Designing Britain

Semester: SPRING 2016
Class code: ARTH-UA9650002
Class Details: Designing Britain, Spring 2016
Thursdays 2-5pm. Room G04, 6 Bedford Square.

Class Description: British designers are playing an increasingly important part on the world stage. This course examines changing attitudes to design in Britain: from the eighteenth century, when it played a central role in the modernisation of the country, to the 2012 Olympics and beyond, when it is being called upon to refresh our image to the world. We will ask whether there are features about British design over the last 250 years which are distinctively British, and to what extent British designers have been informed by developments in both Britain and beyond.

Design now seems all-encompassing, and this very fact also raises broader questions. Have we overvalued this work of the mind over more traditional hand-skills? Are we becoming cynical in the face of endless “rebrandings” (which includes the rebranding of cities and whole countries)? Does design necessarily falsify, or paper over the cracks? And is it good for the planet? Moreover, recent events in the “global economy” force us to reconsider the essential value of design.

The course format consists of weekly lectures which will be conducted both in the classroom at Bedford Square and in museum spaces throughout London. In addition, there will be extra visits to museums and pertinent exhibitions.

Desired Outcomes: To gain awareness of changing theories of design, and patterns of consumption; To identify recurrent themes in British design over the last 250 years; To understand the nature, variety, and roots of British design today; To develop greater visual appreciation of designed objects; To appreciate British design in its British, European and global context; To better understand the role of design in modern society

Assessment Components: 

Assessment (1): 5 Minute Class Presentation on an object from the V&A collection displays (Britain 1760-1900) plus hand-in of accompanying notes (c.500 words). 10%

Assessment (2): Essay on a British design movement c.1850-1900 (1,500 words). 20%

Assessment (3): Essay on an aspect of post-war design (1945 to the present). The subject of the essay is of student’s choosing but should be concerned broadly with the relationship between design and its social context. Subject and title to be confirmed with tutor by w/c 11th April (3,000 words). 40%
Assessment (4): Slide Test covering development of style in British design and its context (1750-2015). 30%

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

Submission will be marked primarily on clarity of argument and on relation to course objectives.

Grade A: Originality in application and discussion of ideas; good structure/organization; clear and coherent arguments well presented; a number of comparisons made outside the immediate scope of the question; obvious display and use of further reading; citations well referenced; very good English.

Grade B: Good structure and organization; coherent arguments well expressed; some comparisons made outside of the immediate scope of the question; some display of further reading; citations adequately referenced; good English.

Grade C: Structure/organization could be improved; argument clear in places, not in others; limited in scope; little display of further reading; English has regular, but not serious flaws.

Grade D: Poor structure/organization; argument generally unclear; limited in scope; serious flaws in English.

Grade F: Work with the characteristics of grade D which in addition has been submitted very late, or displays signs of plagiarism; work which results from very poor attendance or failure to submit work.

Required Texts:


Useful course overviews:


Supplemental Texts(s) (not required to purchase as copies are in NYU-Library)

The following texts are available in the NYU Library or Senate House and might be broadly useful. All required reading will be available in either the NYU Library, elsewhere in Senate House, or supplied on NYU-Classes (as marked).

Further reading resources may be available elsewhere in Senate House or you might need you to use other reference libraries. It might be worth signing up and familiarising yourself with the British Library early on.


M. Byars, *The Design Encyclopedia* (Lawrence King 1994)


B. Highmore, *The Design Culture Reader* (Routledge 2009)


P. Sparke, *An Introduction to Design and Culture: 1900 to the Present* (Routledge 2004)

J. Thackara, *Design After Modernism: Beyond the Object* (Thames and Hudson 1988)


### Internet Research Guidelines

There are a huge amount of resources available online, but it is the student’s responsibility to decide whether the information is of good enough quality, and from a reputable enough source, to be used in an essay.

It is certainly worth consulting the website of the Victoria and Albert Museum as a point of reference for objects in their collection and for brief histories of British design: [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)

### Additional Required Equipment

A camera and notebook are useful for museum visits.

