

DES101 Elements of Design

School: School of Business and Creative Industries

2026 | Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast
UniSC Moreton Bay

**BLENDED
LEARNING**

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Online

ONLINE

You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

Please go to unisc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

Design plays an important role in generating imaginative and effective communication, understanding, and affective engagement. This course aims to develop your understanding and application of design elements and principles through a range of practical activities. The course provides you with skills and strategies to assist in ideas generation and encoding meaning through sound and image. Within this course you will apply design elements and principles to address creative problems and practical challenges and will learn critical evaluation and observation skills.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – Interactive online learning activities.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Scheduled face to face workshops.	2hrs	Week 1	10 times
Seminar – Scheduled face to face seminars.	2hrs	Week 5	2 times
ONLINE			
Learning materials – Interactive online learning activities.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Scheduled online workshops (Recorded).	2hrs	Week 1	10 times
Seminar – Scheduled online seminars (Recorded).	2hrs	Week 5	2 times

1.3. Course Topics

- Design Language and Focal Point
- Balance
- Colour Theory
- Colour Meaning
- Rhythm
- Space and Depth
- Encoding Meaning
- Culture Jamming
- Design that Works
- Design Futures

2. What level is this course?

100 Level (Introductory)

Engaging with discipline knowledge and skills at foundational level, broad application of knowledge and skills in familiar contexts and with support. Limited or no prerequisites. Normally, associated with the first full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES	GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1 Apply understandings of design principles to develop creative solutions to design problems.	Creative and critical thinker
2 Demonstrate an understanding and application of semiotic principles in design communication.	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker
3 Generate a range of possible solutions to design tasks and demonstrate critical ability in the selection of final outcomes.	Creative and critical thinker
4 Demonstrate an ability to explore and manipulate a range of selected media and to present work in a professional manner.	Empowered
5 Develop culturally sensitive design skills that respond to place, embrace sustainability, and acknowledge Indigenous protocols and perspectives.	Ethical Sustainability-focussed

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

Not applicable

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

5.5. Microcredential Information

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

In week 4, formative feedback will be provided on your Task 1 work in progress during the tutorial.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece	Individual	30%	PDF Journal containing exercises, research, and reflection.	Week 5	Online Submission
All	2	Artefact - Creative	Individual	40%	2 to 3-minute audio-visual piece + in class presentation	Week 9	Online Submission
All	3	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece	Individual	30%	2 x design works plus 400 word written summary	Exam Period	Online Submission

All - Assessment Task 1: Design Imagination

GOAL:	To explore idea development, develop critical ability and demonstrate an understanding of design elements and principles through visual communication exercises linked to professional design outcomes.																
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece																
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:																	
FORMAT:	Specific task details and description can be found on Canvas in the Assessment/Task 1 section.																
CRITERIA:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th> <th></th> <th>Learning Outcome assessed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Demonstrated understanding and application of design principles</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Sound understanding, practice, experimentation, research and working processes to support the final outcomes</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Creativity and originality in idea development and final design outcomes</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Professional presentation and skilled use of the medium</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No.		Learning Outcome assessed	1	Demonstrated understanding and application of design principles	1	2	Sound understanding, practice, experimentation, research and working processes to support the final outcomes	3	3	Creativity and originality in idea development and final design outcomes	2	4	Professional presentation and skilled use of the medium	4	
No.		Learning Outcome assessed															
1	Demonstrated understanding and application of design principles	1															
2	Sound understanding, practice, experimentation, research and working processes to support the final outcomes	3															
3	Creativity and originality in idea development and final design outcomes	2															
4	Professional presentation and skilled use of the medium	4															
GENERIC SKILLS:	Problem solving, Applying technologies																

All - Assessment Task 2: Design in Nature

GOAL:	To demonstrate an understanding of design principles by using digital photography, collage or drawing to reflect the mood of a selected piece of music or sound in a series of images. The images will focus on natural environments and will demonstrate an understanding of a collection of design principles.	
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative	
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:		
FORMAT:	Specific task details and description can be found on Canvas in the Assessment/Task 2 section.	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Project meets the criteria set in the project brief and is presented in a skilled and professional manner 4
	2	Thorough documentation of working processes, idea generation and design decisions 1
	3	Clear understanding and application of design principles 1 2
	4	Demonstrates critical ability in the selection of final design outcomes and overall unity of presentation 4
	5	Creativity and originality in responses 1 5
GENERIC SKILLS:	Problem solving, Applying technologies	

All - Assessment Task 3: Culture Jamming

GOAL:	Demonstrate an understanding of design elements, design principles, and semiotics in the creation of two design outcomes.	
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece	
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:		
FORMAT:	Specific task details and description can be found on Canvas in the Assessment/Task 3 section.	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Project meets the criteria set in the project brief and is presented in a skilled and professional manner 4
	2	Demonstrates an understanding of semiotics and design principles in visual and written outcomes 2
	3	Demonstrates critical ability in the selection of final design outcomes 3
	4	Creativity and originality in responses 1 3
	5	Thorough documentation of research, analysis, idea generation and design decisions in the journal 1 5
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Applying technologies	

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

There are no required/recommended resources for this course.

8.2. Specific requirements

It is essential that you come prepared with appropriate materials for each tutorial. Requirements: A3 sketchbook/journal, 2B, 4B, 6B graphite pencils, eraser, scissors, glue, ruler, black medium point marker pen, coloured pencils. Task 2 requires the use of a digital camera, a phone camera is suitable.

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Risk assessments have been performed for all field activities and low to moderate levels of health and safety risk exists. Moderate risks may include working in an Australian bush setting, working with people, working outside normal office hours for example. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

- Less than 15 minutes: No penalty
- From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty
- More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.5. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.6. General Enquiries

For course-specific questions, contact your teaching staff or Course Coordinator.

For other enquiries or to access support, please contact Student Central:

- [UniSC Student Central](#)
- [UniSC Adelaide Student Central](#)