DI301-15 Design Research

24/25

Department
 Design Studies
Level
 Undergraduate Level 3
Module leader
 Jane Webb
Credit value
 15
Module duration
 10 weeks
Assessment
 100% coursework
Study location
 University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

The Design Research module provides students with the opportunity to explore processes of practice-based and academic research of, for and through design. Students will inhabit a range of methodological approaches throughout this module and will be encouraged to experiment with traditional and novel methods of design research, and to understand the importance of serious play. This will allow them to more fully understand and hone their own research methods, relevant to their own interests and project aspirations. Ethical issues will be embedded throughout the module, encouraging students to consider, address and critique their own standpoints and perspectives. The module will also work with students to explore and understand structures for research funding.

Module aims

The module aims to equip students with a knowledge of the potential breadth of research methods, methodologies and positionality in design research by allowing them to experience diverse approaches to research. Key to this introduction is the development of openness to methods that might be unexpected and perceived as radical, experimental or playful. The module also aims to encourage students to think about and develop their own innovation in practice-based research methods. By the end of the module, students will be able to place ethics at the heart of their research. Students will also be familiar with research funding structures and application

processes.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Design Research covers a diverse range of design practice research methods that will be explored throughout the module. These include (but are not limited to): technical research (explores physical material qualities/digital qualities/systems and transformations of those), information visualisation research (working with data capturing and sources), process-based research (working through a process to find its boundaries and limits), material research (explores the histories and culture of materials), diaristic research (uses the self to document patterns or change), ethnographic research (what people, animals and things do), object-based research (using objects directly, even out of context), place-based research (about a place or in a place), experimental research (setting up a scenario and working within it, e.g. imagining a different, time or place), participatory or co-design research (related to ethnographic but others are part of the process of conception, ideation and recording), a diverse range of academic research including methods of secondary and primary research (qualitative and quantitive). All research methods will be infused with ethical considerations and address methodology and research positionality.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Understand and identify the diversity and potentiality of design research methods.
- Participate in and adopt experimentation across diverse research methods and methodologies.
- Develop and deploy appropriate design research methods for particular tasks and contexts.
- Demonstrate understanding and use of appropriate ethical approaches, complementary to personally chosen methods and methodologies.
- Develop record-keeping and critical analysis (visual and textual) of methods and methodologies.

Indicative reading list

Crabtree, Andy, et al. Doing Design Ethnography. Springer, 2012.
Grierson, Elizabeth, et al. De-Signing Design: Cartographies of Theory and Practice. Lexington Books, 2015.
Jonas, Wolfgang. "The Strengths / Limits of Systems Thinking Denote the Strengths / Limits of Practice-Based Design Research." Formakademisk, vol. 7, no. 4, 2014.
Kirk, Andy. Data Visualisation: A Handbook for Data Driven Design. SAGE Publications, 2019.
Kriz, Karel, et al. Mapping Different Geographies. Springer, 2010.
Leavy, Patricia. Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice. The Guilford Press, 2015.
Müller, Francis, and Anna Brailovsky. Design Ethnography: Epistemology and Methodology. Springer, 2021.
Robertson, Toni, and Jesper Simonsen. Routledge International Handbook of Participatory Design. Routledge, 2013.

Uğur, Seçil. Wearing Embodied Emotions: a Practice Based Design Research on Wearable Technology. Springer, 2013.

Vear, Craig. The Routledge International Handbook of Practice-Based Research. Routledge, 2022.

Research element

This module is all about research methods and the consideration of positionality and methodology. Research methods will range from archival research to fieldwork and material exploration and involve students trialling approaches that they might initially be unfamiliar with.

Interdisciplinary

This module is focussed on practice-based research for design but this is a broad, interdisciplinary field drawing on (but not reduced to) approaches from anthropology, sociology, medicine, archaeology, politics, philosophy, performance, and fine art.

International

Material and examples of research practice will be drawn from design practice research activity across the world.

