

# DESN 1003 DESIGN HISTORIES AND FUTURES

**Credit Points** 10

**Legacy Code** 102262

**Coordinator** Karena De Perthuis ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Karena De Perthuis/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Karena%20De%20Perthuis/))

**Description** This subject introduces students to historical accounts and theories of design from the dominant perspective of Modernism in the first half of the 20th century, through post-war consumerism and the ensuing movements of the 20th century, such as Postmodernism, Punk and New Wave; design reactions to corporate culture, design for change and activism; and the digital design enablers of the 21st century. Students learn a contextual history of 20th century design practice by studying the doctrines around which the modernist movement cohered, and the conditions under which these doctrines are challenged by later movements. The subject explores various roles of the visual designer through history-avant-garde, futurist, revolutionary, utopian design; client-service design; social activism, producer and digital enabler. These roles are expressed across a range of design outcomes such as photography, typography, illustration, print media, graphics, digital design, film and animation. Part of this exploration will examine the impacts of design histories on our past, present and future conditions, as well as changing the future for design. Students will complete visual and writing tasks that aim to build their understanding of design histories and futures, and scholarship in academic research and writing.

**School** Humanities & Comm Arts

**Discipline** Graphic Design Studies

**Student Contribution Band** HECS Band 2 10cp

Check your fees via the Fees ([https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current\\_students/fees/](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/fees/)) page.

**Level** Undergraduate Level 1 subject

**Equivalent Subjects** DESN 1001 - 20th Century Design Histories  
DESN 1004 - Design Histories and Futures (WSTC)

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this subject, students should be able to:

1. Identify and analyse examples of design as part of historical contexts of visual practice/experimentation, ideas, social and/or cultural events.
2. Explain influential cultural themes, theories and doctrines that inform the design histories considered with reference to primary and secondary literature about exemplary design approaches.
3. Evaluate the contributions of select designers to these movements and periods of design practice by analysing examples, professional/cultural roles and relevant literature, and by making thinking visible through a design outcome.
4. Demonstrate understanding of the impact of design on contemporary society and the sustainability of the future.
5. Demonstrate research and English language literacy for critical thinking and writing about design history and scholarship

## Subject Content

1. Introduction to Design Histories & Futures: Modernism in design: The experience of industrial urbanism and cultural responses to modernity
2. Experimental graphic design, Futurism and the European modernist avant-garde
3. Constructivism, utopianism and the revolutionary role of the designer in the Soviet transformation
4. The Bauhaus: Modernist principles and model of design education
5. New Typography, the International Style of modernism and assimilation into US advertising and visual identity systems.
6. Disturbances: Postmodernism, New Wave and Punk Graphics
7. Writing an Essay: Assessment 2b: Case-Study (essay) on design movement
8. Revolution: Change agendas of the designer as activist and critical thinker
9. The role of the designer in the 21st century and digital design enablers of networked communication
10. Imagining the future 1: design's speculations about future life and 'social dreaming'.
11. Imagining the future 2: sustainable futures and 'futuring'.

## Assessment

The following table summarises the standard assessment tasks for this subject. Please note this is a guide only. Assessment tasks are regularly updated, where there is a difference your Learning Guide takes precedence.

Type	Length	Percent	Threshold	Individual/ Group Task	Mandatory
Short Answer	1,000 words	20	N	Individual	Y
Essay	Visual design and 1,500 word essay	40	N	Individual	Y
Applied Project	Visual work plus 500 word narrative	30	N	Individual	Y
Participation	12 weeks	10	N	Individual	Y

Prescribed Texts

- Meggs, P.B. and Purvis, A. W. (2016). Meggs' history of graphic design. (6th ed.). New Jersey, John Wiley & Sons.

Teaching Periods

## Autumn (2025)

**Parramatta - Victoria Rd**

**On-site**

**Subject Contact** Alison Gill ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Alison Gill/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Alison%20Gill/))

View timetable ([https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject\\_code=DESN1003\\_25-AUT\\_PS\\_1#subjects](https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=DESN1003_25-AUT_PS_1#subjects))