# 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
- Design Theory
- 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, 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
- 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 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
- Change.
- Relationships between people, the natural environment and the designed world; repositioning designers as agents of sustainable change.

### Experiential Futures (Year 1, Spring)

"Experiential Futures" equips you with the tools and methods to envision and model system-level change, over time. Spanning 15 weeks, you will explore future-focused design practices, coupled with training in futuring 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
- Emerging Design Practices
- Theory of Change
- Visions
- Transition Designing

### 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, or 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
- Design Writing Workshop
- Emergent Design Practices
- Design Pedagogy
- Sustainable Futures

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**FALL**

| YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PhD Intensive (August) | Progress Review (November) | Design Theory & Practice | | | | |
| Ecoliteracy | | Design Writing Workshop | | | | |
| All But Dissertation (ABD) | | | Research I | | CODA I |

**SPRING**

| YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Transition Design | Progress Review (March) | Experiential Futures | | | | |
| | | Framing Proposals for Change | | | | |
| | | | Research II | | CODA II |
| | | | | Mock Defense (March) | | |
| | | | | Final Defense (April) | | |
| | | | | Walk (May) | | |