



# History of Design in Italy

## Course Details

**Course Designator & Number: FLOR 3018**

**Number of Credits: 3**

**Language of Instruction: English**

**Contact Hours: 45**

**Instructor: Dafne Mazzanti**

## Course Description

This course introduces students to the history of design in Italy from the post-war period to the present day and explores the connection between design and the rebuilding of Italy and the Italian economy, following the devastations of World War II. The link between Italian design and Italian identity, and the concept of “Made in Italy,” will be explored through the study of design in different areas, including fashion, objects, transport, and furniture. By looking at the impact of Italian design outside of Italy and the emergence of global companies, including the main fashion houses, the course leads students to understand the importance of design both as part of the Italian economy and as a lens through which the world views Italy.

Finally, through visits, lectures, case studies analyzed through a cross-cultural lens, and in-class discussions, the course aims at building awareness in students and inspiring their creativity for new projects in an ever-changing world and society, with an eye on sustainability, ethics, design justice, and life cycle assessment in today’s market.

## Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Develop visual skills to recognize the main movements of design in Italy
- Discuss the socio-economic history of post-war Italy in relation to developments in design

- Describe Italian design in context and relation to Italian society and history
- Discuss Italian design in relation to other countries
- Be familiar with language and issues about ethics, justice and life-cycle assessment in design
- Demonstrate awareness of the day-to-day problems of design in a global environment of social, religious and philosophical movements
- Use critical thinking skills
- Demonstrate research and presentation skills

## Methodology

To grasp the experience of the course subject, students will initially be given tools to develop skills for analysis of the different historical moments, to explain and reflect how the environment stimulates the creation of certain objects, ideas, philosophies.

Through in-class discussion, students will become aware of how design has always been connected with society, politics and philosophy and will develop a sensibility for sustainability, ethics, and life-cycle assessment.

During the semester the students will be asked to experience what they have learned by working on a case study analyzed through a cross-cultural lens and a research paper that draws on their knowledge of the history of Italian design and present an idea for a new design. Active experimentation will be required in presenting their idea. A midterm test and a final exam will evaluate the commitment and results of the students.

## Experiential Learning & Field Visits

Field trips facilitate reflection and integration and are purposefully organized to engage in a direct experience, hands-on learning, observation, and active experimentation.

The course will include field trips to traditional design museums, site visits of renovated areas in which design has been key for the new projects, a meeting with a designer that will give students the opportunity to understand the different elements and issues involved in a project.

Critical thinking, problem solving, and the application of real-world scenarios will be all used to improve the skills for learning and understanding Italian design.

## Course Prerequisites

None

## Required Reading / Materials

A selection of the following readings will be made available electronically on AYF:

- Berman, *Do Good Design: How Designers Can Change the World*, 2009
- Bornsen-Holtmann, *Italian Design*, 1994
- De Angelis, *Design the Italian Way*, 2001
- Lupton, *Design is Storytelling*, 2017
- Online sources (see in calendar of classes)

All books are also available at the school library in Florence. Additional readings and study materials will be assigned during the course of the semester.

# Grading

## Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

## Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Assignment 1: Case study (500 word count)	10%
Assignment 2: Presentation of a design idea	20%
Assignment 3: Paper and presentation (1500 word count)	20%
Midterm test	20%
Final exam	20%
Participation	10%
<b>Overall grade</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Assessment Details

#### Case Study 10% (about 500 words)

Students will work on a case study (a designer, an object, a style, a movement) that draws on their knowledge of the history of Italian design and present an idea for a new design. The new design idea can be in any area covered by the course (fashion, product, furniture, transport, etc.)

#### Presentation of Design Idea 20%

Students will present their idea for a new design. The new design can be in any area covered by the course (fashion, product, furniture, transport, signage system, etc.) and can use any media (word, image, film, drawing or collage).

#### Mid-Term Test 20%

The midterm tests students' knowledge of the course content midway through the academic term.