### Session 1

**Designing Britain, 1750 to the Present Day**

04-Feb-16

**Lecture:** Introduction: Approaches to design history and an outline of what’s to come

**Visit** to the British Museum Rooms 47 and 48 (Europe 1800-2000) in the final hour of class

### Session 2

**Neo-Classicism and Regency Classicism**

11-Feb-16

**Lecture:** Chippendale and Wedgewood; Flaxman; Adam, Chambers and Stuart; Thomas Hope

**Reading:**

A. Forty, *Objects of Desire*, pp.11-36


Session 3

18-Feb-16

**Gothic Revival and Arts and Crafts**

**Lecture:** Sir George Gilbert Scott; Charles Barry; AWN Pugin; Joh Ruskin and William Morris; The Arts & Crafts Movement

**Reading:**
A. Crawford, “Ideas and Objects: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain”, *Design Issues* 13 (Spring 1997); pp. 15-26 (NYU Classes)


W. Morris, “The Ideal Book”, *The Design History Reader*, pp.65-69

J. Ruskin, “The Nature of Gothic”, *The Design History Reader*, pp.60-64

G. Semper, “Science, industry and Art”, *The Design History Reader*, pp.55-59

Session 4

25-Feb-16

**The Great Exhibition and the Origins of the Victoria & Albert Museum**

**Visit** to the Victoria & Albert Museum, Rooms 118-125 (Britain 1760-1900). Meet at 2pm inside the museum’s main entrance under the large glass chandelier by Dale Chihuly.

AND FRIDAY

26-Feb-16

**Visit** to the Fashion and Textile Museum to see ‘Liberty in Fashion’ exhibition. Meet outside Pret A Manger by London Bridge Station at 11am (on the corner of Borough High St. and London Bridge St.)

**Reading:**

**Assessment (1) and (2): Choose** an object from these rooms to discuss in seminar the following week (to be agreed with tutor) and begin to think about subjects for essay the following week.

Session 5

03-Mar -16

**Aestheticism, Art Nouveau and Bloomsbury**

**Lecture:** Christopher Dresser; CFA Voysey; CR Ashbee; CR Mackintosh; Liberty & Co; Bloomsbury and Omega

**Reading:**
Alexandra Gerstein, *Beyond Bloomsbury: Designs of the Omega Workshop*, pp.11-35 (NYU Classes)


**Assessment (1): Class Presentations on objects from the V&A Collection (Britain 1760-1900), plus hand in of accompanying notes (500 words)**

**Assessment (2): Begin essay on a British design movement c.1850-1900 (1,500 words)**
Session 6  
Modernist Design  
10-Mar -16  
Lecture: Modern Design and the International Style; Underground architecture and design  
Reading:  
A. Forty, *Objects of Desire*, pp.223-238  
P. Greenhalgh, “Introduction to Modernism in Design”, *The Design History Reader*, pp.91-97  
Assessment (2): Hand-in essay

Session 7  
The Festival of Britain and Post-War Modernism  
17-Mar -16  
Visit to the exhibition of public sculpture at Somerset House followed by the South Bank. Meet under canopy at entrance to Somerset House on Strand at 2pm.  
Reading:  
B. Conekin, “‘Here is the Modern World Itself’, The Festival of Britain’s Representations of the Future”, *The Design History Reader*, pp.143-151  

Session 8  
Designs of the Year  
24-Mar -16  
Visit to the Design Museum to see ‘Designs of the Year’. Meet at Bermondsey Station at 2pm.  
31-Mar-16  
**SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**

Session 9  
From Modernism to Post-Modernism  
07-Apr -16  
Lecture: Brutalism, the Independent Group; Pop, Punk and Post-Punk  
Reading:  
O. Hatherly, “‘Clean Living Under Difficult Circumstances’: Modernist Pop and Modernist Architecture: A Short History of a Misunderstanding”, *British Design: Tradition and Modernity after 1948*


**Assessment (3):** Start to think about possible essay questions and bring notes and images (PowerPoint if possible) to next class to present your interests to the class informally. The subject of the essay is of student’s choosing but should be concerned broadly with the relationship between design and its social context in the post-war period. Subject and title to be confirmed with tutor by w/c 11th April.

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<th>Session 10</th>
<th>14-Apr -16</th>
<th><strong>Aspects of Post-War Design</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Presentations for Assessment (3):</strong> Confirm essay question with tutor</td>
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<th>Session 11</th>
<th>21-Apr -16</th>
<th><strong>Modern Design and Popular Culture</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Visit</strong> to the Victoria &amp; Albert Museum, Rooms 74-76 (Britain 1900-2000). Meet again at 2pm inside the museum’s main entrance under the large glass chandelier by Dale Chihuly.</td>
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<th>28-Apr -16</th>
<th><strong>Design and National Identity</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Lecture:</strong> British Design in the 21st Century; Regeneration and the Olympics</td>
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<th>Session 13</th>
<th>05-May -16</th>
<th><strong>Architecture/London Now</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Visit</strong> to Royal Academy exhibition, “Mavericks: Breaking the Mould of British Architecture”. Meet in the courtyard outside the Royal Academy (on Piccadilly) at 2pm.</td>
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**Assessment (3): Hand-in essay via Turnitin**

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<th>Session 14</th>
<th>12-May -16</th>
<th><strong>Conclusions: Designing Britain</strong></th>
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<td>Including Revision notes for the exam</td>
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| Session 15 | 19-May -16 | **Assessment (4): Final Image Exam, Design 1750-2015** |
**Classroom Etiquette**

Toilet breaks should be taken before or after class or during class breaks. Food and drink, including gum, are not to be consumed during class sessions.

