UNIVERSIDADE LUSÍADA
LISBOA

Course Unit Program
Theory of Design

Academic Year 2025/2026

1. Organic Unit

Faculty of Architecture and Arts

2. Course

DESIGN

3. Cycle

1st

4. Course Unit

Theory of Design (L5017)

5. Scientific Area

6. Curricular Year

2nd

7. Type of Curricular Unit / Semester

2nd Semester

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8. Class type and workload (work time)

Theoretical classes:	30,00
Practical classes:	
Theoretical-Practical Classes	
Tutorial Guidance:	

9. ECTS Credits

2,00

10. Scientific Area Coordinator

11. Regent

Prof. Doutor JOSÉ MANUEL SILVEIRA DIAS

12. Assistants

13. Teaching Language

Portuguese

14. General Objectives

Understand the interdependent relationship between theory and practice;
Awaken to the relationship of thought with the history of objects in the context of design theory and criticism;
Know fundamental concepts of design theory and its contemporary application.

15. Specific Objectives

Promote the approach of issues and problems around the Design;
Stimulate the ability to reflect and discuss specific issues of Design;
Promote research practice in Design; Consolidate the rules of scientific work;
Develop reading practices, interpretation, and discussion of disciplinary texts;
Enrich the technical and critical vocabulary, specific to the discipline;
Contribute to the maturation of a critical sense refined and well-founded, supported by specialized literature.

16. Skills to be acquired

Know how to relate theoretical content of the Design;
Know how to relate content outside the Design with content and practices disciplines; Develop a sense of curiosity about the physical world and the world of ideas;
Find in research a strategic and sustained tool for possible answers/solutions to problems identified;
Develop critical capacity on the role of the designer and ways to use and exercise Design.

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17. Teaching Methodology

Classes will address various examples, motivating the ability to analyze and consequently debate, the issues presented;
The presentations may - alone or together(s) - give rise to theoretical reflections; Students will develop practical work allowing the knowledge of the relationship between theory and practice.
In addition to the participated exposition and debate, the reading and criticism of texts is promoted, as well as the viewing of relevant material (projection of slideshows, films).

18. Course Unit Program

1. THE DESIGN CONCEPT: projectual activity and interpretive guidelines; Industrial Design; Image of the Profession; Extension of Industrial Design: Functional quality of the product; Rationalization and increase of productivity; Environmental Quality; Pretensions of industrial design.
2. COMMUNICATION AND THE DESIGN PROCESS: the Communicative Language to the Semantic of Product; How to communicate design? relations of communication and the design process; The designer as a communicator.
3. NEW PERSPECTIVES AND THINKING ABOUT DESIGN: Interpretive Design; Design thought in a more inclusive scope; Design participated by the user; The role of perception in design; Design responsive to context; Methods of strategic thinking in design.
4. DESIGN AND CONSUMPTION CULTURE: Design Experience - changing nature of Design; Dimensions of culture: Ecological, Social and Ideological; Consumer culture in economic development, sustainability, social distinction and as a creative process.
5. DESIGN IN INDUSTRY AND TRADE: the contribution of Design for economic development and business; the relationship of Design with innovation as a factor in value creation. Design and Innovation; Designing the brand experience; Branding; Design Management in Industry.
6. FUNCTIONS OF AESTHETIC-FORMAL PRODUCTS: indicative functions and symbolic functions. The function in the context of Design: utility vs. meaning. 7. DESIGN IN THE 21st CENTURY: from Designer prescriber to Designer mediator; about Innovation; the Design experience; Design and consumer culture; designing the Design experience. 8. RESEARCH IN DESIGN: Participatory Design, Emotional Design, User-Centered Design, Design Thinking. Introduction to methodologies in Design: A Practical Theory of Design; Methods and methodologies; Problem and solution; Design Processes.

19. Assessment Methods

Continuous assessment will be based on assiduity, participation and commitment in the discussions in class during the contact privileged by the class space, the execution and presentation of works of application of knowledge, in addition to two written tests.

20. Didactic Resources

Recommended bibliography;
Several digital resources: social networks, videos, scientific articles, among others; Support texts, mandatory or optional reading;
UL Media Library and other libraries; Audiovisual material.

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21. Sustainability Objectives

Although the aim of teaching this course and of the degree is to fulfil goal n.4 - quality education - the foundational basis of the UL-Lisbon Design courses is the belief that Design is a tool for the sustainable promotion of society in its ethical, social and ecological aspects. Therefore, one of the global objectives of Design teaching at UL-Lisbon is to alert students to the importance of their future as Designers so that it fulfils ALL the 17 SDG defined by the UN.

22. Keywords

Global Design;
Product Design and Communication;
Social Design;
Environmental Design;
Design

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23. Main Bibliography

Author(s):	MANZINI, E.		
Title:	Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation		
Edition:	1ª	Year:	2015
Local:	Cambridge, Massachusetts		
Publisher:	The MIT Press		

Author(s):	DORST, K.		
Title:	Understanding Design. 150 Reflections on Being a Designer		
Edition:	1ª	Year:	2003
Local:	Amsterdam		
Publisher:	Bis Publishers		

Author(s):	MULLER, L. ed.		
Title:	Social Design. Participation and Empowerment		
Edition:	1ª	Year:	2018
Local:	Zurich		
Publisher:	Lars Muller Publishers		

24. Complementary Bibliography

Author(s):	TROMP, N. & HEKKERT, P.		
Title:	Designing for Society. Products and Services for a Better World		
Edition:	1ª	Year:	2019
Local:	London		
Publisher:	Bloomsbury		

Author(s):	MARTIN, B. & HANIGTON, B.		
Title:	Universal Methods of Design: 100 Ways to Research Complex Problems, Develop Innovative Ideas, and De		
Edition:	1ª	Year:	2012
Local:	Beverly, MA		
Publisher:	Rockport Publishers		

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Ficha técnica MIP / MIP Datasheet	
Título / Title	Course Unit Program 'TEORIA DO DESIGN': Academic Year 2025/2026
Autor / Author	Prof. Doutor JOSÉ MANUEL SILVEIRA DIAS
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Descritores / Descriptors	-
Colaborador(es) / Colaborator(s)	-
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