Subject specific skills

Practice-based design methodologies and methods.
An understanding of ethics within a design-practice framework.

Transferable skills

Research skills (detailed below).
Documentation skills including digital recording (audio/visual), photography, textual documentation and repository construction.
Critical analysis.
Essay writing.
Referencing.
Analysis of ethical considerations.
Project design.

Study

Study time

Type	Required	Optional
Tutorials	1 session of 30 minutes (0%)	1 session of 15 minutes
Practical classes	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)	
Private study	26 hours 30 minutes (17%)	
Assessment	105 hours (70%)	
Total	150 hours	

Private study description

Students will be investigating their own materials on research, preparing for participation in the practical class and working on their recording of experimentation undertaken in the practical class.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time
Research Methods file	50%	45 hours

Students will work on documenting the activities of each week's practical class, alongside more detailed research of other practitioners that have undertaken similar or relevant research. This can be digital (e.g. as a blog/website) or physical (as 2 or 3 dimensions), but should be able to be submitted digitally. Submissions should include a range of media including (but not limited to) photography, text and digital audio and visual.

	Weighting	Study time
Research methods and methodologies review	50%	60 hours

This assignment gives students an opportunity to explore methods and methodologies that they have identified as particularly relevant to themselves and their current or future practice. Students will research existing approaches or develop a rationale for their own approach through the use of primary and secondary research. Students will work with the ethics process to ensure that these considerations are at the heart of their proposed practice.

Feedback on assessment

Students will be provided with written feedback for their assignments and have the opportunity to have a feed-forward tutorial should this be required.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 3 of TGDA-L801 Postgraduate Taught Global Sustainable Development
- Year 3 of UIPA-L8A2 Undergraduate Global Sustainable Development (with Intercalated Year)
- UVCA-LA99 Undergraduate Liberal Arts
  - Year 3 of LA99 Liberal Arts
  - Year 3 of LA92 Liberal Arts with Classics
  - Year 3 of LA73 Liberal Arts with Design Studies
  - Year 3 of LA83 Liberal Arts with Economics
  - Year 3 of LA82 Liberal Arts with Education
  - Year 3 of LA95 Liberal Arts with English
  - Year 3 of LA81 Liberal Arts with Film and Television Studies
  - Year 3 of LA80 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 3 of LA93 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 3 of LA97 Liberal Arts with History
  - Year 3 of LA91 Liberal Arts with Life Sciences
  - Year 3 of LA75 Liberal Arts with Modern Lanaguages and Cultures
  - Year 3 of LA96 Liberal Arts with Philosophy
  - Year 3 of LA94 Liberal Arts with Theatre and Performance Studies
- UVCA-LA98 Undergraduate Liberal Arts with Intercalated Year
  - Year 3 of LA85 Liberal Arts with Classics with Intercalated Year
  - Year 3 of LA72 Liberal Arts with Design Studies with Intercalated Year
  - Year 3 of LA79 Liberal Arts with Economics with Intercalated Year
  - Year 3 of LA78 Liberal Arts with Education with Intercalated Year
  - Year 3 of LA88 Liberal Arts with English with Intercalated Year
  - Year 3 of LA77 Liberal Arts with Film and Television Studies with Intercalated Year
  - Year 3 of LA76 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development with Intercalated Year
  - Year 3 of LA86 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development with Intercalated Year
  - Year 3 of LA90 Liberal Arts with History with Intercalated Year
  - Year 3 of LA98 Liberal Arts with Intercalated Year
  - Year 3 of LA84 Liberal Arts with Life Sciences with Intercalated Year
  - Year 3 of LA74 Liberal Arts with Modern Lanaguages and Cultures with Intercalated Year
  - Year 3 of LA89 Liberal Arts with Philosophy with Intercalated Year
  - Year 3 of LA87 Liberal Arts with Theatre and Performance Studies with Intercalated Year