

# Domus Academy Master's Degree Interior & Living Design Program Structure

The Interior and Living Design Master's Degree at Domus Academy (DA) is organized into four main modules lasting eight weeks each that include courses and workshops, followed by an 8 week internship period and a final portfolio presentation.

## CORE WORKSHOPS – Required

### Design Of Spaces Workshop

The "Space Design" workshop explore the multitude of ways of living the contemporary space, starting from the behaviors, habits, lifestyle, and interest of their daily life inhabitants. The projects explores the relation between people and spatial systems at a small/medium scale, identifying criteria and solutions, developing concepts and scenarios that will address, according to the design brief, one or more of the following dimensions:

- Micro-system environments: reversible structures for relational spaces made of components and semi-finished products
- Social/personal spaces: service spaces, from hospitality (hotel, spa) to leisure, to work etc.
- Design for business and retail spaces: innovative concepts for retail, and shopping, experiences
- Design for public spaces: the relation between urban infrastructure and temporary events

The workshop outcome will include:

- The selection of the appropriate materials for a given design context
- The organisation of the spaces and furnishing
- The consideration of visual and sonic representation aspects

### Envisioning Workshop

The "Envisioning" workshop concerns cultural and social signals and themes that will have an impact on our society in a medium to long-term perspective. The workshop emphasizes design activities stemming from ideas to concept scenarios and revolves around envisioning future scenarios based on the crossing of innovative emerging technologies with socio-cultural, geo-political, and strategic values.

The design process starts with the elaboration of design concepts by applying a problem-setting approach where divergence and convergence phases alternate. Concepts are validated through concurrent activities, such as:

- Activity analysis;
- Context and user understanding;
- Technology road-mapping, etc.

Students are invited to elaborate projects with a strong, evocative and narrative focus, creating a synthesis of values that are independent of the specific typology of product examined using a wide range of communication tools, including story telling, storyboards and/or video scenarios etc. Particular emphasis will be laid on different strategies for sourcing inspiration and drawing actionable insight from the analysis.

## ELECTIVE WORKSHOP – Choose one

### Experience Design Workshop

The "Experience Design" workshop explores, by way of studio-based activities, the designing process from the point of view of the people (not users, neither consumers or clients) in their life context. Everyday experiences are built upon the continuous interaction with information, communication tools, relational spaces as well as interactive objects and services mostly mediated by service-driven brands, companies or organizations. Thus, the condition for succeeding in a evolving and demanding market resides in the ability to:

- decipher people's behaviors, needs, and desires
- to transform passive clients into active partners
- to involve them in a cyclic conversation that encompasses three main phases: attraction, engagement, extension
- to define, design and manage the qualities of people experiences

Areas of application include among the others: mobility, retail, hospitality, tourism and cultural heritage, learning and working environments.

The workshop addresses aspects and contemporary methodologies related to people's activity and context analysis. It also considers, experience scenario development, solution, validation, and assessment. The workshop investigates the main domain of User Experience analysis, exposing students to methodologies and best practices allowing them to extract knowledge from primary research activities. The workshop activity will also cover domains pertaining to visual representation and the formalization of knowledge garnered. Students are expected to familiarize with techniques for representing activity flows and complex systems.

### **Identity Design Workshop**

The workshop "Identity Design" aims at developing the skills for designing the brand identity of a company, or to extend a pre-existent one. The starting point is based on the observation that the relation between people and brands tends to be more and more like a relation between people, in which the brands assume a human connotation and a personality, whose core values are represented through the visual image, communication style and behaviors, interaction models, tone and language.

Branding is, indeed, much more than just the definition of a visual image. It is the creation of a rich and attractive environment, grabbing the consumer's attention and bringing that person into the brand world, to share those brand values and to become an informal sponsor of the brand.

Aim of the workshop is to create scenarios and concepts, by utilizing a mix of communication strategies and design tools, in order to design the "global brand identity" of a small to medium scale company, a product line and/or a start-up. The topics covered include:

- Visual design, illustration and iconic design
- Brand identity and corporate culture
- Communication strategies: advertising, events, marketing and design strategy

The identity of a brand and its success is strictly connected to its ability to:

- Leverage and exploit the broad range of media channels, both physical and digital
- Establish and maintain a rich and reciprocal fruitful conversation with the audience, both current and potential clients
- Orient and lead the brand "social media presence"

### **Advanced Design & Processes Workshop**

The "Advanced Design and Processes" workshop investigates, through a specific design research activity, the different ways in which the adoption of advanced production technologies and the exploration and utilization of new materials can ignite an innovation mechanisms, both at the level of the product quality and of the industrial process. Main objective is to develop the competencies for managing the innovation process by contributing to its key aspects and phases, such as:

- Product identity and expressivity
- Material qualities
- Product positioning
- Design process
- Production process
- Distribution and communication

The experimentation and leverage of advanced design techniques, such as technology exploitation, technology and knowledge transfer, cross-disciplinary experimentation, delocalization, process optimization etc., can lead to innovative design solutions that have the potentiality to generate new opportunities for existing companies, but also to launch innovative start-ups and new business ventures.

