

PHD IN TRANSITION DESIGN

School of Design

DESIGN THEORY & PRACTICE

Year 1, Fall

“Design Theory & Practice” advances understanding of how methods from different disciplinary domains inform different kinds of research and practice. Through a total of 15 sessions spanning 15-weeks, you will explore the intersections of theory, practice and praxis, to develop a holistic understanding of design research as both a theoretical and practical process. Coursework includes the design of praxis methods to shape your own inquiry, and deepen your research practice.

Topics

Research Of Design
Research For Design
Research By Design
Design Praxis

DESIGN WRITING WORKSHOP

Year 1, Fall

“Design Writing Workshop” deepens your connection with the craft of design writing via a cross-section of academic, journalistic, and creative styles. Spanning 15-weeks, and seven practical workshops help you develop your style, structure, and confidence in design writing. For PhD students, writing is a creative process where ideas are discovered and expressed. Coursework includes an abstract, research statement, reflective journal, and outline literature review.

Topics

Discovery Writing
Developing an Outline
Reviewing the Literature
Writing to Dismantle
Constructing an Abstract
Extreme Distillation

ECOLITERACY

Year 1, Fall

An “ecoliterate” mindset is the starting point for Transition Design. Indeed, to be ecoliterate is to understand the principles through which natural systems flourish and to apply these principles to society, so that we too may flourish without compromising or destroying the natural systems on which we depend. Spanning 15-weeks, this seminar class focuses on key themes of ecoliteracy to help us navigate our social, ecological, and existential crises.

Topics

Place and Bioregions
Goethean Science
Living Systems and Gaia
Relationality and Context
Radical Holism
Everyday Life and Infrastructure

TRANSITION DESIGN

Year 1, Spring

“Transition Design” drives design-led, systems-level change towards socially and ecologically sustainable, convivial and equitable place-based lifestyles. Spanning 15-weeks, with two classes each week, this course explores multi-level wicked problems to establish mutually beneficial relationships between people, the natural environment and the designed world; repositioning designers as agents of sustainable change.

Topics

Living Systems @ Wicked Problems
Mindsets @ Postures
Theories of Change
Visions
Transition Designing

EXPERIENTIAL FUTURES

Year 1, Spring

“Experiential Futures” equips you with the tools and methods to vision and model system-level change, over time. Spanning 15-weeks, you will explore future-focused design practices, coupled with training in futuring and foresight techniques and methods. Coursework includes the development of a ‘Time Machine’—an immersive, future scenario for storytelling and research activation developed in collaboration with others.

Topics

World Modeling
Futuring @ Foresight
Emerging Design Practices
Design Pedagogy
Sustainable Futures

FRAMING PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE

Year 1, Spring

“Framing Proposals for Change” introduces techniques to support you in framing research projects geared toward steering sustainable change in the world. Spanning 7-weeks, this course helps you frame research contexts, define research questions, plan methodological approaches, and speculate upon outcomes and their impacts. Coursework is the development of a PhD Proposal; a paving the way for the rest of your PhD.

Topics

Framing Research Problems
Building an Argument
Planning your Project
Keeping it Open
Writing a Research Proposal

RESEARCH I, II, III, IV

Years 2 @ 3

“Research I, II, III, IV” provide a 2-year period of deep, reflective and self-directed research. Across this sequence of courses—spanning 4 semesters—you work closely with your Advisory Committee to build upon your Research Proposal and Literature Review. During this phase you will deepen your literature review, undertake field research, develop practices and begin pulling together your research into a coherent body of work.

