

COURSE # ID 310**Furniture Design****Instructor: Michael Colgan**

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Outline:

Furniture is a demonstration of culture, it is Art. Furniture represents technology, mirroring the ascent and progress of humanity and marking history and fashion. Owned and appreciated by emperors and commoners alike, it is the ordinary people who keep the multi-billion dollar furniture business 'in business'. Furniture has been comprehensively studied by Art Historians, although seldom designed by them. Design work is performed by craftsmen, artisans, interior and industrial designers and by architects.

It is entirely possible that more furniture has been designed and built in the 20th Century than in all other centuries combined, yet few up-to-date academic texts exist to mark this major modern development. Fortunately, enlightened designers and members of the public are acutely aware of the need for current, comfortable, well designed furniture and the business of furniture design and manufacturing has expanded despite the dearth of current academic literature. Academic classes sometimes place little emphasis on an understanding of the creation and design of furniture, preferring to follow and record the historical data. This approach could eventually leave the furniture industry lacking in imaginative, forward looking design graduates, with a good understanding of the craft and technology of furniture design, a broad perspective on furniture history, and a practical appreciation of anthropometric & ergonomic requirements. Despite the vast selection and the huge number of manufacturers in the multi-billion dollar furniture industry, it is still no easy task for interior designers to find comfortable, quality, upholstered furniture and practical, attractive casegoods. As a result, designers often need to design and specify furniture themselves and take the risks of blazing new paths in their stride.

Designers must Design:

Designers are frequently required to design and commission furniture for their own projects. This course will help students develop an appreciation of and develop a respect for furniture design and manufacture. It should also help prepare students to confidently design and specify furniture.

Intent:

The intent of this class is to examine theory and practice of furniture design as well as studying the materials and construction techniques used for furniture manufacturing. Craft methods, and artistic approaches to custom and mass production techniques will be examined and some historical development of furniture will be explored. The class provides information for an understanding of furniture design and manufacturing techniques and should assist students to develop an appreciation of the important contribution interior designers can make to the furniture industry.

Structure:

The class will comprise a mixture of lectures, discussions, class study and project work relating to furniture design and history. Class hours will be devoted to lectures, private study, group discussion and criticism and project preparation; homework will comprise background reading, current (web & magazine) and historical (books & document) research and preparation for class presentations and coursework.

Professional development:

Satisfactory completion of this class should give students an understanding of the rewards and complexities of furniture design and as a basis for further, in depth study and research.

Evaluations:

Evaluations of coursework will be project oriented and will comprise 60% of overall required grade (4X 15%); 15% by written examination; 15% research paper; 10% attendance and class participation. All parts must be taken and passed to aggregate a final passing grade. Bonus points (up to 10%) will be awarded for originality, creativity, presentation style and materials, accuracy of technological specifications and quality of research.

Learning Goals:

1. Students will develop an understanding of the role of furniture design as a discipline with direct relationships to interior design, architecture, industrial design; they will gain an appreciation of the need for interior designers to develop skills in original design, design development and specification of furniture products.
2. Students will practice and develop skills in drawing and documentation for communicating design information to furniture industry professionals, dealers, artisans, tradespeople and design clients, sufficient to accurately communicate their ideas, concepts and designs.
3. Students will gain an appreciation of science and technology relating to the growth, cutting, grading, drying and production of wood and wood products used in the furniture industry. They will also develop an appreciation of the benefits and limitations of metals and other materials used in furniture making.
4. Students will study some of the common methods of fabricating, joining and installing furniture and will develop an appreciation of furniture casework and upholstered goods and their construction. Kitchen and bathroom cabinetry, custom built-ins and modern and traditional furniture building comparisons will be addressed.
5. Students will learn to identify 10 common wood species used in furniture design and construction. They will learn to identify solid and veneered furniture, hardwoods and softwoods, specify 5 different furniture finishes and apply this knowledge to their designs.
6. Students will research 'modern era' (1860-2000) furniture styles and their implications for designers. This may include Arts & Crafts, Art Deco, Art Nouveau, Memphis, Bauhaus and others. Students will write a 2,000 word paper and give individual class presentations on their research topic.

Başık Class Outline (proposed)

Class outlines are basic guides, presented to help prepare students for reading and preparation of required assignments. Class structure & content may vary from the written text according to class makeup, external events and opportunities, etc. Students must attend class to keep current with class activities, courseworks, presentations & examinations.

week 1	Introduction to furniture design; Overview of designs & concepts	HW. Orthographics & Paralines, Project #1
week 2	Kitchen design basics I; Construction methods I, select research	HW. Design sketching; Project #1
week 3	Kitchen design basics II; Tech. I materials	HW. Reading, wood growth, cutting, drying
week 4	Upholstery basics; PRESENTATIONS, Project #1	HW. Videos (tape & demo)
week 5	Fine furniture, casegoods; Construction methods II	HW. Concepts & designs; Project #2
week 6	Built-ins & millwork; Detail design & specifications I	HW. Design development
week 7	Tech II, veneers & sheet goods: PRESENTATIONS, project #2	HW. Individual research; Project #3
week 8	Approaches to design; MIDTERM EXAM (wood technology)	HW. Reading & research; Project #3
week 9	Joints, details & hardware; Ordering, assembly & installation	HW. Assigned reading
week 10	Modern & traditional furniture; Classical & vernacular designs	HW. Architecture & Furniture design
week 11	Spring break, no classes	
week 12	Very modern furniture; PRESENTATIONS, project #3	HW. Individual research
week 13	Working with the trades; Detail design & specifications II	HW. Project work, detailing
week 14	Architectural detailing, Design development; INTERIM EXAM	HW. Projects, specifications
week 15	Form & function, space planning; Interior design specializat	HW. Projects; assigned reading
week 16	Project work; PRESENTATIONS, project #4	HW. Research & Projects
week 17	Research paper PRESENTATIONS	

Summary of required work for grading:

PRESENTATIONS: #1, (due week 4); #2, (due week 7); #3, (due week 12); #4, (due week 16).

EXAMS: Midterm (week 8); Interim exam (week14)

RESEARCH: Individual research report (due week 17)