### Paper and Presentation 20%

The paper (1500 words) is a research paper that should demonstrate the ability of the students to carry on an independent study about a topic related to class. The student will choose the topic and confirm it with the professor. The choice of a subject can go beyond what has been covered in class. During the presentation, the student will demonstrate their knowledge of the subject matter, an ability to organize material and to communicate and present it clearly. The paper can include fashion, product, furniture, transport, signage system etc. and can use any media (word, image, film, drawing, or collage).

### Final Exam 20%

The final exam tests the students' knowledge of the overall course content.

# Course Content

REMEMBER to schedule your **paper TOPIC AND PRESENTATION** during the course in agreement with the professor.

## Unit 1

### Lesson 1

Introduction to the course: A designer is?

“Designers today produce more than logos and cereal boxes; they create situations that stimulate the mind and body over time”

*Readings:*

Berman “do good design” Intro

Lupton “Design is storytelling” Inciting Incidents

### Lesson 2

Introduction to the “History of Design,” why Italy?

## Unit 2

### Lesson 1

“Italy at Work.” The 1950s

The 1960s economic development and social transformation: *IL miracolo economico*

### Lesson 2

Italy: The New Domestic Landscape. The 1970s and MoMA exhibition.

## Unit 3

### Lesson 1

The Conditions of Design in Italy

*Readings:*

De Angelis, Design the Italian Way, chapter The Condition of Design in Italy

## Lesson 2

Assignment 1: Case Study (about 500 words) (10%): How can designers do good design: Sustainability, Gender Equality

*Readings:*

What can designers do about it?

An exploration of how design might be led by marginalized communities, dismantle structural inequality, and advance collective liberation and ecological survival

## Unit 4

### Lesson 1

Fiat and Vespa, small vehicles with big impact

This class will explore the design of Fiat and Vespa, their significance in Italy, and their lasting legacy

### Lesson 2

Visit Piaggio Museum in Pontedera

## Unit 5

### Lesson 1

How everyone gets a bit of Italian design in their home

Legacy of industrialization on the environment, Design Justice

### Lesson 2

Assignment 2: Student Presentations of a design idea (to be finalized on Week 10)

*Readings:*

From Lupton, *Design is storytelling*

## Unit 6

### Lesson 1

Fashion, the creation of the major Italian fashion houses

### Lesson 2

Visit *Mazzanti Piume*: artisanal design in Florence



## Unit 7

### Lesson 1

In-class discussion: How can designers do good design: Sustainability, Gender Equality Q&A in preparation for mid-term test

### Lesson 2

Mid-term

## Unit 8

### Lesson 1

Italian Identity and design today: Sustainability, Ethics, and Life Cycle Assessment in today's market

### Lesson 2

Mass production and design vs. Luxury Design (Lamborghini, Ferrari, Gucci)

## Unit 9

### Break

## Unit 10

### Lesson 1

The Narrative of Design: Action, Emotion, Sensation

*Readings:*

From Lupton, *Design is storytelling*

### Lesson 2

Presentation of Final Design Idea (from Week 5)

*Readings:*

From Lupton, *Design is storytelling*

## Unit 11

### Lesson 1

The influence of Italian design outside Italy and the intersection of the Made in Italy brand with design in other countries: Artemide, Alessi, Boffi and many others.

*Readings:*

From De Angelis, *Design the Italian Way*

### Lesson 2

The Radical Design Movement

Breaking with the past and reinventing design as a socio-political tool

*Readings:*

Bornsen - Holtmann, *Italian Design*

## Unit 12

### Lesson 1

Visit: Meet a Designer in Florence

### Lesson 2

Fashion & Sustainability in Italy?

Slow Design

## Unit 13

### Lesson 1

Visit a Florentine artisanal workshop

### Lesson 2

Join our sustainable journey, how to re-use: the case of the ex-area Manifattura Tabacchi in Florence

## Unit 14

### Lesson 1

Visit Manifattura Tabacchi site

## **Lesson 2**

Question and answer in preparation for FINAL exam

Preparation for final exam includes analyzing diverse ideas and voices in design; critical application of methods and theory to the interpretation of design works; discussion on how this course implemented values in life; and how the study of the past and present can challenge the future.

## **Unit 15**

**Final Exam**

# Policies

## Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

## University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

### Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

### Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).