Course Title: Design Execution: Bringing Ideas to Life  
Course Code: DSN 102  
Instructors: Peter Macdonald & Annie Valdes

Course Summary:  
Each class will include some hands-on and/or group activities and discussions.  
*Please see course page for full description and additional details.

Grade Options and Requirements:  
- No Grade Requested (NGR)  
  o Students should participate actively in in-class activities including discussions,  
    small group collaborative exercises, and generally be willing to try new things  
    they may not think they’re good at. Optional activities will be suggested to  
    reinforce in-class activities. They will be designed to be completed in less  
    than an hour per week.  
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)  
  o Students must keep a design sketchbook of their notes, ideas, sketches, and  
    thinking to submit at the end of the final class. It will be possible to complete  
    the logbook almost entirely during class time.  
  o Students must also attend at least 7 of 9 class sessions in order to earn credit.  
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)  
  o Students must submit a design sketchbook as described above and submit a 2  
    to 3 page description of how they would approach a design challenge of their  
    choosing given the methods learned in this course.  
  o Alternate: Select a design challenge and follow the steps we followed in the  
    class to create a designed solution. Capture every step in the process in your  
    sketchbook or in other appropriate media. Use the 2 or 3 pages to describe  
    the process and key learnings and decisions.  
  o Students must also attend at least 6 of 9 class sessions in order to earn credit.  
    Those who miss more than two class sessions will receive a full letter grade  
    reduction.

*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.
Tentative Weekly Outline:

Week 1
Introduction to Design Methodology

What are the core methodologies designers use to create and develop ideas?
We’ll talk about the process that designers use to create designed solutions and how that process has been applied to problems and opportunities outside the realm of what traditional designers do - what is now being called design thinking.

Week 2
Design Research - Mindset and Methods

How do you engage people to learn from them and about them?
In order to create a unique and appropriate design solution, designers need to immerse themselves in the context - existing solutions, people’s needs and current behaviors, and the resources available to create and deliver solutions to those needs. The goal is gaining inspiration and developing an intuition to inform design, not gathering data.

Week 3
Design Research - Observations and Planning

What do we hope to learn by engaging people in our design process? And what’s the best way to learn from them?
Great insights come from real people, but they don’t come by accident. From choosing the methods that will shape what is learned, to designing and managing the conversation, thoughtful planning of observation activities sets designers up to uncover valuable insights.

Week 4
Design Research - Insights and Synthesis

How do you extract meaning from observations? How do you take what you’ve learned from user observations and transform it into tools to motivate and refine design concepts?
After observing and engaging people in context, a designer needs to extract what has been seen, and not seen. What is the reality of people’s experience? What do people have in common, and how do they differ? What are their latent needs? Abstracting from the
insights extracted from observations, the designer can create frameworks to organize their thinking, identify opportunities, and define the characteristics of a successful design. The result is a point of view that informs the subsequent design process.

Week 5
Concept Generation

How can you generate a lot of relevant ideas and choose which to develop?
Designers need to generate many, many creative ideas. Every designer has their own preferred techniques or practices. We’ll talk about and practice some ways to tap your creative mind.

Week 6
Visualizing Ideas - Sketching

How can you capture concepts with simple illustrations?
Having ideas is great, but capturing them, communicating them, and developing them requires putting them in a form to help you start to shape and refine them.

Week 7
Visualizing Ideas - Quick Prototyping

How can you quickly bring concepts into three or even four dimensions?
If a picture is worth a thousand words, a prototype is worth a thousand pictures when it comes to developing your ideas. To really test and deeply consider ideas as they develop into richer concepts, designers make prototypes in many forms.

Week 8
Visualizing Ideas - Storytelling

How can you create a compelling story that illustrates a concept in context and helps test that concept?
If designers begin the design process by learning about the context for their design, a great way to test their design concepts is to put them back into context. Embedding a design concept in a narrative makes it come to life, or exposes its warts and gaps. Humans are very good at understanding context in the form of stories - knowing what makes sense, what feels right, and what is awkward or unnatural.
Week 9
Gathering Feedback

How can you gather constructive and meaningful feedback on concepts?
When designers have captured ideas they believe have potential, it’s time to show them to others to find out what they think. Does it make sense? Does it have value? How can it be better?