

# DE 131: Design and Human Evolution

---

## Instructor

Vivek Kant

## Phone

+91 721-985-1945

## Email

vivek.kant@iitb.ac.in

## Course Overview

“So how can design be understood in a meaningful, holistic sense? Beyond all the confusion created by the froth and bubble of advertising and publicity, beyond the visual pyrotechnics of virtuoso designers seeking stardom, beyond the pronouncements of design gurus and the snake-oil salesmen of lifestyles, lies a simple truth. Design is one of the basic characteristics of what it is to be human, and an essential determinant of the quality of human life. It affects everyone in every detail of every aspect of what they do throughout each day. As such, it matters profoundly.” – John Heskett (2002, p.2)

## Office Location

2nd Floor, Old CSE Building

## Office Hours

By Appointment

## Class Timings

Every Wednesday  
2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

The aim of this first year course is to critically and historically engage with the nature of design. The course emphasizes the study of design and its evolution through artifacts, materials, ideas, decisions, values and policies. Here design is envisioned lying in a continuum between art and technology. Thus this course addresses design in terms of its creative constructions, images in popular media along with its growth in terms of the historical, societal and cultural dimension. The course also supports experiential learning through guided tours and visits to museums to give learners a deeper understanding of artifacts. This course serves as a gateway to a number of other courses on design history as well as courses on critical discussion of design and design theory. Specifically, this course is aimed as a global survey that presents the students with an introduction to various historical trends, viewpoints and perspectives that have shaped the manner in which we comprehend design in its totality.

## Learning Outcomes

- The students will be able to apprehend the notion of design historically in terms of its material manifestations, economical values and societal relations.
- The students will be able to articulate the various challenges associated with addressing design and its evolution in society.
- They will be able to evaluate various historical processes, events and trends that shaped design in past eras.
- The main outcome of this course is to help the students to enable them to focus on trying to make sense of the current state of design in terms of its past evolution.

## Pre-requisites

None

## Course Schedule

Session	Content
Session 1	<p>What is design? · Design as a historical construct · Ways of comprehending design · design based on chronology · design based on geography · humans and artifacts · Challenges of comprehending design as a world construct</p> <p><b>Documentary screening (in-class):</b> Hustwit, Gary (dir.). (2009). <i>Objectified</i>. <a href="https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1241325/">https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1241325/</a>. Online link: <a href="https://docur.co/documentary/objectified">https://docur.co/documentary/objectified</a></p> <p><b>Class Activities:</b> The students will have to identify three viewpoints on design they agree with and disagree with. Class discussion will follow.</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Chapter 1: What is Design? in Heskett, J. (2002). <i>Design: A very short introduction</i>. Oxford: OUP.</p> <p>Basalla, G. (2002). <i>The evolution of technology</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press</p>
Session 2	<p>Early artifacts and their developments · humans and artifacts · stone tools · Paleolithic stone tools · Neolithic stone tools ·</p> <p><b>Class Activities:</b> Discussion of muscle power, types of tools, different ways of making tools</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Chapters 1,2: Margolin, V. (2017). <i>World history of design: Prehistoric times to World War I</i>. London, New York: Bloomsbury.</p>

Session	Content
Session 3	<p><u>Discussion of Assignment 1 topics</u></p> <hr/> <p>World Artifacts · cross-cultural exchanges · crafts and craftsmen · weapons, warfare and architecture</p> <p><u>Start work on Assignment 1. Discuss plans with instructor.</u></p> <p><b>Class Activities:</b></p> <p>Discussion of the intermingling of material, skills and workmanship</p> <p><b>Documentary:</b></p> <p>Wate, John (dir.) <i>Samurai Sword: Making of a Legend</i>. Online Link: <a href="https://topdocumentaryfilms.com/samurai-sword-making-legend/">https://topdocumentaryfilms.com/samurai-sword-making-legend/</a></p> <p>PBS (prod.). <i>Secrets of the Dead - China's Terracotta Warriors</i>. <a href="http://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/chinas-terracotta-warriors-watch-the-full-episode/844/">http://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/chinas-terracotta-warriors-watch-the-full-episode/844/</a>. Available online: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09GCnZmmk9Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09GCnZmmk9Q</a></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Chapters 3, 4, 6: Margolin, V. (2017). <i>World history of design: Prehistoric times to World War I</i>. London, New York: Bloomsbury.</p>
Session 4	<p>Medieval Europe and the Islamic world</p> <p>Chapters 3, 4, 6: Margolin, V. (2017). <i>World history of design: Prehistoric times to World War I</i>. London, New York: Bloomsbury.</p>
Session 5	<p>Renaissance Europe and Ottoman Empire</p> <p><b>Class Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Submit Assignment 1</b></li> <li>• <b>Work and discussion of Assignment 2</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Chapters 5, 7: Margolin, V. (2017). <i>World history of design: Prehistoric times to World War I</i>. London, New York: Bloomsbury.</p>

