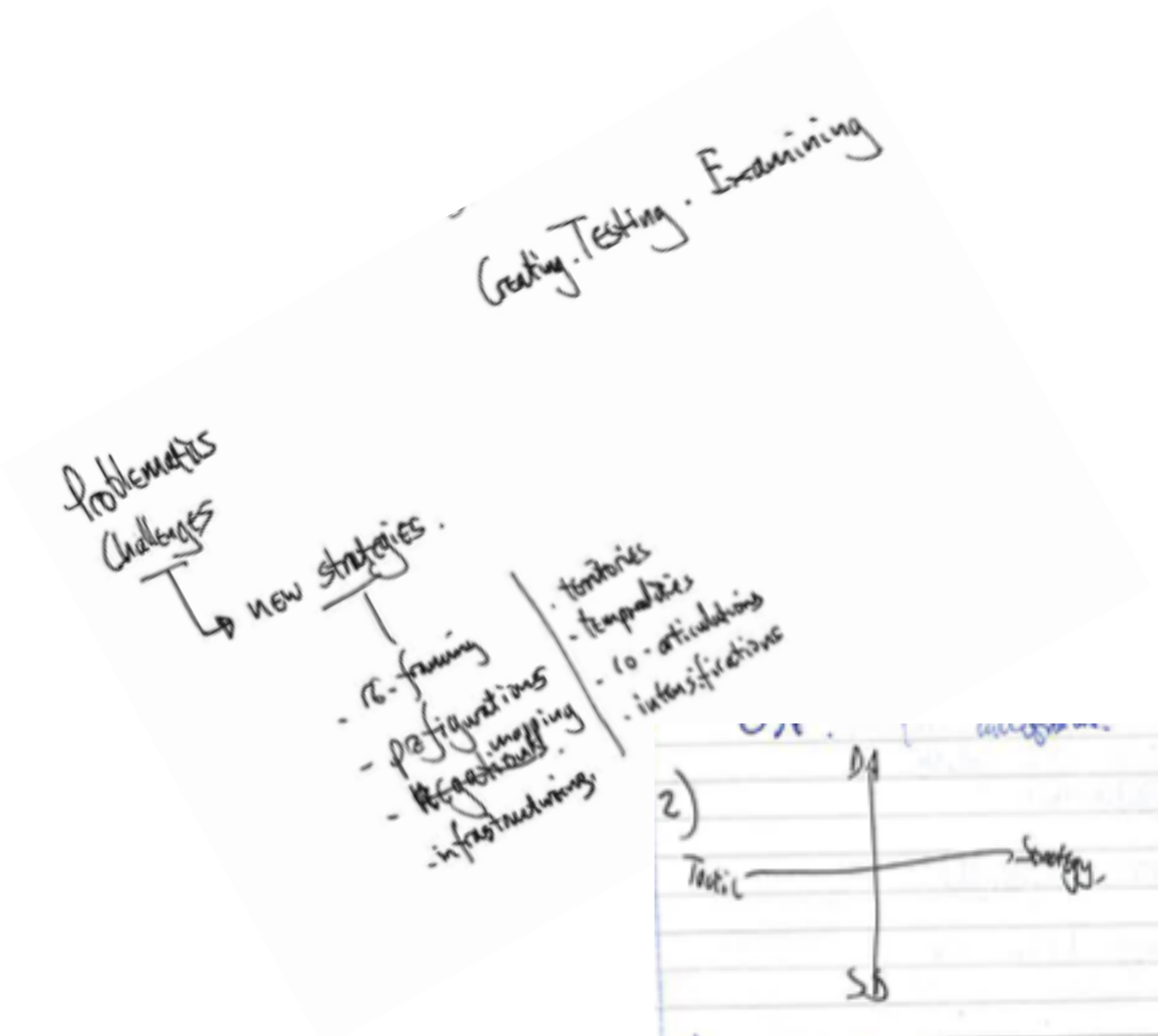
1. **Interim Presentation.** Here you can briefly present what you have done so far, what particular difficulties you are encountering. This is a useful point for you to get feedback and help from your peers.
2. **Project Report.** This should be no more than 12 pages. If you are working in a pair or group, then the length should be adjusted to reflect this. It should follow the 'Report Structure' as given later in this handbook. It must contain full references of works consulted. Take care to check that it is clear to its reader. Use of illustrations, tables and diagrams is encouraged.

Project Report Submission

Your Project Report should be submitted as a PDF via MyCourses. The deadline for submission is **Monday 4 December 2023, 2359h**.

This deadline is set so that you have a clear break between this course, Design for Social Change (CoDesign) and the following week of Design Culture Now (Part 2) (if you are taking these).

Late submission carries an automatic penalty of a grade point unless you have clear mitigating circumstances that can be evidenced (e.g. bereavement, illness supported by a doctor's note or other documentation).



