



Course syllabus

Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Department of Design

4DI932 Design och transdisciplinaritet, 7,5 högskolepoäng
Design and Transdisciplinarity, 7.5 credits

Main field of study

Design

Subject

Design

Level

Second cycle

Progression

A1F

Date of Ratification

Approved 2025-09-10.

Revised 2026-03-10. The prerequisite requirement has been supplemented with subjects according to GY25.

The course syllabus is valid from autumn semester 2026.

Prerequisites

At least 60 higher education credits on second-cycle level, or the equivalent.

You also need:

Approved portfolio and English 6

Or:

Approved portfolio and English level 2

Or:

the equivalent.

Objectives

After completing the course, the student should be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- explain core frameworks, methods, and processes in transdisciplinary design, with emphasis on sustainability and design as a change agent,
- recognise the differences between multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary approaches and their relevance in addressing complex societal challenges.

Skills and abilities

- apply selected transdisciplinary design methods to a focused collaborative project addressing a sustainability challenge,
- integrate knowledge from at least two different fields (disciplinary or non-disciplinary) to propose context-specific design outcomes,
- present a concise, well-structured report that contextualises and critically reflects on the design process.

Values and approach

- demonstrate openness to diverse perspectives and knowledge systems in collaborative problem-solving,
- reflect on ethical considerations and the societal impact of design decisions in a transdisciplinary context.

Content

The course introduces the principles and practices of transdisciplinary design, focusing on its application to complex sustainability challenges. The student explores the evolving nature of design beyond single disciplines, integrating diverse methods and perspectives to address real-world problems. Through a combination of theory, case studies, and a focused collaborative project, the student examines the opportunities and challenges of working across disciplinary boundaries, culminating in the development of a concise transdisciplinary design proposal.

Type of Instruction

The course uses a blended approach, combining theory-based lectures, literature seminars, and field activities. Students will work individually and in multidisciplinary teams, collaborating with real or simulated “problem owners” (e.g., local communities). Peer review and opposition sessions form an integral part of the learning process.

Examination

The course is assessed with the grades A, B, C, D, E or F.

The course is assessed with the grades A highest, E Minimum, F Fail. Assessment criteria for the A-F scale are communicated to the students in a separate document. The students are informed about the assessment criteria when the course starts, at the latest.

Assessment of student performance is made through:

- 40% Group project – Development and presentation of a concise transdisciplinary design proposal addressing a sustainability challenge, including project documentation and visual communication of results.
- 30% Individual reflective paper – Critical analysis linking theoretical concepts, applied methods, and ethical considerations encountered during the project.
- 30% Active participation – Engagement in workshops, seminars, and peer

review sessions, demonstrating collaboration, openness to diverse perspectives, and constructive feedback.

For a grade of E, the course objectives must be achieved. For grade of A, the student must have achieved a grade of A on at least 70% of the course assignments.

For students who do not pass their first examinations, retake examinations are provided in accordance with Local regulations for courses and examinations at the first and second levels at Linnaeus University.

If the university has decided that a student has the right to special educational support due to a disability, the examiner may offer an adapted test or allow the student to conduct the test in an alternative form.

Course Evaluation

A course evaluation should be conducted during the course or in connection with its conclusion. The results and analysis of the completed course evaluation should be promptly communicated to students who have completed the course. Students participating in the next course instance should be informed of the results of the previous course evaluation and any improvements that have been made, no later than at the start of the course.

Other Information

Any costs for material and printouts are covered by the student.

Required Reading and Additional Study Material

van der Bijl-Brouwer, Mieke, 2022. *Design, One Piece of the Puzzle: A Conceptual and Practical Perspective on Transdisciplinary Design*. In D. Lockton, S. Lenzi, P. Hekkert, A. Oak, J. Sádaba, & P. Lloyd (Eds.), DRS2022: Bilbao, 25 June – 3 July (Research Papers), Bilbao, Spain, June 2022. Design Research Society, 402.
<https://doi.org/10.21606/drs.2022.402>

Jantsch, Erich, 1972. Towards Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity in Education and Innovation. In *L. Apostel, G. Berger, A. Briggs, & G. Michaud (Eds.), Interdisciplinarity: Problems of Teaching and Research in Universities*, 97–121. OECD/Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, Paris.

Manzini, Ezio, 2015. *Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, USA. ISBN 978-0-262-02860-8.
<https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9873.001.0001>

Moreno Toledano, Leonardo and Rogel Villalba, Erika, 2018. *Transdisciplinary Design: Tamed Complexity through New Collaboration*. Strategic Design Research Journal 11, 1 (Jan.–Apr. 2018), 42–50. <https://doi.org/10.4013/sdrj.2018.111.07>

Nicolescu, Basarab (Ed.), 2008. *Transdisciplinarity: Theory and Practice*. Hampton Press, Cresskill, NJ, USA. ISBN-10 1572738359; ISBN-13 978-1572738355.

Additional Study Material

Reading on design research:

Bannon, Liam J., & Ehn, Pelle, 2012. Design: design matters in Participatory Design. In

Routledge international handbook of participatory design (pp. 37-63). Routledge.

Max-Neef, Manfred, 2005. Foundations of transdisciplinarity. *Ecological economics*, 53(1), 5-16.

Meadows, Donella, 2008. *Thinking in systems: International bestseller*. Chelsea Green publishing. (Selected excerpts)

Selected case studies and academic articles provided during the course via the university's learning platform