Session	Content
Session 6	<p>Transitions in Asia, Africa and Americas · <b>Major themes – redux</b></p> <p><b>Class Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Work and discussion of Assignment 2</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Chapters 5, 7: Margolin, V. (2017). <i>World history of design: Prehistoric times to World War I</i>. London, New York: Bloomsbury.</p>
Session 7	<p><b>Experiential Learning: Visit to the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum. Details to be discussed in class. <a href="http://www.bdlmuseum.org/index.html">http://www.bdlmuseum.org/index.html</a></b></p>
Session 8	<p>Industrial Revolution in Europe and America · Age of Exhibitions and the proliferation of design activity: Great Britain and Europe ·</p> <p><b>Documentary screening</b></p> <p>Black, Jeremy (pres.). <i>Why the Industrial Revolution Happened Here</i>.  <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01pz9d6">https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01pz9d6</a>. Online link:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UM2Aw4kmA0s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UM2Aw4kmA0s</a></p> <p><b>Class Activities:</b></p> <p>Discussion of technology, design, history and culture and its impact on future generations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Submit Assignment 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Rework on Assignment 1</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Chapter 8,9 in Margolin, V. (2017). <i>World history of design: Prehistoric times to World War I</i>. London, New York: Bloomsbury.</p> <p>Chapters 1,2, 3 in Forty, A. (2005). <i>Objects of desire : design and society 1750-1980</i>. London: Thames &amp; Hudson.</p>
Session 9	<p>Craft Ideal and the Art movement: Britain and elsewhere · Art Nouveau and Decoration · North America and Europe ·</p>

Session	Content
	<p><b>Class Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rework on Assignment 2</b></li> <li>• <b>Reworked Assignment 1 submission</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Chapters 5, 6 (Part II) from Raizman, D. S. (2004). History of modern design. Upper Saddle River, NJ; London: Prentice Hall ; Laurence King Pub. (New versions of the texts are also available)</p> <p>Chapter 10,11,12 in Margolin, V. (2017). <i>World history of design: Prehistoric times to World War I</i>. London, New York: Bloomsbury.</p>
Session 10	<p>The colonies and the designs of the colonized · Challenges of industrialization · industrialization and factory system</p> <p><b>Documentary screening</b></p> <p>Geographic History. <i>The assembly lines</i>. Online link:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbYaJsr67fc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbYaJsr67fc</a></p> <p><b>Class Activities:</b></p> <p>Discussion of industrialization as a background for growth of design and mass production.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Start work and discussion of Assignment 3</b></li> <li>• <b>Assignment 2 submission</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Chapters 7,10 (Part II and III) from Raizman, D. S. (2004). History of modern design. Upper Saddle River, NJ; London: Prentice Hall ; Laurence King Pub. (New versions of the texts are also available)</p> <p>Chapter 13,14, 15, 16 in Margolin, V. (2017). <i>World history of design: Prehistoric times to World War I</i>. London, New York: Bloomsbury.</p>
Session 11	<p>Modern Design in North America and Europe · Modernism and Mass Culture · Design between the World Wars</p> <p><b>Documentary Screening:</b></p>

