

# introduction to graphic design

art 131z

## course info

z: mon/wed 6:30-9:00pm  
South Campus room 007/print design room

## professor info

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## Course Description

**131. Introduction to Graphic Design.** Foundation skills in the formal and conceptual principles of graphic design: concept, composition, legibility, language, typography. Projects develop visual literacy and skills in text, drawing, and image production using the Macintosh computer as primary design tool. Critical thinking is stressed through analysis of content and its most effective form of visual presentation. **Prerequisite:** Art 170 or permission of instructor.

## Course Goals

- To introduce and familiarize you with the principles of graphic design.
- Create strong compositional designs through the use of format, line, shape, contrast, positive/negative space, rhythm, direction, balance, and repetition.
- Solve visual problems by expressing ideas through the creative use of images and text.
- Recognize elements of and produce professional-quality design.
- Gain a strong skill of rapid and strong idea generation through thumbnail sketches.
- Demonstrate your understanding of the principles of design through the sharing of ideas during group critiques.
- Gain an intermediate knowledge of the three main types of design programs: vector-based (Adobe Illustrator), raster-based (Adobe PhotoShop), and page-layout (Adobe InDesign).

## Course Requirements

This is a studio class, therefore you will work in class on your projects and be expected to work outside of class on your own. Each class will generally begin with a class discussion, design lesson, or group critique. It is extremely important whatever your career, that you have the ability to interpret, express, and communicate ideas to others. There will be some computer instruction every class. You will have homework every class, and most of the time, there will be some kind of assignment due. **Be on time.** Come to class prepared to work and have all sketches, readings and materials ready as specified in the previous class or on the syllabus.

- **No using zip disks. Learn how to use dependable media.**
- **No iChat, AIM, icq, msn irc, MySpace or anything of the like during class.**
- **Be present during class. And don't do your freelance work during class.**

## **Grading**

### Attendance/Class Participation/Homework—15%

If you are more than 15 minutes late to class, it does not go unnoticed. Absences affect your work, so they affect your grade. E-mail or call beforehand if you are going to miss a class. Two unexcused, missed classes will drop your grade by one letter. **Example:** If you have an A in the class and miss two classes, unexcused, your grade will now be lowered to a B. I will give one unexcused class (no questions asked), in the interest of mental health. When you are absent from class, it is **your duty** to get the information covered in class from one of your fellow classmates. I do not have time to do this for you. **Excused absences** (sickness, with a note from the health center or family doctor; death in the family with documentation; other extenuating circumstances) require you to make up the work missed. Make arrangements with me to make up work in an appropriate time frame. Unexcused absences seriously affect your grade. Plan ahead and talk to me if you need to miss a class. If you are involved in a sport, please see me as soon as possible in the beginning of the semester, bring me a schedule of your games (and other meets/games) that might conflict with class. Talk to your coaches and then talk to me and we will plan ahead so that you do not fall behind.

### Projects—75%

Each project is graded on three aspects:

- **Creativity/Problem Solving:** How well was the problem solved and how creative was the solution?
- **Presentation/Execution:** Neatness and a level of professionalism in the completed work. Did the work utilize the computer program efficiently and with authority or was the student guided by the program? Were the design principles used efficiently? How well is the work presented? (this includes professional attitude and attire)
- **Deadline/Attitude:** Was the project handed in on the day specified and in a positive mental attitude?

**note** Late project: Five points off final project grade will be deducted for each day late.

### Quizzes & Reaction papers—10%

There will be scheduled quizzes given periodically throughout the semester based on handouts, reading assignments, and computer skills. Reaction papers will be due throughout the semester and will NOT be accepted late. Please refer to the section in the syllabus on reaction papers for detailed information.

## **project submission**

My guidelines are “real world”. On time. Professionally-done. The habits you form here can enhance your level of success after graduation. Clients employ and depend on designers who are not only skilled, talented, flexible, and good communicators, but who are **reliable**. Talent does not meet a deadline—planning and discipline does. Discipline is just another word for good work habits.

## **FAQ**

### **What if I'm absent from class and I have a project or assignment due?**

Absences from class do not excuse you from a deadline. Call and notify me how I should be expecting to receive your project. Have a friend, classmate, relative, or a messenger service deliver it to me. FedEx overnight is an option, marked in my attention.

### **What if I was really lost on a project and didn't know what to do?**

Please talk to me as soon as you may be having trouble. I can only help if you ask.

### **What if the computer crashed and I lost my work? Or the printer wasn't working?**

There will be technical problems—this is no excuse for missing a deadline.

## talk to me

If you need to see me, please make arrangements to meet with me. The best way to reach me is my e-mail. I am on the computer most of the day and check e-mail more frequently than I would like to admit. You can call me on my cell. If I am unable to answer, leave a message and I will return your call at my earliest convenience. I will try to stay after class for a while since I am not on campus during the day. Please feel free to come ask me questions or talk about any concerns you may have.

## Supplies

- portable mass storage device: USB Flash Drive (at least 1GB). You may use your own firewire or USB drive of comparable or larger size
  - \*No Zip disks—they are not reliable
- 2 Large sketch books (one for thumbnails and the other for the scrapbook assignment)  
Suggested sketch book: Strathmore Drawing medium, 24 sheets, 80 lb.
- Folder for handouts
- Several **black** mat boards (32"x40" **NOT** foam core)
- Although cutting boards, spray mount and xacto knives are supplied, you may want to purchase your own so they are available to you at all times. It is your responsibility to have all projects handed in on time. Not being able to find necessary tools in the lab or someone used all the spray mount will not be a valid excuse for not having a project handed in on time!
- Pencil and eraser & extra fine sharpies for sketching
- *Design Elements: A Graphic Design Manual*; by Timothy Samara
- *How to Think like a Great Graphic Designer*; by Debbie Millman

### **suggested text (strongly suggested for graphic design majors)**

- *Illustrator CS2 for Windows and Macintosh (Visual QuickStart Guide)* by Elaine Weinmann, Peter Lourekas
- *InDesign CS2 for Macintosh and Windows (Visual QuickStart Guide)* by Sandee Cohen
- *PhotoShop CS2 (Visual QuickStart Guide)* by Elaine Weinmann, Peter Lourekas

## Sketchbook

Your sketchbook will become an extension of you while in this class. This book will become your "think tank". It will count as a project grade at the end and will be critiqued in your final review. Do not take this loosely!

Thumbnails!! For each project you are assigned, you will be expected to come up with many thumbnail sketches before you even think about designing on the computer. Resist the urge! **It doesn't matter if you think it looks bad or not**—as long as you can get your idea across, you have a powerful tool. This does not come easy to most. You will need to work on it and train yourself, just as you will be working on your computer skills.

## Scrapbook

Each week you will be expected to collect a minimum of 5 specimens. What constitutes a specimen? Anything you see that interests you. Anything you look at and say, "wow, that's really cool/interesting." Tear things out of magazines; collect business cards; take pictures of exhibits, cars, posters, anything that has been designed! Collect web site url's, books you've looked at—xerox things from the library. You should write down next to each piece why you chose it, ex: the color pallet works great, the fonts used express the message, the hierarchy is perfectly executed. Do some sketches incorporating your specimen for thumbnail/idea-generation practice. The more you do, the better your grade. This will benefit you and act as a resource for inspiration. Constant research of what other designers are doing is an important part of the design process. Look to history, but don't repeat it. The scrap book needs to be 50 pages total and will count as a **project grade**. I will randomly collect the scrapbook periodically throughout the semester to see your progress. When it is collected at these times it will count as a **homework grade**.

## **Reaction Paper**

To achieve success in graphic design, you must be able to research other designers and interpret their ideas into your own style and design practice. Very little progress is made without considering what others have done before, but do so without repeating it rather making it your own. Only by reviewing the literature critically can a student begin to find areas in the field that are ripe for additional research. Thus, to demonstrate your understanding, and to practice your technical writing ability, you must turn in a reaction paper for selected readings. All of the reaction papers will be on a reading from your text *How to Think Like a Great Graphic Designer*. These papers may be informal, and they should be about two pages long.

