General Course Analysis Template – DM2601, 2021

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1. **Description of the course evaluation process**

Describe the course evaluation process. Describe how all students have been given the possibility to give their opinions on the course. Describe how aspects regarding gender, and disabled students are investigated.

The course evaluation process was done through three channels:

1. The official online evaluation form available at kth.se, consisting of a semi-structured questionnaire of 12 entries.
2. An analysis meeting with Marianela Ciolfi Felice.
3. Individual assignments comprising short written reflections documenting their understanding from the lectures and theoretical material, including those methods they find more appropriate to implement in their design process. The intent of these assignments was (a) to evaluate their ongoing learning process, and implicitly the reception of the design activities from the class (b) to crystalise their knowledge and (c) to give students the possibility to express their positions regarding their interpretation of the design challenge, as well as the use of methods.

Taking into account some occurrences related to discrimination between Swedish and international students in past versions of the course, I decided to distribute students to different pre-assigned teams I created randomly. As this course is one of the first ones they take during their master education, most students didn't know each other. Those who offered their opinion in the course evaluation questionnaire appreciated working with strangers and people from different backgrounds and genders.

2. **Description of meetings with students**
Describe which meetings that has been arranged with students during the course and after its completion. (The outcomes of these meetings should be reported under 7, below.)

Due to COVID, lectures, workshops and supervision sessions were delivered online. Critique sessions were done in person, in small groups. Students had the possibility to meet the teacher assistants and present their progress every week without being graded. These meetings were composed of (a) supervision meetings, which were open to asking questions, and (b) critique sessions intended to discuss their progress.

3. **Course design**
Describe briefly the course design, the constructive alignment (intended learning objectives, learning activities, assessment, and how they interact), and the development that has been implemented since last course offering.

This course introduces students to the human-centred design process for interaction design and media technology, particularly by following the Double Diamond methodology proposed by the British Council. We have done this by systematically introducing a series of methods, from research, framing, ideating and prototyping, first in the lectures, and then as workshops sessions. Students were expected to generate prototypes by responding to a particular design challenge, which was centred on the concept of *designing in a world of introverts*. The ill-defined nature of this design brief was intended to put students in the mindset of the very nature of design problems in real life, which can be complex, messy and uncertain.

The evaluation process comprised a combination of both individual and group assignments. In terms of the individual ones, students were asked to complete three short essays where they had to reflect on

the different stages of the design process, plus a personal meta reflection at the end. The objectives of these individual assignments were already described in question 1. They also had a reflective assignment deriving from a reading seminar involving a discussion of a series of papers related to the description of the design process and methods. In terms of group assignment, students had to submit a process workbook and a concept video devised to exercise their newly acquired skills and decision making as a design team. Additionally, students had to present their progress during the critique sessions and upload evidence to Canvas. Next to reflections, these functioned as instances for formative feedback.

Below I include a summary of the course activities and deliverables.

	Mode	Deliverables	Type of deliverable
Lectures	Online	Written reflections (3) about different stages of the Design process, 500 words each	Individual
Workshops	Online		
Reading Seminar	Online	Written reflection on discussed papers, 500 words	Individual
Critique Sessions	In person	Details on canvas	Group
Supervision	Online	Questions to your supervisor	Group
Final presentation	In person	• A workbook • One of the following: Video prototype or video demonstration. • A final written reflection, 500 words	Group (workbook and prototype) Individual (reflection)

Compared to previous versions of this course, lectures aligned with the design process stages students were expected to follow in the critique sessions. Previously, lectures were arranged in ways that were not always consistent with these stages, relying on the availability of guest lecturers. For this version of the course, I decided to take a more active role as a lecturer, teaching the majority of lectures and workshops (all these materials were designed from scratch, yet following the outcomes and structure of the course), except by three activities when I was absent. These activities are (1) a lecture on prototyping conducted by Jarmo Laaksolahti and (2) its respective workshop by Karey Helms. Additionally, (3) Nadia Campo Woytuk facilitated a workshop on video prototyping, which was also given in previous versions of the course. Critique sessions and supervisions were run by the TA. Additionally, practical workshop activities were offered each week as a way to apply what was learnt in the lectures. Below I include a summary of learning outcomes, how these were addressed and some observations regarding pending challenges

| Learning outcomes	Activities	Observations (if any)
• give an account of standard process models in interaction design	Lectures, Workshops	--
• give an account of design methods in the different phases of the design process	Lectures, Workshops	--
• discuss how different methods can contribute to successful solutions based on research and experiences in the industry	Lectures, Workshops, Crit sessions and supervisions	Although the methods we teach are routinely applied in industry, we need a more explicit connection here to transmit trust in this regard.
• analyse strengths, weaknesses and applicability of different methods	Lectures, Workshops, Crit sessions and supervisions	--
• account for and utilise technological properties in different design materials to create successful solutions	Independent work guided through crit sessions and supervisions.	--

• apply methods for the design of interactive media technologies in practice	Workshops, Independent work guided through crit sessions and supervisions.	--
• use modern software and hardware tools for interaction design in order to independently be able to run successful design processes.	Workshops	Students were free to suggest their prototyping tools, but we need more emphasis on directing them to more specific ones. Example Adobe XD or Figma.

