

**J338F/J383P**

# Advanced Visual Design

**T-Th 6-9p.m CMA 4.152**

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*Office hours by appointment only.*

This class is an advanced communication design course. You will expand on the basic skills you learned in J319, and by the end of the course will be familiar with wearing all the hats required of a visual designer—that of a photo editor, page designer, visual editor, typographer and craftsman.

## **Overview**

Since you are all skilled story tellers – either from your background in writing news stories or constructing documentary photo stories – we will focus on adapting your skills into an effective visual language. You will be required to look around and pay attention to how visual culture manipulates what you see and how you use and speak this language every day. You'll be required to discuss your design ideas in class critiques of your own work and your classmate's work each week. Furthermore, you'll be required to react to these critiques constructively and use them to improve your work. For time-intensive projects, you'll go through several stages of critique before your projects are graded. This is to give you a chance to see your work through the eyes of others and to gain a deeper understanding of how perceptions are shaped and can be clarified successfully. When you present your work for critique, you will be required to share the research behind your ideas and show whatever bits of visual inspiration you may have found. This will not only enhance your presentation and story telling skills, but will create a window into your creative process so that each student learns from the others' ideas, inspiration, and mistakes.

This will primarily be a communications course, so we will be focusing your visual language skills through publication projects. However, additional projects will help you stretch your creative muscles and embrace your visual playfulness.

## **Practicalities**

*This is what I expect and how you'll be graded.*

**YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO PRODUCE YOUR OWN ORIGINAL WORK.**

As with any art, the language you use as a designer exists in a context. This means that you will be expected to be aware of design around you and to be influenced by other designers. It is expected that you may take graphic ideas that you find and adapt them to your own entirely different purposes to create new meanings; that you may use existing images (in books, magazines, or on the internet) to illustrate your stories; that you may use bits of ephemera; and that you may use greeking, or placeholder copy, to represent where long passages of text will be. Your design should communicate what the content of the text will be without anyone having to read it. Even though it is acceptable to be influenced, all of your designs need to be your own—born from your own research, executed by your own hand, and presented and justified in the presentation of your work.

## **WRITE YOUR OWN DISPLAY COPY FOR ALL PROJECTS.**

Copy and images work together to communicate a coherent message. Even though we are focusing on visual communication, your display text will work hand-in-hand with the visual presentation of your work. The language of this text will either severely enhance or distract from the message you are trying to create.

## **PARTICIPATE IN CLASS.**

Attend class regularly. Work out the assignments, discuss them with the class, present your ideas clearly and thoroughly. Any more than three excused absences will count against your final grade. Each unexcused absence will deduct 10% from your attendance grade.

## **BE CREATIVE, AND CRAFT EVERYTHING WELL.**

You'll be expected to explore ideas and try unusual ways of getting an idea across to your viewers — to exercise your design skills. We will have weekly critiques and these will give you the chance to fix your projects and the chance to work out and explore design solutions that aren't safe and expected. It gives you the safety of being able to try an idea and, if necessary, be able to fix it before you're graded. After the final critique session on your project, you'll be expected to incorporate the combined critiques, then to create the final design. You will be graded on the quality of your ideas as well as your execution of those ideas, so be neat and pay attention. You should already know how to use a grid, to neatly align layout elements, to make sure columns of text align at baselines, fix widows and unnecessary hyphenations in copy, and to properly kern all your display text. During critique, we will point out areas that need to be addressed in terms of crafting, but you should be doing it anyway.

## **Projects**

*What we'll be doing to work out your visual story-telling skills*

### **THE PRESENTATION PROJECT:**

You will make one traditionally researched oral presentation to the class this semester focusing on a particular iconic graphic designer. You may choose a designer you admire, or we'll pick names from a hat and you'll be assigned randomly. Presentations should be at least 15 minutes long. It should be presented using presentation software or as a PDF that will be shown in class. It should cite at least three sources that are not wikipedia, feature at least 20 examples of the designer's work, and explain the designer in historical context. Some of the people have interesting personal lives, but the presentations should focus on the work and the context of history that made them iconic. You may incorporate video into your presentation, but you still need to show 19 other examples of work. You will be graded on the presentation style and information. You should keep the design of the presentation neat and simple. The fine arts library should have books on whatever designer you are researching, and it would be best for you to get that book now even if you aren't presenting until the end of the semester.

### **THE MAGAZINE PROJECT:**

This semester, we will tackle a print magazine, redesigned toward looking into the future of the medium. We will discuss and improve upon how magazines function — from rough idea to well-crafted prototype. This will be a small-group project. Each group will be responsible for exploring the problem and pooling resources, but each student will be responsible for producing individual design solutions to the same problem. You will focus on exploring big-picture ideas about magazines and adapting them to a more formal and functional maga-

zine architecture. You will explore designing many different variations on your idea, but will narrow your designs down to one final look. At the end of the semester, you will turn in a final logotype, three covers, a four-page feature, and three distinct front or back of the book section stories that best express your ideas for the future of that particular magazine.

