UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Services Analysis and Planning Workshop

2526-1-F6303M007

Learning area

The Service Analysis and Design laboratory offers MAGES first year students the opportunity to learn and experience a design methodology linked to the analysis, conception, development and prototyping of a new service directly in the field.

Learning objectives

Service Design aims to identify innovative solutions that can satisfy expressed and unexpressed needs, thereby improving the experience (in terms of quality and interaction) of the users of the service. What is a service today? A hospital, a school, but also microcredit, bike-sharing, Starbucks, Spotify, Netflix and Satispay. Within the laboratory we will work on the concept of service as a procedural type of activity aimed at organizing people, infrastructures, tangible and intangible components in order to solve simple or complex problems.

Descriptor 1 – Knowledge and understanding
The workshop provides a solid theoretical foundation in service design, introducing principles and methodologies of analysis and design. Students gain an understanding of how services are structured in different contexts, acquiring tools for critical interpretation.

Descriptor 2 – Applying knowledge and understanding
Acquired knowledge is applied through group projects and field research activities. Students learn to design, develop, and prototype innovative services with a user-centered approach.

Descriptor 3 – Making judgments
The course enhances critical thinking in evaluating needs and solutions, encouraging autonomous and responsible decision-making. Students develop independence in data analysis and in assessing project feasibility.

Descriptor 4 – Communication skills

Through reports, presentations, and pitches, students strengthen their ability to communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively. Weekly reviews foster dialogue with peers, instructors, and stakeholders.

Descriptor 5 – Learning skills
The workshop promotes active and collaborative learning, combining theory, practice, and critical reflection. Students acquire a transferable method, useful for adapting to new contexts and pursuing continuous learning.

Contents

Divided into groups of 4-5 people, students will develop project proposals to promote new services linked to a specific project (which will be defined in the classroom).

Their work will develop in the following ways:

- a series of lectures (topics covered: design thinking, qualitative research and user observation, project proposal, prototyping, final presentation)
- a qualitative research in the field carried out by the students using different study techniques (shadowing, focus groups, interviews and cultural probes)
- weekly reviews and presentations in order to monitor the entire design process

Detailed program

The project path is organized into several phases, each designed to develop specific skills and to progressively lead students to a higher level of understanding and application.

Theoretical Introduction
The initial phase is dedicated to a theoretical introduction aimed at aligning students' knowledge of the fundamentals of service design. This part includes lectures on:

- Principles of Service Design: Basic concepts, history, and evolution of the field.
- Design Thinking Methodology: Processes and tools for user-centered innovation.
- Qualitative Research Techniques: Methods to understand user needs, including interviews, focus groups, and cultural probes.

Problem Analysis
In this phase, students are asked to identify and analyze specific problems within the chosen context (for example, the Bicocca context: access to information, food, mobility, culture, etc.). Activities include:

- Field Research: Students apply different techniques (shadowing, interviews, participant observation) to collect data.
- Data Analysis: Processing the data collected to identify patterns, unmet needs, and opportunities for intervention.
- Stakeholder Mapping: Identifying and analyzing the actors involved in the service system.

Solution Ideation
With a deeper understanding of the issues, students move on to the ideation phase. Activities include:

- Brainstorming: Intensive sessions to generate a wide range of ideas.
- Creative Workshops: Collaborative activities to refine ideas and develop preliminary concepts.

- Co-Design: Involving users and stakeholders in generating and validating ideas.

Service Structure Design
The generated ideas are transformed into structured projects. The main activities include:

- Service Blueprinting: Creating service blueprints to visualize all the components and interactions of the service.
- Journey Mapping: Mapping user journeys to identify touchpoints and opportunities for improving the experience.
- Process Definition: Analyzing and optimizing the operational processes required to deliver the service.

User Experience Study
This phase focuses on optimizing the user experience. Activities include:

- Prototyping: Developing low- and high-fidelity prototypes to test solutions.
- User Testing: Involving users in practical tests to collect feedback and improve prototypes.
- Scenario Analysis: Analyzing usage scenarios to anticipate different service experiences.