4. **Students' workload**
Are the students working to the expected extent in relation to the course credits? If there is a significant difference from the expected, what can be the reason?

Below, I illustrate a summary of the course activities. Each week we had a one-hour lecture on Mondays, followed by two-hour workshops on Wednesdays. In addition, depending on the week, students would attend 4-hour crit sessions or schedule a 30-minute supervision session.

Monday	Wednesday	Thursday or Friday
Lecture	Workshop	Supervision (Friday)
Lecture	Workshop	Critique session (Thu or Fri)
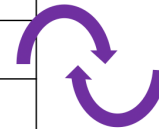
The majority of students openly perceived their workload to be appropriate, with two polar exceptions (one student wishing to do more and one who considered the workload too intense). In their self-reporting responses, most students reported having worked less than 20 hours per week. Considering we met students three times a week and had assignments each week, in some cases, some students might have underestimated the number of hours they spent working on the subject.

5. **Students' results on the course**
79 students registered for the class. Two of them were registered for the second time. Out of those 77 remaining 72 have completed the course (94%).

6. **Students' answers to open questions**
What do students say in response to the open questions?

Open questions focused mainly on the appropriateness of the workload and the satisfaction generated by the group's diversity. The rest of the opinions concerning positives and negatives are described in question 7 below.

7. **Summary of students' opinions**
Summarise the outcome of the questionnaire, as well as opinions emerging at meetings with students.

Positive evaluations
- Critique sessions and having the chance to meet the teachers and students in person were perceived as particularly beneficial for their learning process. Students were grateful for this.
- Workshops and hands-on application of methods were highly valued. Students systematically expressed their satisfaction about these activities throughout the course.
- Diversity: Working with people from different backgrounds was evaluated as having a positive impact on their learning experience.
- The freedom to decide on the methods and topics to choose from was appreciated. This aspect is particularly important, as the uncertainty of the design process tends to frustrate students. In this case, however, it was perceived as an advantage.
- The teaching staff was also mentioned as a high point of the course.

To improve
- Feedback from the assignments needs to be timely.
- Students missed learning concrete digital prototyping tools.
- Some students requested more reading material. Additional articles will be integrated for the following versions of this course, possibly as an additional reading seminar.
- We need to ensure consistency between the instructions given by the lecturer and the TAs. In some cases, communication was not as direct as it could be. However, clear instructions were given after all lectures, and these were available for all but proven to be not enough.
- More emphasis on the importance of sketching: Two students suggested removing the sketching workshop, as they perceived it as less relevant. However, as this is a foundational design skill, we as educators need to reinforce its importance.

8. Overall impression
Summarise the teachers' overall impressions of the course offering in relation to students' results and their evaluation of the course, as well as in relation to the changes implemented since last course offering.

The general reception of the course was in general quite positive. Furthermore, the changes implemented in relation to previous versions (more workshop activities and the arrangement of students to conform groups of local and international) were actively well-received.

Here is the opinion of TA1, who has taught this course before:

> *I think there was a great match between what was offered and the results: students demonstrated clear understandings of double diamond and reflectively engaged with design methods to fulfil a project brief. 2) Your changes implemented were significant… I've been a part of this course at least three times. What I noticed this time around was a much stronger understanding from students of the relationship across methods and their impact on more sophisticated final concepts and deliverables than previous years.*

The following is the comment of TA2, who was a student of this course a few years ago.

> *Since this was the first time teaching this course for me I don't really have a comparison except for when I took it, which has improved significantly, especially the project brief (such a great topic and future-oriented, which opens up for a lot of creativity) and freedom to choose methods and approaches.*
> *I think the students successfully completed all the course requirements and some projects went a bit further in several aspects (more focus on the prototype, or the workbook etc) but some groups remained at the level of what was required, which is OK. I also had a bit higher expectations for them to try out different methods, or to "dare" to design beyond something that can be implemented immediately. However, if I compare with when I took the course, the explorative and creative aspects have really been magnified!*

9. Analysis
- In terms of responses, there were no significant differences between male and female students.
- It seems the majority of our respondents were female international students. However, I could tell as the responses of male participants appeared considerable later.
- In-person teaching seems to be more valued than remote.
- During the evaluation meeting, Marianela Ciolfi Felice pointed out the high workload for the teachers of this course, suggesting the need for another TA. I echo her observations, which I detail later in question 11.

10. **Prioritised course development**
What aspects of the course should be developed primaily? How can these aspects be developed in short and long term?

- *Short term:* More emphasis on prototyping tools applied in industry, which we expect students to apply. Also, to introduce more explicit connections with industry in general, for example, by inviting guest lecturers who use the methods we teach in the class.
- *Short term:* Introduce additional reading materials: The course is highly practical, but it needs some extra connection with theoretical and critical knowledge.
- *Short term*: Improving access to course materials: As it was my first time as a course coordinator, I had some difficulties with accessing -and making accessible- some course materials. When relevant, I tried my best to keep track and make changes to streamline wayfinding.

11. **Other information you want to share**

I need another teacher assistant to cover the demands of the course. Although TAs were not involved in most class preparation, they had to spend many hours marking and assisting students with their projects. They were very committed, but we also needed more support. On the other hand, I was busy looking after coordination duties, designing and delivering workshops and lectures every week.