**SD3468 Furniture Design**

**Discipline Elective**

**Objectives**

Furniture design has emerged as the design field *par excellence*, embracing all the key aspects typically associated in the design of self-contained objects. This course introduces students to the fundamentals of furniture design, focussing on both traditional and state of the art techniques. This course also includes a in depth analysis of the various design movements reflected in furniture design with particular emphasis on the most common iconic eras, ideologies and individuals within the design field.

**Intended learning outcomes**

Upon completing the subject, students will be able to:

**Professional skills**

1. develop knowledge and understanding of the numerous stylistic periods in furniture design;
2. identify and apply the main technologies and finishing techniques used in furniture design;
3. possess a key awareness of the elements (i.e. space, form, texture) and principles (i.e. scale, proportion, harmony) of furniture design;
4. demonstrate basic sketching and modelling techniques related to 3D form making;
5. understand and apply key design terminologies specific to furniture design;
6. apply 2D and 3D visual forms as they relate to the human body;
7. develop proficiency in visual and verbal presentation techniques.

**Subject synopsis**

Students will be introduced to:

This course serves as an introduction to the furniture design and manufacturing industry through lectures, instruction, field trips and hands-on furniture design and construction. Throughout this course, the student will be exposed to traditional craft based techniques and state-of-the-art technology used by the furniture industry. The overall aim of is to offer students an opportunity to explore furniture design both theoretically and practically.

The lectures offer a brief history of furniture design and an analysis of iconic furniture of the 20th century. The student will be instructed on materials and processes to help with the design and prototyping of a piece (or series) of furniture with due consideration to human factors as well as possibilities and limitations of relevant manufacturing systems. The field trips, if scheduling permits, to manufacturing facilities and wholesale furniture stores are to expose you to the newest furniture about to hit the global market.

In addition to the teaching, the course deliverables will be based on three furniture related projects. It is expected that the items created for this class will be of such high quality design and finish that the work can be presented to a jury of design and furniture professionals without embarrassment.
### Teaching and learning methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>To introduce students to theories and principles related to the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>Putting principles into practice with short in-class exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>To discuss assigned readings related to the topic, expanding students’ contextual knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>To guide students on the development of projects, individually and in small groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique</td>
<td>To allow students to learn from the strengths and weaknesses of their peers and to provide a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the students’ projects from various perspectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assessment methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment task</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Learning outcomes to be assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning journal</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To evaluate the students’ critical reflections on their learning experiences, how they have made connections between the concepts discussed in the subject with other areas of learning and their everyday lives, responses to assigned readings and their project development processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects / Presentation</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To evaluate how the students have applied principles introduced to practical projects designed for specific contexts of use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class exercises</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To evaluate whether the students can apply the theories and principles introduced in lectures related to the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment Criteria**

- **Conceptual Strength** - Identification of design opportunities, creativity, originality and clarity of concept; fitness for context and purpose, technology targeting.
- **Overall development process and methodology** - Explorations on user and context; evolution of insights into concept; experimentation.
- **Execution** - Overall professionalism in final outcome; aesthetics in form and interaction; clarity of final presentation
- **Participation** - Proof of teamwork
- **Potential (user group) / Need marketable / Gap in the market** - How well does the concept fit the identified user group, is the user group large or small (mass market or niche) is it relevant at the intended market, competition, added value.
- **Feasibility / Extendibility (no one off)** - How feasible is the concept, does it rely on available or future technologies, does the technology fit the user group, does it consider accessories, upgrades or fit into a larger system.

**Purposes**

To apply appropriate knowledge regarding materials and technologies used
in furniture design

To analyze, consolidate and apply learned knowledge to create viable new design concepts

To demonstrate an understanding of the manufacturing steps specifically required in furniture design

To integrate form making processes based on visual principals learned

To present design concepts through: (1) verbal (ppt) presentation and (2) three-dimension models

---

### Student study effort expected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class contact</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Lecturers/ Seminars</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tutorials</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Workshops</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Other student study effort

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Self-study</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Project work</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Total student study effort**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>102</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

---

### References

**Books**

The PolyU library and your local bookstores are full of books on furniture and interior design.

Useful call numbers:

- NK2200-2750 – Decorative Arts – Furniture
- NK2395-2399 – History – 20th Century
- NK2405-2694 – Countries
- NK1 – Decorative Arts – Periodicals
- NK28 – Decorative Arts – Encyclopedias
- NK30 – Decorative Arts – Dictionaries
- NK789 – Decorative Arts – History – Modern – 20th Century
- NK1165 – Decorative Arts – Decoration and Ornament – Design – Dictionaries
- NK1160 – Decorative Arts – Decoration and Ornament – Design – Periodicals and Societies
- NK2115 – Decorative Arts – Interior Decoration – House Decoration – Interior Decoration - Furniture

Etc...

Jim Postell. Furniture design.


George Nakashima. The soul of a tree: A master woodworkers reflections.


**Magazines/journal**

Design Issues by MIT Press. Design Issues focuses on the history, theory and criticism within design.

Design Week by Centaur. DW reports on news in the design world including new product launches and campaigns, the latest appointments, and award winning work.

Form by Birkhäuser Verlag AG – Bi-monthly magazine reporting on current trends in product and commercial design.

Journal of Design History by Oxford University Press. The Journal of Design History includes book reviews, special issues and features important articles on visual and applied arts as well as material culture and craft.

**Internet references/web sites**

There are hundreds of website devoted to lighting, furniture and the history of design.

http://www.intute.ac.uk/artsandhumanities

http://www.designboom.com/eng/index.xhtml

http://www.designaddict.com

http://www.dexigner.com

http://www.furnituresociety.org

http://www.museumofdesign.org

http://www.metropolismag.com/cda/index.php

http://www.designhistorysociety.org/intropage.htm

http://www.designmuseum.org

http://www.metmuseum.org