Sungkyunkwan University (SKKU) International Summer Semester (ISS) 2026

Design for Society

Prof. Michele Grimm, University at Albany (State University of New York)

SHORT COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores how the design of devices and systems is influenced by the backgrounds and experiences of designers, and how engaging with diverse groups -- particularly those intended as users or beneficiaries -- enhances design outcomes. The course delves into how personal factors such as race, class, gender, age, and disability shape our design frameworks. Students will learn techniques such as ethnography, culturally responsive interviews, and reflection to better integrate varied perspectives into the design process. The course includes readings, discussions, and team-based design activities, making it suitable for students from all disciplines interested in systematic approaches to creating impactful devices or systems.

READING MATERIALS

Each of these will be discussed in class on a particular date. Students will be asked to read and submit a short reflection on the readings in each case. PDFs will be provided to students who would prefer that mechanism of access. Links are provided when possible to support accessibility, as screen readers are often not as accurate or complete at reading pdf documents. Approximate reading time is provided for each assignment.

Module 1 – Introduction to Inclusive Design

- Option 1: Hoskins and Cohen, "10 reasons why designers can be leaders who make a difference," *Fast Company*, 2025 {10 minutes}
- Option 2: "Designing For and With Society," *Medium*, 2019 {10 minutes}

Module 2 – The Impact of a Designer's Background

- Madeson, "Social Identity Theory: I, You, Us, & We. Why Groups Matter," Positive Psychology, 2024 {12 minutes}

Module 3 – Understanding Target Users

- Sutliffe, "Requirements Engineering," *The Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction*, 2nd Ed., 2014 {40 minutes}
- Randall and Rouncefield, "Ethnography," *The Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction*, 2nd Ed., 2014 {35 minutes}

Module 4 – Engaging Diverse Groups

- Tarimo, "A Guide for Outreach and Engagement of Diverse Cultural Populations," *Transit Planning 4 All,* 2021 {25 minutes}
- "Tips for Engaging Diverse Partners," Bulletin, Office of Human Services Policy, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2022 {15 minutes}

Module 5 – Application of Reflective Design

- Holtzblatt and Beyer, "Contextual Design," *The Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction*, 2nd Ed., 2014 {40 minutes}

Module 6 – Impact of Race on Design

- Burleson, "Racism in America, manifested in engineering design: A pledge to take responsibility and action," *The BYU Design Review,* 2020 {15 minutes}
- Heldreth and Yong, "*Racial Equity in Everyday Products*," *Google Design*, 2021 {10 minutes}

Module 7 – Designing With and For Disabilities

- Allen, "Designing for Disability Justice: On the Need to Take a Variety of Human Bodies Into Account," *Harvard University Graduate School of Design News,* 2021 {10 minutes}

- Smith, "The Future of Design is Designing for Disability," *The Nation Newsletters*, 2023 {12 minutes}

Module 8 – Gender and Design

- Waters, "Design has a gender problem. What can we do about it?" *Medium*, 2021 {12 minutes}
- Choice of one or more:
  - Turk, "Technology Isn't Designed to Fit Women," *Vice*, 2014 {12 minutes}
  - Chakladar and Ascott, "Personal Protective Equipment is Sexist," *The BMJ Opinion*, 2021 {10 minutes}
  - Prasad, "Eight ways the world is not designed for women," BBC News, 2019 {10 minutes}

Module 9 – Age and Intergenerational Design

- Farage, Miller, Ajayi, and Hutchins, "Design Principles to Accommodate Older Adults," *Global Journal of Health Science*, 4(2), 2012 (Click on the "Full Text" link to download; available in pdf only – please request screen reader text version if necessary) {45 min}
- Strickler, "Co-designing with kids – let's design with them, and for them," *Medium*, 2019 {10 min}
- Optional additional readings:
  - *Global Roadmap for Healthy Longevity*, National Academy of Medicine, 2022 (Read "Chapter 5 – Physical Environment Enablers," pdf only) {50 min}
  - Tvedt, "How to design for children," *Norwegian University of Science and Technology,* circa 2016 (pdf only) {25 min}

Module 10 – Socioeconomic Factors and Design

- Mattson and Wood, "Nine Principles for Design for the Developing World as Derived from the Engineering Literature,"*Journal of Mechanical Design*, 136(12):121403, 2014 (pdf only) {35 min}
- Edrin and Zaim, "Product Design and Its Role in Improving the Daily Lives of Poverty-Stricken Societies," *International Journal of Creative Multimedia,* 5(2):37-54, 2024 {25 min}

Module 11 – Ethics in Design

- "Product Design Ethics," *Sustainability Directory*, 2025 {10 minutes}

Module 12 – Culturally Responsive AI

- Ozegalska-Lukasik, "Culturally Responsive Artificial Intelligence – Problems, Challenges, and Solutions," *Intercultural Relations*, 7(2(14)):106-119, 2023 (click the pdf button, pdf only) {30 min}
- Sownie, "The principals of ethical design (and how to use them)," *99designs*, 2020 {12 min}

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

This is a flipped class. Lectures will be posted online in within the course management system. The class time will be used for class discussion and team project work. Students are expected to attend all classes to participate in discussions and work with their design team. Grades will be assessed based on participation in the discussion, individual work, and teamwork. In order to confirm that students are watching and listening to the recorded lectures, questions about the lectures will be posed to students in class and will be responded to using a Student Response System.

The table below describes the graded course activities including points and activity description. The first column includes the percentage of the points attributed to the assessment, and the second column includes a description for each activity. A weighted percentage will be calculated for any activity that has multiple components.

Percentage	*Description*
20	Participation and engagement
25	Reflection papers
20	Individual assignments
35	Team assignments – Final Design Project

Participation and engagement will be graded on the following scale:

0: Did not attend class
1: Attended class but did not participate in discussion
2: Participated in discussion in a limited way OR did not correctly answer lecture survey questions
3: Participated extensively in discussion, demonstrating thoughtful assessment of the reading and input from classmates AND correctly answered lecture survey questions

The lowest two scores in each of the following categories will be dropped when the semester grade is calculated:

- Reflection papers
- Participation and engagement

A score of 60 or higher will result in a grade of Pass.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (ENGINEERING – ABET OUTCOMES 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)

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

1. Understand the impact of a designer's background on their design process and outputs.
2. Learn and apply methods to include diverse groups in the design process.
3. Analyze how personal and societal factors influence user interaction with designed systems.
4. Develop practical skills in ethnography, interviewing, and reflective practices.
5. Collaborate on projects that address real-world problems through inclusive design practices.

COURSE SCHEDULE

– WEEK I –

Monday (29 June) – Course Overview and Introduction to Inclusive Design (Module 1)

Tuesday (30 June) = The Impact of a Designer’s Background (Module 2A)

Wednesday (1 July) – Avoiding Bias in Design (Module 2B)

Thursday (2 July) – Techniques for Understanding User Needs (Module 3)

– WEEK II –

Monday (6 July) – Scavenger Hunt Presentations

Tuesday (7 July) = Engaging Diverse Groups (Module 4)

Wednesday (8 July) – Introduction of Design Project and Reflective Design (Module 5A)

Thursday (9 July) – Reflective Design (Module 5B) and Impact of Race on Design (Module 6)

– WEEK III –

Monday (13 July) = Impact of Disability (Module 7) and Gender (Module 8) on Design [Team Time]

Tuesday (14 July) – Designing Across the Lifespan (Module 9) [Team Time]

Wednesday (15 July) – Impact of Socioeconomic Factors on Design (Module 10) [Team Time]

Thursday (16 July) – Ethics in Design (Module 11) [Team Time]

– WEEK IV–

Monday (20 July) – Teams present top 3 designs and receive feedback

Tuesday (21 July) – Culturally Responsive AI [Team Time]

Wednesday (22 July) – Final Design Presentations

LATE WORK AND MAKE-UPS POLICY

Readings should be completed before the class period in which the material will be discussed. Likewise, reflecting on the reading in advance will best prepare students for the discussion. Thus, the due date for the reflection will be the start of class on the day that the material will be discussed in class. Students are encouraged to work ahead if they wish – the reflection paper will provide you with a way to refresh your memory about the reading before the in-class discussion.

Reflection papers submitted after the start of a class in which the material will be discussed will only be awarded half of the points indicated through the rubric. If you have submitted a reflection paper on time but wish to enhance it following the in-class discussion, you may earn up to 50% of the remaining points if (and only if) the updated reflection is submitted before the next class. NOTE: You will generally need to make this judgement without receiving a grade on the original submission.

If you are sick – especially if you are contagious – please do not attend class. The fact that two participation and engagement grades are dropped gives you a buffer. You are, however, expected to complete the reflection papers by the due date. However, if your **illness or injury** significantly impacts your ability to read and reflect (e.g., high fever, hospitalization, etc.), documentation can be provided to the professor from the SKKU International Summer Semester or a licensed healthcare provider documenting the illness or injury. In this case, this missed class will not be counted as one of the low grades for participation and engagement (i.e., the total points in this category will be reduced) and the due date for the reflection will be extended until the end of the day when you are able to return to class. A specific diagnosis is not required in this documentation, but it should include a date when the symptoms began and a date when you are able to safely return to class. If your illness or injury will prevent you from participating in class for over 1 week, you should contact SKKU International Summer Semester. SKKU policy requires students to attend 80% of class sessions.

Viewing Grades

Grades will be posted in the course management system. It is the professor's experience that these systems sometimes make slight errors in the calculation of weighted scores. All grades will be checked manually before the final grade is submitted. If you have any questions about your grades, please raise them as soon as possible – both in terms of the grades entered and the grades calculated.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

Inform Your Professor of Any Accommodations Needed
If you have a disability that impacts your ability to interact with the course material, please inform the professor as soon as possible so that appropriate accommodations can be made. As there are no quizzes or exams in this course, time extensions should not be required.