Mobile phones should be set on silent and should not be used during class except for emergencies.

Laptops are allowed for note-taking only. Those found using them during class for personal purposes will be asked to put them away.

**Required Co-curricular Activities**

All required co-curricular activities are outlined in the above document.

**Estimated Travel Costs**

The cost of travel for all of the visits should be about £40. Obtain a pay-as-you-go Oyster Card, which allows for efficient travel and provides a serious discount over cash fares.

**Suggested Co-curricular Activities**

There are numerous public lectures available to attend in London at various institutions. Keep an eye on the relevant institutions’ websites or on Timeout for interesting related lectures.

**NYU LONDON ACADEMIC POLICIES**

**Academic Integrity**

At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others.

At NYU London, students will submit electronic copies of their written work to Turnitin via their NYU Classes course site. Instructions will be provided to you separately.

**Late Submission of Work**

Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor. Late work should be submitted in person to a member of NYU London staff in the Academic Office (Room 308, 6 Bedford Square) during office hours (Mon – Fri, 10:00 – 17:00). Please also send an electronic copy to academics@nyu.ac.uk for submission to Turnitin.

Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.

Written work submitted more than 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

Please note end of semester essays must be submitted on time.
Study abroad at Global Academic Centres is an academically intensive and immersive experience. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. As classes typically meet once a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course.

To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance is mandatory and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

**How to report an absence**
Absences from class must be reported to NYU London administrative staff using the online Absence Form: [http://tinyurl.com/nyulabsence](http://tinyurl.com/nyulabsence)

Absences can ONLY be excused if they are reported using this form. Students should NOT approach their class instructor for an excused absence. However, students should contact their class instructor to catch up on missed work.

**Medical absences**
If you are unable to attend a class due to ill-health, you must provide details of your illness and class(es) missed to NYUL staff using the online Absence Form WITHIN SEVEN DAYS of your return to class.

Please do not use the form to report a medical emergency or to request urgent assistance. In a medical emergency call 999 and ask for an ambulance. NYU London staff are available to offer support, whatever time of day. If you would like to speak to a member of staff urgently to request support with a medical problem, please call 0800 316 0469, selecting option 2.

**Non-medical absences**
If you have to miss class for an unavoidable, non-medical reason you must provide details to NYUL staff using the online Absence Form at least **SEVEN DAYS PRIOR** to the date(s) in question. Examples of valid non-medical reasons are as follows: religious holiday; family wedding; scholarship competition; family emergency. If in doubt please speak to a member of Academics staff or email academics@nyu.ac.uk. Failure to provide requested documentation for these types of absences will result in the absence remaining unexcused.

Further information regarding absences
**NYU London staff carefully monitor student attendance and absence records.** In most cases full completion of the online Absence Form will be sufficient to excuse your absence. However, in certain circumstances, you will be asked to provide additional information/verification before it can be excused. If we notice that you have multiple absences you will be contacted to arrange a meeting with a member of staff.

**Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam.** Students may not take an exam before or after other students in the class, and may not leave the programme before all course work has been submitted.

Please refer to the NYU Wikis Page for the full absence policy: [https://wikis.nyu.edu/x/awRgAw](https://wikis.nyu.edu/x/awRgAw)

Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their professor and the Office of Academic Support in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.
Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see Study Away and Disability.

NYU in London uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

A=94-100
A-=90-93
B+=87-89
B=84-86
B-=80-83
C+=77-79
C=74-76
C-=70-73
D+=67-69
D=65-66
F=below 65

Where no specific numerical equivalent is assigned to a letter grade by the class teacher, the midpoint of the range will be used in calculating the final class grade (except in the A range, where 95.5 will be used).

NYU in London aims to have grading standards and results in all its courses similar to those that prevail at Washington Square.

NYU requires all instructors to submit midterm grades for their students. Midterm grading is considered an educational best practice, and plays an important role in schools’ early intervention programs, which enable advisers to identify and to respond to students in crisis.