Topics

Fieldwork
Design Research Practice
Research Pilots @ Prototypes
Dissertation Planning
Project Development
Peer Review @ Critique

CODA I, II

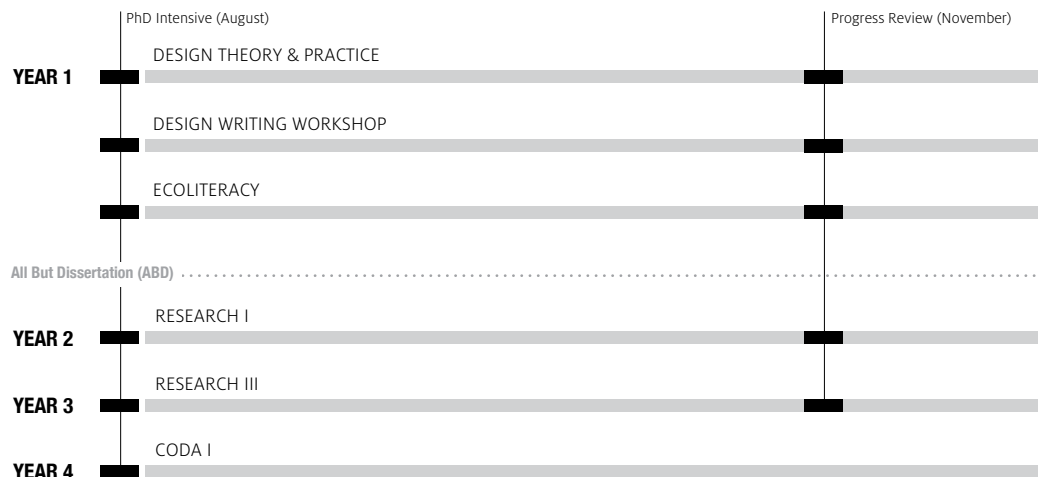
Year 4

“Coda” provides the critical space for divergent research themes to coalesce into a clear and conclusive body of research. You will assemble your dissertation ready for examination in May of the final semester. Dissertations can be entirely written (60—80K words), or a body of written and practical work (40—60K words, by negotiation). Your final body of work must demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge, advancing the field of Design.

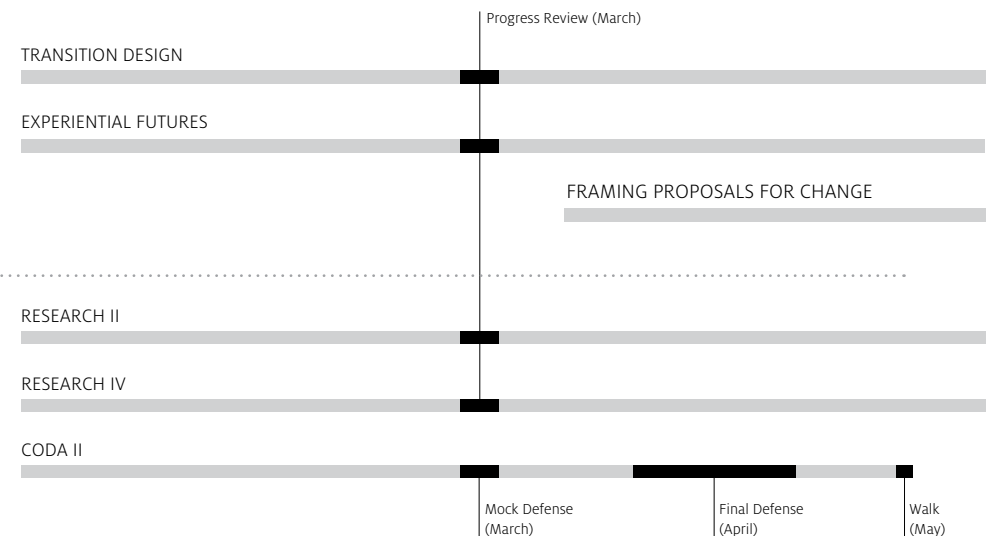
Topics

Distilling Research Findings
Finding Voice; Making your Point
Coalescing Divergent Themes
Dissertation Production
Editing @ Refining
Viva Prep

FALL



SPRING



All But Dissertation (ABD)