Report Structure

Your report should be about 5-10 pages (unless you are in pairs, in which case it may be longer). Please pay attention to its layout and design. Graphs, diagrams and illustrations are welcome. Key quotations may be highlighted in support of it. All statistics, quotations, sources of ideas must be fully referenced.

Title page	report title your name(s) submission date
Executive Summary	overview of subject matter methods of analysis findings recommendations
Table of Contents	list of numbered sections in report and their page numbers
Introduction	terms of reference outline of report's structure
Body	headings and sub-headings which reflect the contents of each section. Includes information on method of data collection (if applicable), the findings of the report and discussion of findings in light of theory makes wider recommendations for design strategy and leadership perhaps drawing in material from lectures and assignments
Conclusion	states the major inferences that can be drawn from the discussion reflects on limitations of the study, design philosophical position of the author, potential for further study
References	list of reference material consulted during research for report references should be done consistently, preferably using Harvard or similar style
Appendix	information that supports your analysis but is not essential to its explanation

Adapted from <https://unilearning.uow.edu.au/report/4b.html>

See a couple of reports I have co-authored for ideas on content and layout:

<https://protopublics.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/protopublicsreportfinal1.pdf>

<https://mappingsocialdesign.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/social-design-report.pdf>

Project Assessment Criteria Design for Social Change (Strategy) MUO-E3040 - 5 credits

Key criteria	Grade and indicative description				
	5	4	3	2	1
Understanding of different ways that design can facilitate social change in different socio-techno-economic settings	Sophisticated identification and understanding of the issues, problematics and problems. You have used the material given within the course really well, approaching it critically and rigorously. You have carried out in-depth and critical research into the precedent and its adaptation into new circumstances.		You have identified some, but not all, of the issues, problematics and problems relating to the precedent and the adaptation. You have used the material given within the course well. There is some critical articulation of the relationship of design to social change, although these are not strongly developed.		Rather superficial understanding of the issues that reproduces material that was given but doesn't develop it very far.
Critical approach in assessing potentials and pitfalls of different design activist strategies to social change in particular contexts	Superbly rigorous and thoughtful responses to Assignments I-IV that clearly understands and critiques material encountered.		Good approach and methods that fulfill the requirements but these could have been developed further.		Reasonable use of methods and depth of enquiry but mostly undertaken with little personal development.
Understanding of possibilities of different ways, combinations, intensities and resources for fostering change are adequately addressed.	Highly innovative, creative and engaging approach to the subject matter. Excellent understanding and articulation of the project's position in relation to a range of contextual issues surrounding the project.		Good engagement with the subject matter. Some understanding of the context but this could be developed further in the time you had.		Mostly descriptive project that doesn't develop the thinking or its application much.
Presentation of a creative design activist strategy for social change and gaining experience in doing so.	You deliver the Project Proposal on time. Extremely creative, engaging and thoughtful presentation that is rigorous in the presentation of its argumentation and evidencing.		You deliver the Project Proposal on time. Quite nicely presented but it could have been improved by (either/and) better structuring, clearer signposting, more rigorous referencing, more attention to the layout and text.		You deliver the Project Proposal on time. Not particularly focused in its argumentation. Chaotic and unclear presentation with many errors.

Course Team

Guy Julier is Professor of Design Leadership and Head of Research in the Department of Design at Aalto University. In 2019 he was Commissioner of 'Everyday Experiments', the Finnish Pavilion for the XXII Triennale di Milano and is on the Board of the Helsinki Design Museum. His most recent book, *Economies of Design* (2017), provides an analysis of the multiple roles of design in the contexts of contemporary, neoliberal orthodoxies and beyond. Other books include *The Culture of Design* (3rd revised edition 2014), the *Thames & Hudson Dictionary of Design since 1900* (3rd revised edition 2005) and *New Spanish Design* (1991). Before moving to Finland in 2018, he was the Victoria and Albert Museum/University of Brighton Principal Research Fellow in Contemporary Design. Prior to this he was Professor of Design at Leeds Metropolitan University where he established DesignLeeds, a research and consultancy unit specialising in sustainability and community design. He was also a founder director of 'Leeds Love It Share It', an activist non-profit Community Interest Company bringing together artists, designers, architects, planners and geographers with the aim of changing the narrative of the city of Leeds.

Nathaly Pinto is an Ecuadorian designer and researcher at the Design Department of Aalto University, and adjunct professor at Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador. Her research and practice develops at the intersection of participatory design from the Global South, intercultural communication and design for advocacy.

Brenda Vertiz is a design practitioner and a doctoral researcher at Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture. In the last decade, her areas of research and design practice have evolved around exploring the possibilities and limits of transformative and participatory design practices, advancing creative explorations, socio-economic inclusion and public imagination. During the last four years, she worked as a public servant in Mexico City's government with women and children living in marginalized neighbourhoods, creating alternative and collective tactics for the re-appropriation of public – but contested – city spaces.