Idea Communication
Finally, students learn how to effectively communicate their service ideas. Activities include:

- Storytelling: Narrative techniques to present the project in an engaging way.
- Visual Communication: Creating visual materials (infographics, slides, videos) to support the presentation.
- Pitching: Preparing and practicing pitch presentations.

Final Evaluation and Discussion
At the end of the workshop, each group will present its service idea through a formal presentation, receiving feedback and an evaluation based on criteria of effectiveness, innovation, and feasibility. The final presentation will be a crucial moment to demonstrate the skills acquired and the originality of the proposed solutions.

Prerequisites

Good learning skills, writing and oral communication abilities, and basic IT competences: website navigation, PowerPoint (or other software) presentations.

Teaching methods

The lessons are delivered in person, in accordance with the provisions established by the University and current regulations, in the classrooms indicated in the course schedule and on the University website.

The workshop adopts an interactive teaching approach, alternating lectures with remote activities, mainly project reviews and laboratory work, carried out through the e-learning platform.

Assessment methods

Students can attend the course and take the exam in two different ways:

GROUP PROJECT
Course completion will be confirmed according to the following criteria:

- Project proposal: Evaluation of the concept, complexity, feasibility, and prototype.
- Research report: Quality and depth of the conducted analysis.
- Class participation: Engagement and contribution during the working sessions.
- Final presentation: Effectiveness in communicating the service idea.

Note: The evaluation will be the same for all members of the group.

INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN REPORT
Students who choose to attend the course individually must complete a written report and a PDF presentation covering in detail all the phases of the design process. This option requires extensive research, analysis, and design work on a topic chosen by the student. Detailed guidelines are as follows:

Choice of topic
Students may select a personal or professional area of interest, which may include (but is not limited to):
health services, educational services, urban mobility, digital services and online platforms, cultural and tourist experiences, environmental sustainability services, innovation in financial services.

Structure of the written report
The report must be between 50,000 and 70,000 characters (including spaces) and structured as follows:

Introduction
Description of the chosen topic and personal motivations behind the choice.
Project objectives and main research questions.
Problem analysis
Description of the current context related to the chosen topic.
Identification of the main issues through a literature review and available sources.
Mapping of the stakeholders involved and their interactions.
Qualitative research
Methodologies used for data collection (interviews, shadowing, focus groups, cultural probes, etc.).
Analysis of the collected data to identify patterns, unmet needs, and opportunities for intervention.
Discussion of the qualitative research results.
Solution ideation
Description of brainstorming sessions and creative workshops conducted to generate ideas.
Selection of the most promising ideas through predefined evaluation criteria.
Involvement of users and stakeholders in idea validation.
Service structure design
Detailing and developing all the components and interactions of the service.
Prototyping and testing
Development of low- and high-fidelity prototypes to test the solutions.
Involvement of users inuser testing sessions to gather feedback.
Iteration on prototypes based on the feedback received.

PDF presentation
In addition to the written report, students must prepare a PDF presentation of no more than 15 slides, illustrating the key aspects of the project. The presentation should cover the following:

Introduction and project context.
Problem analysis and qualitative research.
Solution ideation and service structure design.
Prototyping, testing, and feasibility assessment.
Communication of the idea and conclusions.

Submission and evaluation
The written report and presentation must be submitted to the instructor at least one week before the exam. Evaluation will be based on the completeness and depth of the analysis, the originality and feasibility of the proposed solutions, and the effectiveness of idea communication.

Note: This option is highly demanding and requires thorough research, analysis, and design work. Students are encouraged to start early and consult the instructor for clarifications or support during the process.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Management e design dei servizi: Strumenti e percorsi di analisi e progettazione innovativa condivisa, Cavenago, Marafioti.

User Experience Design. Progettare esperienze di valore per utenti e aziende, Bottà.

This Is Service Design Doing: Applying Service Design Thinking in the Real World: Applying Service Design Thinking in the Real World: A Practitioners' Handbook, Marc Stickdorn, Markus Edgar Hormess, Adam Lawrence, Jakob Schneider.

An Introduction to Service Design: Designing the Invisible, Lara Perin.

Service Design: 250 essential methods, Robert A. Curedale.

Sustainable Development Goals

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE