

Domus Academy Master's Degree

Service 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.

SERVICE DESIGN WORKSHOP

Service Design is the activity of defining, designing and executing an effective service model with the ultimate goal to improve the quality of the experience of people using the services provided by a private company or a public organization. A service model is a framework detailing the nature of the offered service, its funding mechanism, the management of human resources needed to make it work and the relationships established and nurtured with customers. The quality of the resulting service can be measured by means of several criteria including desirability, credibility, accessibility, utility, and usability. Through a series of theoretical lectures and practical activities, the workshop in Service Design provides students a clear perspective on this subject and a clear framework encompassing all the key steps to be undertaken and the tools to be used to design new service systems or improve existing ones: as-is assessment, to-be alignment, stakeholders profiling, customer journey mapping, service blueprinting, prototyping and testing. Within the workshop, students will work in teams under the guidance of a project leader to ideate and design all the elements of a service system and prototype one or more of its physical or digital touchpoints.

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.

STORYTELLING AND VISUAL NARRATIVE

Storytelling has become today a fundamental design topic; the ability to integrate narration into the design process is an essential component to attract, engage and expand the user experience. The course responds to the growing need to create and deliver original visual content to varied fields ranging from communication of projects, interface design, management of social media channels, and to micro storytelling. The course provides an intensive exploration of visual and structural elements of storytelling and visual narratives where students engage with the necessary tools to design a user experience and to create user scenarios and storyboards. The course prepares the students for the challenges and opportunities of the digital market, developing basic knowledge on software prototyping techniques of interactive services using static and dynamic representations.

BUSINESS FOR DESIGN

Brand managers, entrepreneurs and designers alike need to become familiar with the tools of business analysis in order to have a good understanding of how businesses create value and generate profits. The Business for Design course offers students the possibility to understand and put into practice real-life business scenarios and to appraise the core aspects that determine the economic performance and viability of a company, studio or consultancy. Students will explore basic accounting topics, short and long term profitability aspects, options to fund innovative projects or enterprises within a long-term horizon, and a general framework around intellectual propriety, copyright aspects and regulations. The course is structured around lectures, real case-studies and focused exercises to get an insight, explore and experiment firsthand the fundamental aspects of business applied to the design field and brand management.

DESIGN THINKING

Design Thinking is a human-centered innovation process that emphasizes observation, collaboration, fast learning, ideas visualization, rapid concept prototyping, and concurrent business and technology analysis, which ultimately positively impacts business strategy. Organizations adopting a Design Thinking approach must be open to take risks, and the people

working within them or collaborating from outside should be ready to go out of their comfort zones and embrace new ways to generate value. The objective of Design Thinking is to involve consumers, designers and business people in an integrative process to imagine future states and bring products, services, and experiences to market. Through a series of theoretical lectures and practical activities, the course in Design Thinking provides students a clear perspective on this subject and a clear framework encompassing all the key steps to be undertaken and the tools to be used to transform problems into value creation opportunities through divergent and convergent thinking.

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.