

# BH UNIT TEACHING APPROACH

## Assessment

### Bringing the Outside In – Design by Natures Awards Brief

In the unit this year, we are grounding our project and assessment in a live brief from the Hubbub Design Agency. {REF} The Design By Nature student awards is an open submission challenge for UK university students and recent graduates (up to a year). The awards focus on 'inspiring innovative ways of living that are good for the environment' {ref}. We have adapted the brief for this unit to both submit for the awards and meet the unit's intended learning outcomes and assessment requirements. The brief chosen for the unit is the 'Bring the Outside In' – {ref}. This brief forms the focus and structure for our teaching across the Being Human and Design and Systems thinking units in this teaching block. The unit brief requires students:

*Create an affordable, practical, and evidence-based prototype that brings the multiple benefits of Nature into the homes of low-income inner-city communities. {ref}*

### The Context

The Design By Nature brief provides our students with an urgent and timely problem with the Covid restrictions this year. Spending time in Nature is proven to have multiple positive health and wellbeing benefits for individuals and provides multiple social and economic benefits to communities, including bringing them closer together (Public Health England, 2020). But in the most deprived areas of England, people have significantly less green space than wealthier areas, especially for those living in urban environments. Living in busy cities can keep people away from natural spaces, creating a sense of detachment from Nature. However, there isn't necessarily a need for a park or a forest to strengthen our connection to Nature. This can also happen inside our own home, and whether it's a plant in our living room or a bee box on our windowsill, these simple things can do wonders for our mental health and foster a greater appreciation for the natural world.

### The Audience

The audience for the solution and the research our students will conduct is 'Low-income households.' A household with annual earnings less than 60% of the median household income for that country or a household eligible for financial government assistance. – {ref gov definition}

## A Cross Unit Approach

Students will work with transdisciplinary teams across Being Human and Design and Systems Thinking to develop a research-led solution for the project brief in this teaching block. We will work on a different aspect of the brief, but students will have a separate assessment requirement and submission for each unit. We will use the weekly year-cluster meeting to ensure we are aligned across the unit in terms of content and approach.

### INOV10002 - Being Human

In Being Human, we will focus on the research and insight development stages of the Bring the Outside In brief. As a team, our students will conduct practical, human centre research to inform the design of their solution in D&ST for the brief. At the end of the unit, the teams will collaboratively write a research report using the template provided. The brief requires an insight-led solution, connects people to Nature, and engaging and affordable for communities in low-income inner cities. We will focus on teaching this unit on applied research methods, design for participation,

communications for engagement, and professional development. The structure of the learning this teaching block focuses our student teams research in three areas:

1. **Inner-city, low-income communities** - The audience and participants for the project.
2. **Nature on your Doorstep** - The Nature in our participant's homes and the local area.
3. **Design for Nature** – Methods to engage communities with their local Nature.

### A Group Produced Research Report – Team Submission

Students will submit a collaboratively written research report in the Being Human unit based on their research together. The report provides an account of the design and critical analysis and reflection on the research's insights. Students will submit as a team the following in their report. The report template is available here: {REF}

1. Conduct practical research, develop insights into your audience, the Nature on your doorstep, and innovative ways to design with and for Nature.
2. Write and submit a report that sets out:
  - An account of your research processes.
  - A summary and discussion of your resulting insights.
  - A discussion of how your work as a transdisciplinary team informed your research approach and subsequent insights.

### INOV10001 - Design and Systems Thinking

Students will focus on using the Design and Systems Thinking process to develop an innovative solution that households can have inside their home in this unit. The idea should be engaging, affordable, and help the household connect to Nature to improve their health and wellbeing. They will use the research work conducted in Being Human to support their design and design-research processes in the unit. Please refer to the D&ST unit documents for assessment details.

## Teaching Approach

### A Human-Centre and Tran-Disciplinary Approach.

The brief is human-centered, civically engaged, and focused on design experiences for public context. The research and focus of the project are grounded in the student's local communities, both human and non-human, and conservation. It provides our students with a real-world project designed to be a challenge but also achievable. We provide the research and project approach and the resources and opportunities for our students to apply human-centered research methods with them. The focus for our teaching team is providing enough structure for the project process while leaving room for our students to try, learn and fail at using applied research methods. In this teaching block, we will focus on the following topics:

- Applied research methods
- Participatory Design (PD) for conservation
- Communication for engagement
- Team and project development

Students met with us every week for a facilitated session (blended depending on Covid19 restrictions). Before each session, students will review the week's challenge document, resource, lecture, and reflection videos available on the unit Blackboard page: {ref}

The unit uses the Centre's Design and Systems Process to structure the unit and our student's work. We provide our students with the training, resources, and opportunity to learn and critically reflect on engaged research methods for design. We use a series of challenges to

introduce research methods, apply those research methods, and synthesize the results into helpful design insights for their design work.

