



## History of Modern Design

### [Faculty Contact Information](#)

**Name:**

**Email:**

**Office Hour information:**

### [Course Information](#)

#### Course Description

This course examines the products of the decorative arts and applied design during the past 200 years including furniture, household objects, industrial design, fashion, graphic design, and the built environment. We look at high-end objects intended for wealthy people as well as products of a more everyday nature – all of this material belongs to the history of design.

The emphasis is not upon a particular design profession, medium, or type of object, but rather upon how these elements function in relation to political, technological, aesthetic, economic, cultural, and social contexts. Throughout the course these contextual themes help us construct explanations for design change.

The geographical focus is on Britain but its context within a global network of goods, designers, stylistic currents, and technologies is crucial, particularly when looking at design in Europe and the United States.

#### Course Goals

The course introduces key issues and approaches to understanding applied arts and design during the last 200 years by situating the products of these creative industries historically in the social, economic, technological, aesthetic, and intellectual contexts of their production, circulation, and reception. The course equips students with key skills and appropriate language to describe and analyse cultural artefacts, images, and texts in critical context.

#### Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Develop knowledge of a wide range of objects, including some buildings, designed in Britain from the Industrial Revolution to the present day.
2. Interpret a wide range of objects within the socio/historical conditions in which they were produced and assess the work of designers.
3. Assess the themes, issues, and debates within the study of British design.

## Course Assignments, Grading, and Assessment

| Assignment                           | Percentage | Grading Requirements         |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
| Attendance and Participation         | 20%        |                              |
| Object Analysis Report               | 30%        | Please see rubric on MyStudy |
| Design in London: Group Presentation | 20%        | Please see rubric on MyStudy |
| Design Change Essay                  | 30%        | Please see rubric on MyStudy |

### Brief Assessment Overview

#### Assessment 1: Object Analysis Report (8-10 minutes/1,500 words)

##### Due:

Choose an object that can either be something that we have seen so far on a gallery or museum visit or one that is more unusual. You are asked to answer the question:

‘How does this object exemplify the significance of design in its time and place?’

You are asked to do this through an audio-visual format that allows you to analyze this object in three dimensions, for example, a filmed commentary within a gallery or museum (8-10 minutes). You may instead respond through a written report (1,500 words) if you prefer.

In order to answer this question effectively, you will need to consider your object from three angles, answering the following questions:

1. Social and historical context:

What is it? When was it made? Who made it? Why did they make it? Was it made out of innovative materials for its time? How did it change its environment? How did it make people's lives easier/more difficult? What is its historical significance?

2. The historiography (existing writing) about and around objects of its type:

Who has written about this object, or similar objects before? When was it written about and are these dates significant in a study of the object? If it hasn't been written about, why might that be?

3. Its significance in theory, if any.

(This is the most abstract type of analysis and therefore the most difficult. If you can apply theory to your object, then this will deepen our understanding of its historical context.)

Is there a theory in existence that can help you with an understanding of this object? Apply it. For example: If your object is made in the West in the mid-20th century, it is likely that modernism can be applied to it. If it is made after the mid-1960s you may find it beneficial to analyse it through the lens of postmodernism. If it has something to do with womanhood, feminism can be applied etc. You will need to identify a theory and then find appropriate texts to read and apply to your object.

## Assessment 2: Design in London: Group Presentation

### Due:

Select and discuss an object or design feature (a building, a domestic interior, an everyday object, a feature of the urban infrastructure, etc.) which you have viewed in London, and which you consider to be representative of one of the design movements or historical periods we study on the course. Using images/slides, show how you classify its key traits, and how they enable us to categorize this object or design feature as representative of a movement or period. Consider what the reasons for its design might have been (the social, technological, and aesthetic environment; what was happening in London, Britain, and the wider world at the time of its manufacture of construction; etc.).

## Assessment 3: Design Change Essay (1,500 words)

### Due:

The consideration of design change forces us to consider social, economic, and political changes in history and how those changes affect everyday life, right down to the designed objects that people use.