Session	Content
	<p>Kinmonth, Margy (dir.) (2016). <i>Revolution new art for the new world</i>.  <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09f2m3p">https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09f2m3p</a>. Available online:  <a href="http://zputlocker.com/watch/JdAg6YxL-revolution-new-art-for-a-new-world.html">http://zputlocker.com/watch/JdAg6YxL-revolution-new-art-for-a-new-world.html</a></p> <p><b>Class Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discussion of Assignment 3</b></li> <li>• <b>Assignment 2 is given to students for revision</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Chapter 2, 3, 4 from Woodham, J. M. (1997). <i>Twentieth century design</i>. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.</p> <p>Chapters 8,9 (Part II and III) from Raizman, D. S. (2004). <i>History of modern design</i>. Upper Saddle River, NJ; London: Prentice Hall ; Laurence King Pub. (New versions of the texts are also available)</p> <p>Chapters 17-30 in Margolin, V. (2017). <i>World history of design: World War I to World War II</i>. London, New York: Bloomsbury.</p>
Session 12	<p>World War II and its impact · World war II and beyond · International modernism and mass culture after World War II</p> <p><b>Documentary screening:</b></p> <p>General Motors (prod.) (1958). <i>The American Look</i>. Online access:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gS6HZv4GXj8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gS6HZv4GXj8</a></p> <p><b>Class Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Submit Assignment 3</b></li> <li>• <b>Continue work on Assignment 2</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Chapter 37 in Margolin, V. (2017). <i>World history of design: World War I to World War II</i>. London, New York: Bloomsbury.</p> <p>Chapters 5 from Woodham, J. M. (1997). <i>Twentieth century design</i>. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.</p>

<b>Session</b>	<b>Content</b>
Session 13	<p>1960s and beyond · post modernism and changing styles · Changing comprehension of East and the West · Global products and systems · the challenge of the future</p> <p><b>Class Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assignment 3 is given back to students for revisions</b></li> <li>• <b>Revised assignment 2 is collected from students</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Chapter 6, 8, 10 from Woodham, J. M. (1997). <i>Twentieth century design</i>. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.</p> <p>Chapters 11-16 (Part IV-V) from Raizman, D. S. (2004). <i>History of modern design</i>. Upper Saddle River, NJ; London: Prentice Hall ; Laurence King Pub. (New versions of the texts are also available)</p>
Session 14	<p>Discussion of Key components and major ideas of the course</p> <p>Discussion of class arrangements for Exhibition next week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assignments 1 and 2 are returned to students</b></li> <li>• <b>Comments are provided on revised Assignment 3 in class</b></li> </ul>
Exam date	<p><b>Class Activities:</b></p> <p>Exhibition of <b>Assignments 1, 2 and 3 in class</b>. Arrange for the exhibition.</p>
<b>Total Duration</b>	<b>14 Sessions — 3 hours per session</b>

## Assignment Breakup

Assignment	Content
Assignment 1	<p><b>Assignment 1 (30% of grade):</b> Select any <i>South Asian</i> artifact, craft, product, brand of historical significance. Find details about it in terms of its material, make-up, geographical location, economic linkages, users, etc.</p> <p>Make (by hand) an <u>information poster</u> to depict the technology and the information surrounding it. Use an <u>A3 size cartridge sheet</u> to show your work.</p> <p><u>Using Wikipedia and internet websites is not enough</u>. Please also use information derived from the library/ museums etc.</p> <p>On the back of your submission, please add the list of references. Make it presentable so that you can add it in your portfolio.</p>
Assignment 2	<p><b>Assignment 2 (30 % of grade):</b> Take the artifact that you have selected and use form/styling etc. from a different age to depict the artifact and, if possible, the surrounding context. For e.g. How would the cellphone look if it was placed in medieval world?</p> <p>Make (by hand) a <u>poster</u> to depict the above aspect. Use <u>A3 size cartridge sheet</u>. At the back of the paper identify the era in which the artifact was earlier selected and the era in which it was placed. Write 1 para describing your rationale for transformation.</p> <p>Make it presentable so that there is continuity with the previous ones and you can add it in your portfolio.</p>
Assignment 3	<p><b>Assignment 3 (30 % of grade):</b> Depict the future of the artifact. What would the artifact look like 100 years from now?</p> <p>Make (by hand) a <u>poster</u> to depict the above aspect. Use <u>A3 size cartridge sheet</u>. At the back of the sheet write 1 para describing your rationale for transformation.</p> <p>Make it presentable so that there is continuity with the previous ones and you can add it in your portfolio.</p>
In-class discussion	<b>10% of grade.</b> Students are expected participate in class.
Total	<b>30 + 30 + 30 + 10 = 100%</b>