## Challenges

**The challenge briefs are available here: {REF}**

The unit is structured around two-week challenges that enable our students to develop content through the applied use of research skills. Over the two weeks, students complete an **engaged research task** to collect evidence, a **synthesis task** to develop insights based on your research, and; a **professional development task** to critically reflect on their teamwork. We will provide a set of teaching and practical resources that introduce the methods, communities, and theories required to complete each challenge. The outputs for each challenge include writing, image-making, photography, and social media posts. Through the structure and progression of the challenge's students will research three core project areas:

1. Inner-city, low-income communities,
2. Nature on your Doorstep,
3. Design for Nature.

Through the challenges, the teams will learn about and apply the following research methods: Interviews, Library Research skills, Case studies, More-Than-Human Mapping, Team and project development strategies, Comms for engagement (Report Writing).

## Challenge Structure

### **Engaged Research Task**

In the first week of the challenge, students will carry out an applied research task which we will introduce in the facilitated session. Students will work in teams on the research task between our facilitated session, add the content to their team boards, and prepare the resulting material for the next session.

### **Synthesis Task**

In the second week of the challenge, the teams will synthesize the material from their team research board and use them to produce the following outputs.

### **Professional Development Task**

The team will be given a task to develop their team and individual professional practices. These tasks will be structured to help them learn and provide material for their methodology for their final research report.

## Teaching Resources

We will provide students practical guides and resources for our students to complete their applied research tasks. We have a set of library resources, case studies, and external materials and will ask students to add these to their project boards in addition to their materials each week. These include a weekly set of videos and resources available on the BlackBoard unit page:

### **Team Resource Board**

The teams will use an Online Research board to collate, synthesise, and the work from each challenge. This then provides the students with an iteratively developed set of insight and evidence that they can use to write their final report.

### **Lecture Video**

We provide a lecture video that will contextualize the facilitated session and introduce various practices and case studies through our guest interview series.

### **Professional Development Video**

Over the two weeks, students will meet in their blended sessions as a team and work on a team or project development task. This video provides ideas and context for this work.

### **Library Series Videos**

Our specialist librarian Dr. Marika Zeimbekis has worked with our teaching staff and students to develop an introductory library skills resource and video series for Innovation. This provides our students the required resources, skills, and confidence to use the extensive library resources for design-led research.

## Modeling Authentic Practice

The teaching approach, focus of the student's work, and resulting research are grounded and modeled on the professional practice and experience of the teaching staff as researchers, educators, and design innovators. The engaged approach to learning and assessment enables our students to build on their individual practices in their core disciplines towards a collaborative and rigorous design and research practice for Innovation and entrepreneurship.

The trans-disciplinary nature of both our teaching staff and students provides a rich set of practices to draw on in our work together on this unit. This group of practitioners is still limited in terms of discipline and experience in design and research that supports community engagement with Nature. To bring a more comprehensive set of practices and experiences for our students to consider and use, we have introduced a Lecture Video series of conversations between our teaching staff and guests from a broad but appropriate range of disciplines to talk about their practice in the context of Innovation. The work of these guests then forms the structure for the challenges our students complete each week.

### **Week 13 Dr Marika Zeimbekis, Specialist Librarian (UoB)**

Introduces the library resources, her work as a specialist librarian, and how library research skills can inform their work in their time at the Centre.

### **Week 14 Dr. Rob Phillips, Senior Tutor, Royal College of Arts**

Shares his approach to design for Nature with and for underserved communities. He discusses his recent Citizen Science collaboration with BBC's Nature Watch.

### **Week 15 Dr. Serena Pollastri, Lecturer in Urban Futures, Lancaster University.**

Discusses her trans-disciplinary research using a 'more-than-human' approach to mapping. She introduces her work on cartography, hard data, and mark-making.

### **Week 17 Ben Edwards Bristol, City Fellow (UoB)/ Grassroots NGO**

Is an expert in working with low-income communities in South Bristol through an engagement with Nature. He discusses his work in an interview with teaching staff in Dame Emily Park in South Bristol.

### **Week 18 Ross Harrison, Independent Documentary Maker**

He discusses his new short film, Remembering Nature, and its themes of memory, conservation, narrative, and the social media campaign that informs the week's challenge.

**Week 20**     **Matthew Kipling, Innovation\_ Play Experiences and LEGO**

Senior Concept Designer, LEGO inc. Discusses his engaged research and development work with children in his career as a senior concept designer at LEGO.

**Week 21**     **Paul Dodson, Royal Literary Fellow.**

Paul shares his work and discusses how to write collaboratively for the specific brief they have been set. This includes context for the writing retreat in our facilitated teaching session this week.