This 1,500-word essay requires you to either take one TYPE OF OBJECT, considering changes that have occurred to it over time, or consider one SPECIFIC OBJECT as you did with your Object Analysis Essay, but focus on the changes that occurred to that one object over time. An example of the first method could be the streamlining of cars in the mid-20th century, and an example of the second could be the modifications made to buildings in London such as Leighton House, Michelin House, or the Museum of the Home.

You need to consider why these changes occurred: How far did government policy inform design change? Were these types of changes unique to Britain or international – can you find international case studies to compare to your example? What were the lasting legacies of these design changes? What did these changes say about the changing values of the society that created them? (This is where theory comes in).

## Grading

Alternative formats of the FIE Grading Rubric are available in the Student Resources area of MyStudy@FIE.

|                     | <b>Relevance</b><br><br>Questions are interpreted correctly;<br><br>Argument/thesis is clear and developed throughout;<br><br>Discussion is focused on topic of the questions;<br><br>Irrelevant content and discussion are not included | <b>Knowledge and Understanding</b><br><br>Recommended literature and/or research guidelines are used and interpreted appropriately;<br><br>Selection and use of evidence shows understanding and insight;<br><br>There is evidence of study beyond the recommended literature and that introduced in the module | <b>Analysis, Critical Thinking and Integration of Experiential Learning</b><br><br>Approach shows evidence of analysis and independent reasoning;<br><br>Originality in argument;<br><br>Evidence of critical insight and reasoned questioning of assumptions;<br><br>Integration of connections and experiences outside of the formal classroom | <b>Scholarship and Style</b><br><br>Conclusions are well justified and complete;<br><br>Facts reported and statements made are accurate;<br><br>Writing is clear and fluent;<br><br>All sources are appropriate, accurately acknowledged and formatted in recognised style;<br><br>All work is the student's own |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A</b><br>93-100% | Totally appropriate interpretation and relevant;<br><br>Excellent and thorough thesis development                                                                                                                                        | Comprehensive understanding and mastery of core evidence and extensive wider reading                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Excellent analytical skills, outstanding evaluation of evidence, independent and original critical insight;<br><br>Meaningfully integrates experiential learning where appropriate                                                                                                                                                               | Exceptional fluency and accurate writing using appropriate language, conclusions are well-justified;<br><br>Accurate and thorough referencing                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>A-</b><br>90-92% | Almost wholly appropriate interpretation and relevant;<br><br>Very strong thesis                                                                                                                                                         | Very strong understanding of evidence and clear evidence of appropriate wider reading                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Well-developed analytical skills, excellent evaluation of evidence, shows strong critical insight;<br><br>Effectively integrates experiential learning where appropriate                                                                                                                                                                         | Almost wholly accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language, conclusions are full and justified;<br><br>Accurate referencing                                                                                                                                                                            |

|                     |                                                                                           |                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>B+</b><br>87-89% | Appropriate interpretation and relevant;<br><br>Good thesis throughout                    | Strong understanding of evidence and appropriate wider reading    | Very good analytical skills, strong evaluation of evidence;<br><br>Shows critical insight;<br><br>Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives | Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; conclusions are justified;<br><br>Accurate referencing                                         |
| <b>B</b><br>83-86%  | Largely appropriate interpretation and relevant;<br><br>Thesis is clear                   | Good understanding of evidence and some appropriate wider reading | Good analytical skills, good evaluation of evidence;<br><br>Shows critical insight;<br><br>Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives        | Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language;<br><br>Conclusions are justified;<br><br>Accurate referencing                                  |
| <b>B-</b><br>80-82% | Mostly appropriate interpretation and relevant;<br><br>Thesis is underdeveloped but clear | Sound understanding of evidence and some wider reading            | Sound analytical skills;<br><br>Sound evaluation of data;<br><br>Shows some critical judgement identifies experiential connections                                       | Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language;<br><br>Conclusions are coherent;<br><br>Sound use of referencing conventions |
| <b>C+</b><br>77-79% | Some appropriate interpretation and relevant;                                             | Evidence is largely understood and some wider reading             | Sometimes inconsistent analytical skills;<br><br>Some evaluation of data;                                                                                                | Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language;                                                                              |

