Syllabus

Course Description

Course Title	Information Design & Visual Storytelling
Course Code	96108
Course Title Additional	
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	ICAR/13
Language	English
Degree Course	Master in Eco-Social Design
Other Degree Courses (Loaned)	LM-65 Critical Creative Practices - 2025
Lecturers	Dott. Alessia Musio, Alessia.Musio@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/design-art/academic-staff/person/49190
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	First semester
Course Year/s	1st or 2nd
CP	6
Teaching Hours	60
Lab Hours	0
Individual Study Hours	about 90
Planned Office Hours	9
Contents Summary	Based on their interests and focus, students select courses in areas Observe, Analyse & Apply and Make & Intervene, to which the course in Information Design & Visual Storytelling belongs. The course teaches methods and techniques of Information Design and visual storytelling with particular attention to the social, political and/or environmental topics. It tackles creative ways how to use information design and storytelling to foster positive eco-social change. Students are supported in the practical development of their projects and their practices in eco-social design.

Course Topics	In a world heavily driven by the production and consumption of information, being able to read and represent it has become extremely critical and undeniably important. The Information Design and Visual Storytelling course aims to provide students with the theoretical background - and the opportunity to practice it - necessary to develop visualization projects in their entirety. The first part of the course will consist of lectures interspersed with small exercises to make students familiarize with the disciplines of information design and visual storytelling. We will work together to understand the basic principles of the discipline and how to apply them in real projects. There will be various moments for presenting exercises and class discussions: the goal is to exercise critical thinking and expand knowledge of new design practices. The second part of the course, on the other hand, will be more inspirational in nature. We will discuss some current best cases, which will guide us in the development of group projects focused on representing complex phenomena. The last part of the course will be focused on reviewing the student's works. Before each review, there will be a dedicated session for practical tutoring on data visualization tools, educational moments that can help students materialize their design thinking.
Keywords	Information Design, Visual Storytelling, Data Visualization, Dataviz, Critical Thinking
Recommended Prerequisites	While prior experience with graphic design tools such as Figma or Adobe Illustrator can be helpful, it is not required, as much of the work will be developed collaboratively in groups. The most important prerequisite is a genuine curiosity and enthusiasm for exploring the field of data visualization.
Propaedeutic Courses	none
Teaching Format	Theoretical lessons interspersed with individual exercises at the beginning of the course, followed by more inspirational lessons interspersed with reviews of the final group project and practical tutorials on some data visualization tools.
Mandatory Attendance	strongly recommended

Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes	Knowledge and understanding Students will have developed their own individual project practice and will be able to: - develop creative solutions and processes - making complex problems tangible through design, visualization and storytelling Applying knowledge and understanding Students will be able to: - make tangible ideas, reports and projects, such as sketches, visualizations, mock-ups, models, prototypes, interventions and prototype events Making judgements Students will be able to: - judging independently and critically concepts and drafts Communication skills Students will be able to: - communicate convincingly in different ways and with different audiences - present projects convincingly Learning skills Students will be able to: - working independently to learn according to different situations and in a personal way through experimentation and planning - working independently to learn according to different situations and in a personal way through the development of prototypes, models, mock-ups and the feedback they provide
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes (additional info.)	Students will be able to: - Familiarize with influential figures in the field of information design. - Apply basic principles of data visualization, consciously choosing how to use variables and visual models. - Develop critical thinking skills regarding existing cases in the fields of information design and visual storytelling. - Navigate online resources to gather information for their projects. - Define target audiences and the necessary output type to reach that audience.

	- Prototype their projects in various forms (digital, print, physical, etc.). - Consistently use key data visualization tools in line with their design intentions. - Conceptualize and develop an Information Design project in its entirety. Knowledge will be acquired in the following fields: - Information design, data visualization, and visual storytelling.
Assessment	Attending students will be evaluated on: - Individual exercises. - Final group project, including an A3 data-driven poster presenting the chosen topic, a physicalization project, an oral presentation of the outputs (poster + physicalization), the portfolio page on the official UNIBZ website. Non-attending students will be required to: - Complete the individual exercises. - Prepare individually an A3 data-driven poster presenting the chosen topic (agreed with the lecturer), deliver an oral presentation of the poster during the exam session.
Evaluation Criteria	For the projects: - Originality/Innovation, coherence and technical/aesthetic qualities of the design project, in relation to the context and the aims of the project; in particular, related to the use of media, aspects of the visualization and usability. For the presentation: - Effectiveness and clarity in communicating the project in a convincing way For the process during the whole semester: - Active participation, quality of contributions and individual development - Ability to work individually and in a team
Required Readings	Lachenmeier, N., Hil, D.: Visualizing Complexity. Modular Information Design Handbook; Birkhäuser, 2022 Cairo, A.: How Charts Lie; Norton, 2019

Supplementary Readings	Cairo, A.: The Functional Art. An Introduction to Information Graphics and Visualization; New Riders, 2012 Wiedemann, J., Rendgen, S.: Information Graphics; TASCHEN, 2012 Klanten R., Ehmann, S., Schulze, F.: Visual Storytelling: Inspiring a New Visual Language; Gestalten, 2011
Further Information	All lecture slides will be made available and easily accessible through a dedicated Notion page, which will be shared with students at the beginning of the course. The Notion page will also include links to all the tools and resources we will use throughout the semester, ensuring that students have a centralized hub for study materials and references.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Quality education, Partnerships fot the goals, Industry, innovation and infrastructure