Commercialized Lecture Notes
Commercialization of lecture notes, recorded lectures, and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course. This means that it is not allowable to post any of the course materials on-line, including but not limited to: example problem solutions, lecture videos, lecture slides, prompts for reflective essays, and course notes or other materials provided by the professor. You may post any of your work online as part of a student portfolio. Please either get your teammates' permission to do so or delete their names from any publicly viewable materials.

Submission of Assignments
Assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through the course management system unless otherwise instructed**.**

Office Hours
The professor is happy to meet with students during office hours to clarify course issues and concepts. It is expected that students will give forethought to their questions prior to attending office hours. Don't be embarrassed to visit with a "simple" or "easy" question, often the answers to simple questions provide the most insight. If you are unable to attend the scheduled office hours, please email an professor to set up an alternate time.

Electronics
You will soon enter the professional world. There will not be a prohibition on electronic devices in the classroom; however, their use may not distract other students or the professor. Cell phones must be kept on silent/vibrate.

Communication
Email and other communications should comply with professional standards of corporate best practice. This includes using proper salutations, grammar, formatting, and logical flow. Use informative subject lines that include the course name.

Ethics and Academic Integrity
Engineers must adhere to a rigorous code of professional ethics and maintain the highest level of personal and professional integrity. Unethical conduct in this class includes, but is not limited to: copying homework exercises from any source, including information in a report or presentation without proper attribution (plagiarism), and inappropriate/undocumented use of AI (see below).

Students bear responsibility for ensuring the security of their personal work. There is a professional duty to report unethical conduct by others, including peers. If you have any questions, your professor is available to discuss issues of professional expectations and ethics.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask. In addition, a tutorial on plagiarism and a quiz are available within the "Citations" section of the "Course Information and General Resources" section of the course management system.

Any form of academic dishonesty (cheating) will result in a failing grade in the course

For 10 extra credit points for the Individual Work portion of your grade, email Dr. Grimm with a copy of the certificate that you have earned after completing the tutorial on plagiarism. This must be done by July 6 to receive credit.

Important: A sample reflection with citation of the assigned readings and a sample design document with citations to research are both provided in the "Course Information and General Resources" section of course management system. You are expected to meet these standards in your own submissions. Students may use any citation format (e.g., APA, MLA), but it should be consistent within a document.

Use of AI Tools

AI tools, such as Chat GPT, are ubiquitous and can be very useful in professional settings. The following policies apply to the use of AI tools within this class:

1. **Reflection papers** are expected to be your thoughts and impressions – not those of a chatbot. Thus, no AI tool can be used to draft the concepts that you are presenting in your reflection. If you feel that you are not a strong writer and that you need assistance in polishing your reflection paper to earn full credit, you may utilize a tool such as Grammarly or Microsoft Editor after you have written the original draft. If you do this, you should combine the two documents into a single file and upload it as the submitted paper. The updated version should list the AI writing tool at the top of the first page. An example is provided in the Course Information section of Brightspace. NOTE: Spell checking tools can be used without comment or attribution, as can the simple grammar checking tools found within MSWord (e.g., the ones that simply highlight where you made an error of word usage or verb tense). It is highly recommended that you do not use the advanced writing tools in an embedded fashion (e.g., so that they prompt you for changes while you are writing) as this will prevent you from having a draft that is your own work before the assistance of the tool.
2. **Individual Work and Team-based Work:** You must note at the end of the document any instances that you used an AI tool to support research or brainstorming. This should include both the tool used (e.g., ChatGPT or co-Pilot) and the prompt given to the tool. In addition, you must include one to two sentences of reflection explaining how the use of the tool supported your process for the assignment. An example is provided at the end of this syllabus.
3. **Final Design Project:** This is a team-based project that requires teams to follow a process and synthesize ideas. Any instance of an AI tool being used during the project – at any stage – requires documentation of the following: 1) what AI tool was used; 2) what was the goal of using AI at this point in the process; 3) what was the prompt (or prompts) provided to the tool; 4) what was done with the AI output; and 5) a brief reflection on how AI impacted the work. This should be included in an appendix at the end of the design report.

Use of AI tools beyond what is described above for each type of assignment and/or lack of clear documentation of how the tools were used will be considered a violation if the class's Academic Integrity policy (see above).

NOTE: It is known that AI tools can make up information. It is the responsibility of the students to make sure that no AI hallucinations inform the design process.

INSTANCES WHERE AI WAS USED IN THIS SYLLABUS

In drafting this syllabus and course policies, ChatGPT was used with the following prompts for brainstorming and confirming that all bases had been covered:

1. What are reasonable policies for use of AI in a general education classroom that involves reflective statements, individual work, team-based work, and a final project? *This provided confirmation that the policies that the professor was including were reasonable and filled in a couple of details that had not been thought of.*
2. What does this mean: "the principles of rights, access, equity, and autonomous participation to past, current, or future social justice action"? *This was a stated requirement for courses submitted to satisfy a general education requirement for the original institution where the course is taught (University at Albany). ChatGPT helped me to understand the phrase – particularly related to autonomous participation.*