|                     |                                                                                            |                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                     | Thesis is underdeveloped and lacks clarity                                                 |                                                                                             | Shows some critical judgement though often descriptive;<br><br>Identifies experiential connections                                                                    | Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported;<br><br>Sound use of referencing conventions                                                                                         |
| <b>C</b><br>73-76%  | May contain some misinterpretation and/or irrelevant material;<br><br>Thesis lacks clarity | Evidence is largely understood;<br><br>Limited reading beyond material introduced in module | Mostly inconsistent analytical skills;<br><br>Some evaluation of data;<br><br>Scant critical judgement mostly descriptive;<br><br>Identifies experiential connections | Some level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language;<br><br>Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported;<br><br>Sound use of referencing conventions |
| <b>C-</b><br>70-72% | Limited interpretation and relevance;<br><br>Thesis is inconsistent                        | Weak understanding of evidence;<br><br>Limited reading beyond material introduced in module | Mostly inconsistent analytical skills;<br><br>Some evaluation of data;<br><br>Lacks critical judgement;<br><br>Little integration experiential learning               | Inconsistent written fluency;<br><br>Weak use of appropriate language;<br><br>Weak justification for conclusions;<br><br>Adequate use of referencing conventions                      |
| <b>D</b><br>60-69%  | Limited interpretation and relevance;<br><br>Lacks thesis                                  | Weak understanding of evidence and limited, inappropriate wider reading                     | Inconsistent and weak analytical skills, poor evaluation of evidence, lacks critical insight;<br><br>Little integration of experiential learning                      | Inconsistent written fluency;<br><br>No justification for conclusions;<br><br>Inaccurate use of referencing                                                                           |
| <b>F</b>            | Significant misinterpretation                                                              | Lacks understanding of evidence and                                                         | Lacks analytical skills, lacks                                                                                                                                        | Poorly written with little fluency;                                                                                                                                                   |

|       |                         |                                   |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                     |
|-------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0-59% | and irrelevant material | inappropriate or no wider reading | evaluation of evidence, lacks critical judgement;<br><br>Lacks integration of experiential learning | No justification for conclusions;<br><br>Poor referencing;<br><br>Evidence of plagiarism or inappropriate use of AI |
|-------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Policies specific to this course

- **Co-curricular Activities and Field Trips:** Field trips for your FIE courses have been planned to help students achieve the learning objectives of the course and are required. They take place during class time unless otherwise noted. Details about required visits appear on the class by class schedule below. Please note that any make up for missed co-curricular activities are at the personal expense of the student.
- **Late submission of work:** Written work may be submitted later than the due date only with express permission in advance of the due date from the course instructor. Late work will receive a 5% reduction in points for each 24-hour period handed in past the deadline, including each weekend day. Work submitted a week late will be marked at a C or lower. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be requested in writing to the faculty and include any information on the circumstances that require the extension, the nature of work yet to be submitted, and the date by which the work will be received. If said work is not received by the agreed extension date, barring further exceptional circumstances, the work will not be given credit.
- **Late arrivals to class or site visit:** Please arrive on time. Lateness, particularly on days with co-curricular visits, results in missed course material. Faculty may use their discretion to mark a student as 'Absent' if they feel the student has arrived too late or left too early to be considered 'Present' for that session.

### Attendance and Participation

- Regular attendance is essential in order to pass a course. A class constitutes lectures, student presentations, discussions, seminars, co-curricular activities, tests, and examinations. In addition, under UK Home Office regulations class attendance is mandatory.
- Class attendance and participation is formally recorded and incorporated into a student's final grade.
- In addition to physical presence in class, a student's participation in a class is evaluated on the mastery of assigned course readings as reflected in a consistent, valid contribution to class discussions, in-class exercises, and in asking questions that enrich the on-going discourse. Consistency and validity in participation is expected in every class. Limited participation will have a negative impact on a student's participation score.