#### **THE POSTER PROJECT:**

You will produce one oversized poster on a theme to be determined. At the beginning of this project, you will randomly be assigned an artistic movement in graphic design history. You will produce a five minute pdf presentation explaining to your fellow students the context and influences of that art movement, how to identify the style, the ideology behind it, and ten examples of work produced in the style of and during that movement. Using that research, you will produce a poster in that style that works with our theme.

**NOTE TO GRADUATE STUDENTS:** You will have an expanded version of this project.

Your research will include a 2000 word report on your randomly-assigned artistic movement.

#### **THE REBRANDING PROJECT:**

You will work through producing logos and a final package project on a theme to be determined. Since branding design is dependent on understanding the company, product, and consumer, there will be some research involved, but no formal research presentations made for this.

Everyone will have the same assignment, and will be expected to make sketches, explore varied and numerous logo treatments, and work out how that will exist within a larger graphic context of the product. The final product will be a three-dimensional package that you will be expected to mock up neatly and turn in as your final work.

#### **Supplies**

*What you will need to complete your projects.*

There is no assigned book, but you will have access to software tutorials. You will need some sort of sketchbook or notebook to keep your sketches. It can be any format that you won't lose (small or large) and need not be longer than a 70 page spiral notebook. You will need a few supplies for your final project and for your first project. The format of these projects will be discussed in class, and will depend heavily on how you choose to present your work. If you would like to get a jump on supplies, you will definitely need a metal ruler (or ruler with a metal edge) and an xacto knife with a few fresh #11 blades.

## Grading

*How are you being graded how much does it count?*

Alphabet Project — 10% of your overall grade  
Poster Project — 20% of your overall grade  
Designer Presentation — 10% of your overall grade  
Magazine Project — 20% of your overall grade  
Digital Magazine — 20% of your overall grade  
Class/lab Attendance: 20% of your overall grade

### SCORING

#### A – Excellent

The student clearly articulates the problem studied, presents work and provides strong reasons for the visual solution. Execution of the work is neat and precise. Specific information is given to support the conclusions that are drawn and described. The delivery is engaging and visual solution is effective and clear. Eye contact is made and sustained throughout the presentation or critique. There is strong evidence of preparation, organization and enthusiasm for the topic. Visual research is used to make the presentation more effective. Questions are clearly answered with specific and appropriate information.

#### A- – Very Good

The student articulates the problem studied, presents work and provides reasons for the visual solution. Execution of the work is neat and precise. An adequate amount of information is given to support the conclusions that are drawn and described. The delivery and visual solution is clear. There is evidence of preparation, organization and enthusiasm for the topic. Visual research is mentioned and used. Questions are answered clearly.

#### B – Good

The student articulates the problem studied, presents work and conclusions are stated, but supporting information is not as strong as a A or A-. The delivery and visual solution is clear. Execution of the work is neat but not as precise as a A or A-. There is some indication of preparation and organization. Visual research is mentioned. Questions are answered.

#### C – Limited

The student articulates the problem and presents work but fails to provide a clear visual solution. The information supporting the conclusion is unclear. Execution of the work lacks precision. Evidence of preparation and organization is lacking. Visual research may or may not be mentioned. Questions are answered with only the most basic response.

#### D – Poor

The student presents work without articulating the problem or its visual solution. The project is visually unclear and no adequate solutions are reached. Execution of the work is sloppy. There is no indication of preparation or organization. Questions and critique receive only the basic or no response.

F – No presentation is attempted.

Final Grade and Grade Point equivalent:

A = 4.0	B+ = 3.33	C+ = 2.33	D+ = 1.33	F = 0
A- = 3.67	B = 3.0	C = 2.0	D = 1.0	
	B- = 2.67	C- = 1.67	D- = 0.67	

## **From the University**

### **UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE**

All students are expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code, which reads: “The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.”

All work done in this class must be original work done by the student for this class alone. The goal is creation of images and text that are journalistically sound but represent a personal vision and voice. For information on academic integrity and plagiarism, see <http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/academicintegrity.html>

### **IMPORTANT NOTE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY.

### **RESOURCES FOR LEARNING & LIFE AT UT AUSTIN**

The University of Texas has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning.

The UT Learning Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/>

Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

Counseling & Mental Health Center: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>

Career Exploration Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/careercenter/>

Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

### **USE OF BLACKBOARD IN CLASS**

In this class I use Blackboard—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials, and to post grades. You can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.

### **USE OF E-MAIL FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENTS**

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

### **RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS**

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

#### BEHAVIOR CONCERNS ADVICE LINE (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

#### EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.

If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.

In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors.

Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office

#### Q DROP POLICY

The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231:

“Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number.”

You can find advice, models, templates, and other resources for designing your course syllabus on the DIIA website at <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/>