

# VA453/553 ~ Design Thinking COURSE SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR	Gözde Oral / Visiting Instructor
SEMESTER	Fall 2020 / October 5, 2020 - January 8, 2021
SCHEDULE	Wednesdays / 13:40 - 16:30 / Duration 14 weeks

**Please note that due to the pandemic, the course will be conducted online, synchronously and on the scheduled day/time. Classes will not be recorded and attendance is mandatory.\***

## INTRODUCTION

The 21<sup>st</sup> century designer is not just a creator but an initiator, collaborator and entrepreneur working in areas spanning across culture, technology, business and the environment, for commercial and/or social needs. “Design Thinking” stems from the growing interest in how designers employ different methodologies to think about and solve problems, and aims to use these methods to find creative, feasible and sustainable solutions to some of humanity’s most pressing problems. It involves the adaptation of an iterative, collaborative and constructive attitude between different disciplines, areas of expertise and know-how, at times more focused on *asking the right questions* rather than answering them.

## WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR?

The “Design Thinking” course is a one-semester elective course offered to undergraduate (preferably senior year) and graduate students with a genuine interest in design. Non-VACD majors are welcome and contribute greatly to an interdisciplinary class environment but are subject to special approval based on their objectives and GPA.

## COURSE STRUCTURE & MATERIALS

The course structure is comprised of design-based open discussions, exercises, related reading and written assignments, individual presentations, film screenings and finally a case study requiring the implementation of basic design thinking methodology introduced throughout the semester. Students are expected to express their views, join discussions and contribute material.

The course begins with looking at the act of creating as a basic human need and asking ourselves “What is creativity?” It continues with a look at what ‘designing’ is in an age where “everyone is a designer.” Questions regarding what makes a design ‘good’ follow and how concepts, perceptions and expectations change over time, become obsolete, are redefined, even reborn via new constructs and connections. Basic design thinking methodologies and exercises are introduced to generate creative ideation followed by a case study wherein students implement this knowledge to propose a possible solution.

There is no course book, however recommended reading is available. Various tools for online collaboration will be used. Advanced knowledge of design software is not necessary, but students are expected to be able to present their ideas in written and visual form. Class attendance and participation is integral to the learning process and in the development of certain skills.

## INTENDED OUTCOME

*Upon completion of this course students will be:*

- better able to understand and appreciate the role of design and the work that goes into it
- voice their opinions, exercise critical thinking and practice constructive criticism
- use design thinking methods to better understand, approach and resolve problems

## GRADING CRITERIA

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|--|-----|
| - Weekly research assignments / visual + written | 40% |
| - Case study / exercises + proposal              | 40% |
| - Class participation + weekly attendance        | 20% |

\* **Online classes are a challenge for all of us.** Please prepare your computer setup in advance and free of disturbances, submit weekly work before class begins and be on time. Weekly course content may be subject to change, shifts and adjustments by the instructor.