- When unexpected events cause students to miss a class, it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the faculty member to notify them in advance, or as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Absence from class does not relieve a student of responsibility for assignments. Students bear the ultimate responsibility for all missed class material and assessment.
- If a student misses 25% or more of a course, then they may be awarded a failure for the course and/or not permitted to finish the course.
- [See the full attendance policy here](#)

## Required Readings

Weekly course readings will be provided via MyStudy.

Appadurai, A., (ed), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

Forty, Adrian, *Objects of Desire* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), Ch.3 'Design and Mechanisation'

Frankel, Nicholas, 'William Morris and the "Moral Qualities" of Ornament', *Socialist Studies* 13 (1) Spring 2018.

Greenhalgh, Paul, 'Introduction' in Greenhalgh (ed), *Modernism in Design* (London: Reaktion Books, 1990) pp.1-35

Hine, T., *Populuxe*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf; 1987)

Loos, A., 'Ornament and Crime' (1908), in A. Loos, *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, trans. Michael Mitchell, Riverside, CA: Fuiadne Press, 1998, pp. 167-76

Meikle, J.L., *American Plastic: A Cultural History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), pp. 264-76

Morris, William, Lecture III: 'On Designing for Woven Textiles' from *Some Hints on Pattern-Designing* (1881)

Raizman, D., *History of Modern Design*. (2nd Ed.). (Pearson Prentice Hall, 2010)

Ruskin, John, 'The Nature of Gothic' from *The Stones of Venice* (1851)

Sarah Cheang, 'Selling China: Class, Gender and Orientalism at the Department Store', *Journal of Design History*, 20:1, 1-16

Snodin, M., & Styles, J., *Design and the Decorative Arts: Britain 1500-1900* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 2001)

Venturi, R., Scott Brown, D. and Izenour, S., *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977)

Walter Hamilton, *The Aesthetic Movement in England* (1882)



## Additional Resources and Readings

See MyStudy.

## MyStudy@FIE

MyStudy@FIE is FIE's virtual learning environment based on the open-source platform Moodle. Students are required to access MyStudy@FIE for course information, readings, link to resources, assignment submissions and communication with faculty.

## FIE's Values in the Curriculum

A unique aspect to FIE's curriculum is our courses reflect an engagement with values of 1) knowledge and inclusivity, 2) ethics and human rights, 3) social and cultural engagement, and 4) sustainability. For information about each of these values and how each of FIE's courses aligns with them, please see [Our Values](#).

## Topics

- **Contexts of Design:** The Palladian style and the influence of Classical design in Britain
- **The Industrial Revolution and the social and economic background of the 19<sup>th</sup> century:** the urban transformation of London and its challenges
- **A. W. N. Pugin and the Gothic Revival:** the social role of design; the question of beauty versus utility; traces of the neo-gothic design and architecture in London
- **The Great Exhibition and the beginnings of design reform:** government and 'design politics'; the British Empire and ideas of progress; purposes of the Great Exhibition.
- **The Aesthetic Movement:** art for art's sake; the Pre-Raphaelites Oscar Wilde and the late Victorian aesthetes; Christopher Dresser and the Anglo-Japanese style
- **The Arts & Crafts Movement:** criticism of the social effects of industrialisation in Britain from John Ruskin and William Morris; design reform as a response to modernity; craft production; urban vs. rural; the Arts & Crafts Movement in Britain and the USA.
- **Art Nouveau and Art Deco:** Social context in Europe and the USA and the impact of the wars; sources of inspiration for Art Nouveau and Art Deco and their traces in Paris and London;
- **Modernism:** design for the modern age: Ford, mass production, industry, streamlining, utopianism; Bauhaus: key architecture and design in Europe; Modernism's appropriation in Britain and the USA; the development of design in the underground network.
- **Post World War II (1945 – 1970):** Social context post WWII and rise of the middle class; shift from military to civilian production; Cold War tensions: hi-tech, nuclear threat, the Space Race: manifestations in design; new technologies, new materials; mass culture, mass consumption, mass media.
- **Postmodernism:** Modernism vs. Postmodernism; 'Good design' vs. 'popular design' in the 40s / 50s; Postmodern architecture and design in the 80s; dystopian visions and materials
- **Subculture and the meaning of style:** understanding subcultures; the evolution of London fashion subcultures; music, subcultures, and postmodern imagery