A reaction paper should be more than a simple summary of the material; it should contain your opinion or reaction to reading the material. This may take on a variety of forms: you may compare the work to other related material (including but not limited to other readings from the class); you may hypothesize about ways in which the work could have been improved; you may think about ways to expand on the work, or extend it to cover new domains; or you may argue against the work, questioning its assumptions, or value.

Reaction papers will be graded primarily on your communication skills, and only secondarily on the content and originality of your ideas. The ability to express oneself clearly is an important skill in academics (and in life!). Therefore, your paper, like all good essays, should include an introductory paragraph stating your main premise, a body where you detail your ideas, and a brief concluding paragraph. Although the reaction paper should not summarize the entire article, it should include enough information about the article to make your ideas or criticisms well-grounded. Assume your readers have also read the article, but that they need a reminder about any details you wish to discuss. Try to avoid the temptation of having two sections: (1) summary, and (2) reaction. Instead, it is best if you can interweave these two components (while being clear about which is which, of course).

Although all writing rules are subjective and heuristic, here are a few editing pet-peeves of mine:

- 1) Use active voice. Passive tense sounds amorphous and wishy-washy. The use of first person ("I") is appropriate for these papers.
- 2) Avoid overly complex sentences. If you do have a complex sentence, make certain it uses parallel construction.
- 3) Use paragraphs appropriately as partitions for your ideas. Each paragraph should generally have at least three sentences.
- 4) Obviously, correct spelling and grammar are appreciated and improve the clarity of your paper.

**Good luck, and remember that reaction papers may NOT be handed in late.**

# Studio Materials – Important Notes

## **I. Drafting Tables in Room 8 – IMPORTANT**

Our drafting tables are a valuable resource and are used by students in many classes.

Surfaces must be kept clean and undamaged. Any cutting must be done using one of the grey cutting mats (stored in Room 8) and NOT done directly on the drafting tables.

Anyone caught cutting (or using a utility knife or mat cutter) directly on the drafting tables will be billed for the cost of a table top.

## **II. Safe Handling of Oil Paint, Printing Ink and Solvents:**

1. Oil paint, printing ink and solvents are flammable. Never use near an open flame or while smoking.
2. Always use paint, printing ink and solvents in a well-ventilated area with proper air circulation. Even odorless turpenoid produces vapor that must be ventilated.
3. Never store oil paint, linseed oil or oily rags in lockers, closets or confined, unventilated spaces. Oil paint and linseed oil can spontaneously combust, causing a potential fire hazard.
4. Always dispose of oil paint, printing ink and paper towels used for clean-up in the metal cans provided in the art rooms. These cans are marked for that purpose. Metal cans are emptied on a daily basis.
5. Never dispose of solvents, turpenoid or mineral spirits of any kind in the sinks. Pouring solvent down the sink is illegal and environmentally dangerous. Always dispose of solvents in the 5-gallon metal can marked Used Turp provided in the art room. Can must be kept closed except when adding solvents.
6. Wear latex gloves for hand protection and old clothes or an apron to protect your clothing.
7. Students should always use an appropriate fireproof metal container for long-term storage of oil paints, printing inks, linseed oils, and solvents. All containers will be stored in the OSHA-approved cabinets provided in the art building.
8. Be aware of the fire extinguishers in the area you are working and how to access them if needed.
9. Wash your hands well after you are finished handling paints, inks and solvents.

## **III. Safe Handling of Acrylic Paints and Gesso:**

1. All paints including acrylic paints and gesso should be used a well-ventilated area.
2. Discarded acrylic paint and rinse water from brush cleaning should never be disposed of in the sink. Always use acrylic waste disposal container provided in the art rooms for that purpose. The used rinse water will be screened to remove paint particles.
3. Wear latex gloves for hand protection and an apron for protecting your clothing.

