

Domus Academy Master's Degree Information Design Program Structure

The program is organized in four main modules including “DNA kicks,” courses and workshops, followed by a fifth module providing a professional experience period and a final portfolio presentation.

The DNA kicks are part of the Prototyping Ideas series and is charged through plenary lectures presenting themes that will be then developed by students in dedicated worktables. Each worktable is led by designers/design thinkers of several fields who support the students in prototyping new concepts and ideas related to a specific chosen theme. The DNA kick prototype ideas that is later used to frame the workshops at Domus Academy.

CORE WORKSHOPS – Required

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) in their day to day life context. Everyday experiences are built upon the interaction and relationship with information, communication tools, relational spaces, as well as interactive objects and services. The starting point resides in the ability to decipher people’s needs, expectations and desires.

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.

INFORMATION DESIGN WORKSHOP

Since the digital revolution, the diffusion of online services, sensors, mobile devices, user-generated contents and open data initiatives, is giving access to a never-seen-before amount of data. While the importance of such wealth of information is unquestionably recognized by all organizations, the need for visual tools that enable us to analyze, understand and communicate such data to different audiences, is still growing. The Information Design Workshop will guide students in the investigation of information needs that are critical to companies and organization and in the design and development of visual solutions that transform raw-data into clear and actionable insight. The process will lead students in the ideation, design and digital prototyping of interactive information design projects that tackles real-world needs and complexities, supporting companies and organizations in their data analysis and communication needs for both internal and user-facing contexts.

ELECTIVE WORKSHOP

Students choose one of the following elective workshops:

ENVISIONING WORKSHOP

Through field research, physical or digital analysis, the workshop investigates cultural and social conditions that will have an impact on our society in a medium or long-term perspective for questioning and Envisioning the role of design and designers. The design process starts with questioning the existing conditions with a problem-setting approach where divergence and convergence processes indistinctively alternate. Students are requested to create projects with a strong evocative and narrative focus, designing a synthesis of values that are independent of the specific typology of the examined conditions. Through the use of a wide range of communication tools, including storytelling, storyboards and video scenarios, students are invited to envisioning the possibilities of the future for design and designers. The workshop emphasizes design activities stemming from existing to possible scenarios and revolves around envisioning future scenarios based on the crossing of innovative emerging technologies with socio-cultural, geo-political, and strategic values.

PRODUCT STRATEGY WORKSHOP

Over the last decades, the design of products has reached a high level of sophistication and complexity. Different design approaches and perspectives have conceptualized visions in manifestos, and this has influenced the design culture at large. The Product Strategy workshop aims to develop project proposals able to combine different approaches in a new, innovative and surprising way. The workshop explores corporate cases involving the leading design companies, whose ability to innovate does not merely concern products, but all the elements that contributes to shape a truly global offer encompassing: positioning, image, distribution and communication. The application domain can range from established brands (brand extension), to companies wanting to exploit their potentials, to existing companies that want to re-position their business, to new ventures (startups, crowdsourcing).

A substantial part of the workshop activity is dedicated to the definition of a business model consistent with the objectives and scale of the project, while exploring the scalability of the solution, feasibility and innovation potential.

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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.

DATA ANALYSIS

The Data Analysis course focuses on methods and tools that allow us to interpret and understand complex phenomena through the use of data. Using different digital tools, the course will present fundamental concepts for the interpretation and manipulation of data, exploring various approaches to turn raw data into insightful information through the combined use of statistics, data engineering, data science and design. Through a hands-on approach, students will experience the process that goes from the analysis and modelling of the phenomenon, the gathering of relevant data, its cleaning, transformation and manipulation. The raw data produced by the analyzed context is filtered, transformed, aggregated and explored through a variety of digital tools in order to extract relevant information. During this process, students will use critical and analytical skills to distinguish relevant trends and insights, avoid biases and develop analytical skills.

DESIGN RESEARCH METHOD AND TOOLS

The course Design Research Methods and Tools explores theories and practices within the field of creative thinking. Students are introduced to different research methods and approaches such as observation and interviewing, idea generation techniques such as attribute listing and brainstorming, and data representation tool such as mind-maps, diagrams and graphs. Through the analysis of different case studies presented by international design firms representatives the course explores the relation between design and research. Students learn how to acquire and manipulate the information they need to kick-start their projects.

DATA VISUALIZATION

The Data Visualization course covers the theoretical and practical aspects involved with the transformation of raw data into visual and interactive representations, able to convey insightful and actionable information. During the course, students will experience first-hand with the fundamental concepts of graphic representation of information, starting from its perceptual basis and growing in complexity with the experimentation of different paradigms, approaches and tools for data representation. Following the process that goes from requirements analysis and research, to concept and development, students will practice the different skills required to design a data visualization project. Through creative coding and digital prototyping, they will conceive and develop concept-driven visualizations, focused on user-centered tasks and objectives. During the course, professionals and testimonials from different backgrounds will present their experience and methodologies developed in different fields of application.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Professional Experience 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 three kinds of Professional Experiences:

- Internship in a Company/Firm: the students will be hosted in a work environment developing assigned real projects.
- Field Learning Experience: a work project carried out on campus in collaboration with a company and supervised by a project leader. The students will approach contemporary themes and explore a wide range of design subjects in a multidisciplinary environment.
- Entrepreneurship Module: an entrepreneurial journey in order to develop business and managerial skills. The students will be given a specific toolbox of frameworks and approaches both in theory and practice. In all 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.