- **Traces of design history in contemporary objects:** how can debates on form versus function inform our understanding of 21<sup>st</sup>-century objects? The influence of Dieter Rams and his principles of design
- **Contemporary debates over creation and appropriation:** the rise of AI and its influence in design

### Possible co-curricular activities

- Visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum (architecture and Pugin, Morris, Dresser)
- Visit to Tate Britain (morality in Victorian art)
- Visit to Leighton House and Sambourne House, Kensington (The artist as public figure; 19<sup>th</sup>-century London architecture)
- Visit to the Museum of the Home (the Jeffries Museum and almshouses; English interiors through the ages)
- *Art Nouveau/Art Déco* architectural walk (meeting at Michelin House, London)
- Visit to Design Museum (the evolution of design, the infrastructure of London)
- Visit to Museum of Brands, Ladbroke Grove (the evolution of the building; mass-produced objects in the Time Tunnel)

### Academic Integrity

By enrolling at FIE, you have joined an academic community and you are expected and required to act honestly regarding the work you submit for assessment in your courses. Academic integrity is closely related to the concept of good academic practice.

Any attempts to Cheat; Fabricate; Plagiarise; Collaborate without Authorisation; Participate in Academically Dishonest Activities; and/or Facilitate Academic Dishonesty will be viewed as a breach of this regulation.

[Please see FIE's Academic Integrity Policy in full.](#)

Most students do not have any problems understanding the rules and expectations about acting honestly at university. If you have any questions you must talk to your faculty or a member of FIE's Academic Team.

### Writing and Language Support

FIE's Writing Support Tutors are available to assist students of all levels of expertise with all phases of the writing process. Available year-round and to all students. To book an appointment or for more information visit [www.fie.org.uk/wst](http://www.fie.org.uk/wst).

Please note that FIE allows the use of a foreign language/English dictionary in exam situations for students where English is not their primary language UNLESS the use of the dictionary would give the student a significant advantage (e.g. where the exam is aimed at getting the students to define terms that might be found in the dictionary).

## Accommodations for Students

Students who wish to use academic accommodations at FIE can register to do so via FIE's Administration Team, by providing the appropriate supporting documentation. Students who have approved FIE academic accommodations should discuss them directly with their faculty member(s) within or around the first few class sessions, or via email. Exams are facilitated by FIE faculty and students should give 2 weeks' notice to faculty members if use of approved exam accommodations is required. The Administration team can assist students and faculty with liaison and facilitation as needed. If you have further questions or need further support, please go to the front office of Foundation House or contact [admin@fie.org.uk](mailto:admin@fie.org.uk) and the member of the team designated to support accessibility will be able to help you.

## Additional Policies and Resources

### Mental Health and Stress Management Support

FIE offers mental health support. If students wish to seek this support, including with FIE's counselor, simply email [studentlife@fie.org.uk](mailto:studentlife@fie.org.uk). If you have a counselor from back home that you are seeing, we strongly encourage you to maintain contact with them throughout your time studying abroad with FIE.

### Diversity and Inclusivity

FIE regards its housing and classroom facilities as safe spaces to live, study, and work with students, faculty, and staff who are understanding, supportive, and trustworthy. Inappropriate, derogatory comments and/or actions, harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination are not tolerated. Any such behaviour will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. Students must be respectful of diverse opinions and of all class members regardless of personal attribute and use inclusive language in written and oral work.