BA Concept Seminar 2025

Structure

Lecturers: Dr. Joëlle Bitton
Prof. Jürgen Späth
Mag. Dipl. Des. Nicole Foelsterl

Office hours by appointment

- The module takes place over 2 weeks, from **06.01.24 to 17.01.24**, from Monday to Friday, 9.00-17.00 - see intranet for room details.
- Class sessions include lectures, discussions, mentoring sessions, in-class exercises, assignments, and independent study blocks.
- Projects are conducted individually or with a team of two students at most.

(1) Overview and Objectives

The **BA concept seminar** is considered a way to quickly prototype and showcase the thesis project in a **video narrative**. Students will develop a **conceptual and practical exploration** for their final BA thesis and present the experience they aim to create in the form of:

- A **3-page project description**
- A **prototype/mock-up** showing the core aspects of the interactive experience
- A **video showcasing the prototype in use**

A blog documenting the **2-weeks progress is recommended**.

The concept seminar addresses notions in preparation for the final thesis work:

- What does it mean to make a statement and a contribution to the field of interaction design?
- How to identify the design, social, and experiential opportunities within the topic of interest?
- How to define a space of potential design explorations?
- How to narrow down the topic following personal positioning, approach, and interests?
- How to present the desired embodied experience that the BA thesis should engender?

(2) Course Outline

The **2 weeks** are divided into **two parts**:

1. An **investigative week** with quick exercises, iterations, field studies, and achieving a first initial prototype.
2. A **second week** where students continue the process and summarize their **BA idea and related experience in a video**.

See below for a detailed **calendar**.

(3) Expectations and Grading

Grades will be based on **class participation and final works**.

- Contributing to constructive **group feedback** is an essential aspect of class participation.
- **Regular attendance (80%) is required**. Two or more unexcused absences will affect the final grade. Arriving late on more than one occasion will also affect the grade.

Grading Breakdown:

- **Storytelling (video)** – 30%
- **Mock-up** – 30%
- **Project Description** – 20%
- **Exercises & Class Participation** – 20%

Any assignment that remains unfulfilled receives a **failing grade**.

(5) Deliverables

- **Storytelling**
  1. The experience should be presented in a **video format** with a narrative, showcasing the prototype and user's journey.
  2. (Go into the field if needed for your project.)
- **Prototype/Mock-up**
  1. The mock-up or prototype is the **manifestation of ideas** into a service, product, method, or user experience.
  2. Use basic or advanced materials to showcase ideas in the shape of a **rapid prototype**.
  3. The prototype should be **functional** so it can be experienced when exhibited.
- **Project Description Update**
  1. A **2-3-page text** answering the following:
     - What is the **context, topic, problem**?
     - Who are the **audience/participants**?
     - Who will be impacted by your design (**people/animals/plants, locations, systems, infrastructures, ecologies**)?
     - What do you want to **create** and **how should it work**?
     - What **values and potential** do you want to address/generate?

The essay expands the **thesis disposition** with observations and conclusions drawn from the **two-week BA concept seminar**. Sources and bibliography can be used (**classified by genre**: book, book chapter, journal article, conference article, academic thesis, newspaper article, web article, etc.).

Important Dates

- **Mock-up to be presented:** 10.1
- **Choice of mentor teams to be sent to Johannes via email:** by Monday **13.1, 17:00**

- **Storytelling to be presented:** 17.1
- **Final Deliverables to be uploaded on the server:** by Monday **20.1 at 9:00**

Calendar

See description of exercises below.

Miro Board: link.zhdk.ch/baconcept25

Exercises

Exercise 1: 20 Ways of Description Write down and/or sketch **20 ways to define your thesis project** on post-its and later sort them into categories. **Define two or three most important statements**.

Exercise 2: Topic Mapping Define **all qualities, parameters, and values** important for your thesis and ambition as a designer. Find the **most relevant existing projects** that match your criteria. Use **sketches, photos, or collages** to present projects on your wall. This mapping will continue & evolve throughout the seminar.

Exercise 3: Observation / Field Inquiry Find out through **quick observation and field inquiry** some elements that could inspire your project direction. (*It could also be in the form of bodystorming, auto-ethnography, role-playing...*) Post **photos & findings** on the **Miro Board**.

Exercise 4: Design Exploration Area (50 Sketches of Design) Identify **two or three most important dimensions** of your **topic mapping**.

1. This will be your **“design exploration area”**
2. Showcase **relevant aspects** to explore further
3. Define **how to apply criteria** to your design process & outcome
4. Sketch quickly **50 ideas** to populate your design area
5. Place them on your **design area** in relation to **criteria and parameters** (sketches, photos, or collages).

Exercise 5: Develop 2-3 “How Might We” Questions Develop two to three **“How Might We” Questions** See: NNGroup - How Might We Questions

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Let me know if you need any modifications!

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