### **Free Choice Workshop**

Students are given the chance to select among the active didactic offer in order to end their personal educational path with a strongly autonomous, professionalizing and profiling choice. The student may choose to repeat one of the workshops already developed, enroll in a new workshop coherent with his/her educational path or select a project among the ones offered by the institution as long as it is coherent with the amount of credits required.

## **COURSES**

### **Design Culture**

The course Design Culture aims at exploring and discussing a wide range of case studies, sources and testimonials for understanding the nature, languages and values of the contemporary design scene while developing critical and analytical skills. The course develops the vision that design is an “integrated” activity, capable of perceiving the changes in society, the impact of markets and then transforming into new products, spaces and services, thereby impacting upon strategies of business innovation.

Lectures, group discussions and tutorials are based on the following key concepts:

- Innovation for Design: Analysis of new aesthetic and behavioral trends in the market place including consumption. In addition it also includes new user needs and innovative interactions with objects and services.
- Innovation in Design: Design scenarios and innovative aesthetic and social vision, leading to enrichment and changes in the functional and aesthetic language.

The course embraces different scales of design, from product to interior, from graphic to fashion with the aim to highlight and identify the key factors that determine the quality of a design solution, in a path that connects past, recent and future experiences. Emphasis is given on how people live and behave in contemporary society, their lifestyle, interests needs and aspirations, and how they interact among themselves and with the objects, information and spaces around them.

### **Visualization Tools**

The course is based on the exploration of the world of graphics, providing basic knowledge in order to visualize in a correct and autonomous way ideas and concepts.

The course provides the tools and skills useful to guarantee the pre- and post production of images for internal and editorial use.

### **Research And Design Methods And Tools**

The course Research & Design Methods and Tools elaborates the relation between design and research, by experimentally applying a wide range of methods and techniques, each addressing and enabling a specific phase of the design process, including among the others techniques for:

- Exploration, analysis and understanding of the context
- Problem setting and solving
- User involvement and participation
- Inspirational benchmarking
- Ideation and concept generation
- Validation and proof of concept

The course proposes the adoption of a co-creational versus a linear approach to the design process that transforms the process itself into a challenge, whose success depends on the ability of the people involved to collaborate and understand the reciprocal cross-disciplinary boundaries.

### **Business For Design**

The course Business for Design offers to students the possibility to understand and put into practice in a real life business scenario the core aspects that determine the economic performance of a company and/or a brand, but also of a studio or consultancy. In particular the course investigates and elaborates, through the usage of specific analytical and design tools and by applying them to real case-studies, a wide range of “business relevant” aspects, such as:

- The competitiveness of a brand in the market
- The short and long term profitability
- The sustainable business proposition and business model
- The intellectual propriety and copyright/creative common trends and regulations

Lectures, case-studies and focused exercises to get an insight, explore and experiment firsthand the core aspects of business applied to the design field.

### **Personal Branding**

The purpose of the Personal Branding course is to develop the appropriate competencies and skills for the identification, creation, and management of the student’s professional identity at different levels that include:

- The ability to present and sustain an argument in front of an audience
- The preparation, organization and production of a personal portfolio of projects
- The ability to prepare and handle a job interview

- The leverage of social media tools for managing his/her own digital presence on the different communication channels

Theoretical classes are alternated with targeted exercises where students can develop and experiment a customized strategy aimed at building step by step a consistent personal identity, aligned with their career development plan.

## **INTERNSHIP**

The internship is the final step of a process in which students thanks to a one-to-one tutorship, receive a deep and balanced evaluation of their skills and aspirations, in order to build a career, which fits their aims.

There are two kinds of internship:

- the first is a working experience in a company active in the disciplinary field;
- the second is an “in campus” internship that is shaped as an intensive workshop in collaboration with a company. This “in campus” internship develops an integrated project strictly related to a practical need (i.e. the resolution of a design problem, or the creation of a brainstorming platform for a new project).

In both cases during this crucial phase students are mentored on a step-by-step basis, and acquire the fundamental experience of dealing with the real world, with real business and with the people working in the field.