INSTITUTE OF DESIGN
Nirma University
Product and Interaction Design, Semester VI

Institute:	**Institute of Design**
Name of Programme:	**Bachelor of Design**
Course Code:	**3DD110MC26**
Course Title:	**Form & Product Semantics**
Course Type:	(■ Core/ ☐ Value Added Course/ ☐ Departmental Elective/ Institute Elective/ University Elective/(Open Elective Any other)
Year of introduction:	**Academic Year 2026-27**

L	**T**	**Practical component**				**C**
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Course Learning Outcomes (CLO):

At the end of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Explain fundamental concepts of semiotics and product semantics and their relevance to form, perception and meaning (BL2)
2. Analyse physical products to identify signs, symbols, conventions and meanings communicated through form (BL4)
3. Apply principles of semantics and form language to develop product forms that communicate intended function, character and identity (BL3)
4. Create a coherent product or product family considering semantic intent, context and user interpretation (BL6)

Syllabus: **Total Teaching hours: 90 Hrs.**

Units	Content	Teaching hours
Unit 1	**Semiotics and Product Meaning** • Fundamentals of semiotics: signs, symbols, signifier/signified, icon, index and symbol • Products as carriers of functional, emotional, social and cultural meaning • Product categories, codes, conventions, denotation and connotation • Influence of society, culture, context and prior experience on interpretation of products. • Study of signs, symbols and culturally embedded meanings in products across the globe	**12 Hrs.**
Unit 2	**Form and Product Semantics** • Relationship between elements of product form and perceived meaning • Form cues related to function, affordance, interaction and user expectations • Product character, identity and emotional qualities	**12 Hrs.**

	communicated through form • Analysis of existing products for semantic attributes, category recognition and cultural/contextual meaning	
Unit 3	**Form and Semantics Studio Project** • Study of product category, brand, users, context and intended product experience • Definition of intended meaning, character, identity and form-language principles • Development and evaluation of multiple product-form directions • User testing and iterative refinement for semantic clarity, usability and contextual relevance • Development of a physical prototypes of final product form or product family	**66 Hrs.**

Self-Study	**Maintain a journal of the following:** • Observe signs, symbols and meanings communicated through everyday products • Study form languages used across different product categories • Observe cultural objects, forms and symbols across geographies and their interpretations • Analyse product families across brands for consistency in form and identity • Review selected readings and case studies on product semantics
Suggested Readings/ References	**Books** 1. Schumacher, E. F. (1973). *Small is beautiful: A study of economics as if people mattered*. Blond & Briggs. 2. Chandler, D. (2022). *Semiotics: The basics* (4th ed.). Routledge. 3. Monö, R. (1997). *Design for product understanding: The aesthetics of design from a semiotic approach*. Liber. 4. Krippendorff, K. (2005). *The semantic turn: A new foundation for design*. CRC Press. 5. Norman, D. A. (2013). *The design of everyday things* (Revised and expanded ed.). Basic Books. 6. Bürdek, B. E. (2005). *Design: History, theory and practice of product design*. Birkhäuser. 7. Vihma, S. (1995). *Products as representations: A semiotic and aesthetic study of design products*. University of Art and Design Helsinki. 8. Karjalainen, T.-M. (2004). *Semantic transformation in design: Communicating strategic brand identity through product design references*. University of Art and Design Helsinki. 9. Arnheim, R. (1974). *Art and visual perception: A psychology of the creative eye* (New version). University of California Press. 10. Wong, W. (1993). *Principles of form and design*. John Wiley & Sons. 11. Ulrich, K. T., Eppinger, S. D., & Yang, M. C. (2020). *Product design and development* (7th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education. 12. Eco, U. (Ed.). (2004). *On beauty: A history of a Western idea*. Secker & Warburg. 13. Eco, U. (Ed.). (2007). *On ugliness*. Harvill Secker. **Articles and Additional Resources**

	1. Krippendorff, K., and Butter, R. “Product Semantics: Exploring the Symbolic Qualities of Form.” 2. Product-form and product-semantics case studies published in design journals and professional design publications. 3. Online collections and archives of design museums documenting the development of product categories and product identities. 4. Case studies of product families from consumer electronics, appliances, furniture, tools, mobility and lifestyle products. 5. Manufacturer and brand archives showing the evolution of product form and visual identity. **Suggested Filed Visits** • As per the detailed course plan provided by the faculty teaching the course.