Master of Arts in Design (MA)

MA Seminar I: Design Thinking
A survey of what differentiates the practice of design, including the habits of mind of designers, from related fields such craft, art, engineering, story-telling. This course explores the history of design’s relatively recent emergence as a field of professional expertise and then a discipline in the university. It examines through a series of practical experiences the contested terrain of ‘design thinking’ that extends from the adoption of design processes by non-designers to the deployment of designers on strategic challenges not normally framed as design problems. The course focuses on an account of the power of prototyping. Through the course students will have clear ways of talking about the value of design-based innovation, and default techniques for leading design-based problem-solving workshops.

MA Studio I: Visual Communication Fundamentals
Focus on communication design for interactions through visual form-giving to complex information, language, concepts, processes, systems; developing the ability to move between micro/macro views; working in variety of media for screens, web, and print; moving from convention to invention; soft intro to service and social innovation through content of projects.

Design Software Lab
Software including Adobe CS, After Effects; some limited programming/coding, technical skill building synchronized with Studio I projects in consultation with the Studio instructor.

Design Process and Methods
Taught by several instructors in sequence, 1-2 week sections each on various topics, experienced through short, intense hands-on activities in areas such as design process, human principles of design, basic sketching/notation, desktop modeling, teambuilding, documenting/imaging and presentation and communication of work.

Colloquium (optional)
Exposure to faculty research interests and expertise through a series of short, informal lectures, each faculty member presenting work and inviting class discussion; geared toward both broadened design exposure and selection of possible thesis advisors for MDes students.

MDes/MPS/MA Seminar II: Transition Design
A survey of the history, present and future of sustainable design, design for service and social innovation, and an examination of design-enabled mechanisms of social change (whether political or entrepreneurial) and how they interface with social psychology, economics, and technological change.
MA Studio II: Intro Interaction Design
Multiple introductory studio projects in basic interaction design, providing applied context for skills being developed in parallel prototyping lab; continued soft intro to service and social innovation through content of projects.

Prototyping for Interaction Design
Series of lab exercises targeting basic skill building in rudimentary desktop modeling and other forms of three-dimensional making, hacking, basic mechanics and electronics, programming/coding, and prototyping, intended for parallel applications in Studio II in consultation with Studio II instructor.

Elective
Opportunities for students to broaden knowledge and skills in interaction or communication design, professional writing, or key areas of design intersecting with business, policy, service, or social innovation, from offerings within and outside the School of Design.