

Aim

The aims for the design project:

1. To learn about the world through a complete but narrowly circumscribed *design* project
2. To develop skills for taking a design perspective and for writing about it
3. To develop skills for involving participants in design activities
4. To move forward your own research agenda or to develop skills useful to your personal or professional goals.

The problem

Working alone or in groups of two, you may find and frame any problem you like, subject to three constraints: (1) You impose a narrow problem framing; (2) You involve at least three people in your design work; and (3) You and/or your participants make something.

In the past students have explored such things as: (1) Supporting doctors in medical decision-making; (2) Designing a new museum exhibit; (3) Collecting new data related to the value of “inclusion” through design-based activities; (4) Designing a new interactive input device for people with motor difficulties; (5) Exploring how librarians’ work can be understood as a form of design.

Necessary elements

- *A theoretical perspective.* You develop a theoretical point of view to drive your work. We have seen, at least as one example, how Berry’s three questions can provide theoretical perspective on design. Similarly, you will find theoretical perspective in the work of Simon and separately in the work of Schön. You may look to one of these or other foundational thinkers.
- *Involving people in design.* Please involve three or more stakeholders in a design process or in design activity. You may, for example, make something and then elicit stakeholder feedback on the qualities of what you made. Or, you may work with one or more stakeholders to jointly design something together through a process that prompts mutual learning. This is often called *cooperative design*. Or, you may provide stakeholders with materials and ask them to design something which, in turn, you examine analytically or empirically. However you do it, please involve at least three different people in your design work.
- *Rigor and process.* However you conceptualize and define the concept of *rigor* please follow a rigorous process. Moreover, explicitly discuss how your process was rigorous and provide evidence. Please clearly explicate your stance and your commitments as a designer and/or researcher.
- *Reflection.* Provide reflections on your design process and outcomes. Please consider how *design* has helped you (or not) better understand a phenomenon.

Process

1. *Design framing.* A statement about your project – What is the problem? What framing and commitments to the problem do you make? Deliverable: 1-2 pages (if necessary additional material welcome).
Due: Wednesday, April 19 at 1 P.M. (week 4).
2. *Theoretical perspective and method (draft).* A statement and discussion of your theoretical perspective and your methods.
Deliverable: Concise, clear, and insightful writing.
Due: Wednesday, May 10 at 1 P.M. (week 7).
3. *Final report and Design Expo.* A presentation during week #10 and a final deliverable. Deliverable: A final written document – perhaps 1-2 pages with video or other substantial contribution or perhaps a 3,000-6,000 manuscript (please not 10,000 words) with, if needed, other materials or artifacts related to your project.
Due: Friday, June 2, 3 P.M.