## **IV. Spray Paint, Aerosol Glues, Fixatives, and Spray Lacquers:**

1. Never smoke or use near open flame. Spray paints and fixatives are extremely flammable.
2. Only use aerosols in the spray booths provided in Room 8 and Room 9.
3. Turn on the spray booth first, and follow the instructions on the can. Avoid breathing these vapors; they are a health hazard.
4. After the work has dried, discard scrap papers in the metal cans provided.
5. When finished, turn off spray booth and store spray cans in fireproof metal container with other flammable paints, oils, etc.

Remember, it is up to you to follow the instructions and procedures provided.

By handling these materials properly, you will minimize the risk of accidents to yourselves and the environment.

I have read this document. I am aware of the proper safe handling procedures and agree to follow them.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Date Course number/section

*(This document should be returned to the art office, where it will be kept on file until the course is concluded.)*

## class schedule subject to change

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08.25/Mon	Lecture	Introduction of myself, course, lab and classmates Discuss syllabus, course requirements and grading Sketchbook & Scrapbook explained Introduction to the Macintosh & Design Lab: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• OS X environment</li><li>• Folder &amp; application navigation</li><li>• Server navigation, saving/backup procedures</li><li>• Printing</li></ul>
	Reading	DE (Design Elements): 6-29
	Assignment	Successful/Unsuccessful Design Research Project
08.27/Wed	<b>Due</b> Lecture	<b>Present Successful/Unsuccessful Design Assignment</b> What is Graphic Design? Video
	Lesson	More on OSX
	Reading	DE: 30-61 How (How to Think Like a Great Graphic Designer): forward and introduction Handout on Design Terms
	Assignment	Study for QUIZ on terms: Wed 09/08
09.01/Mon	<b>OFF Labor Day</b>	
09.03/Wed	Lecture	Discuss readings What are thumbnails? Design process
	Lesson	Illustrator Tutorial—working with shapes/value How to save your work Organization of files and documents Setting files up for printing Introduction to Shape & Value project
	Reading	DE: 62-67 How: Milton Glaser 29-40
	Assignment	Reaction paper on Milton Glaser (due Wed 09/10) Shape & Value thumbnails (8 per word, 24 total) for individual meetings Study for QUIZ on terms
09.08/Mon	<b>Due</b>	<b>QUIZ on Design terms</b> <b>Shape &amp; Value thumbnails</b>
	Lecture	Discussion on reading Video on Milton Glaser
	Classwork	Individual meetings to see Shape & Value thumbnails Translate thumbnails onto computer
	Reading	Handout on History of Design DE: 68-79
	Assignment	Continue working on Shape & Value design Reaction paper (Glaser)

09.10/Wed	Due Lecture Lesson  Classwork Assignment	<b>Reaction paper (Glaser)</b> Discussion on reading & review for Quiz Printing files and creating PDFs Mounting Demonstration—Mount Shape and Value Design project Correct use of spray booth Studio to finish Shape & Value project for next class Mount Shape & Value project for Critique on Monday Study for QUIZ on Monday
09.15/Mon	QUIZ <b>Due</b> Lecture Lesson  Reading  Assignment	Quiz on readings <b>Critique of Project #1: Shape and Value Design</b> Typography, Form and Functions (type anatomy) Tutorial on Extensis Suitcase (font management application) Working with type in Illustrator (type tools and pallets) Introduction to presentation DE: 114-131 How: Seymour Chwast 155-159 (due Wed 09/22) Presentation information given—begin research for Contemporary Designer
09.17/Wed	Lecture  Lesson  Classwork  Reading Assignment	Discuss reading The Figure/Ground Principle Letter Form Exercise on Letter Form (handed in at end of class) Introduction to Figure Ground assignment Begin thumbnails for Figure Ground assignment Individual meetings for Contemporary Designer Presentations DE: 132-145 Reaction paper (Chwast) Thumbnails for Figure Ground (8) work on presentation
09.22/Mon	<b>Due</b>  Lecture  Lesson Classwork  Reading  Assignment	<b>Reaction paper (Chwast)</b> <b>Figure Ground thumbnails (8)</b> PhotoShop lesson for use in presentations scanning images Hierarchy study: quote exercise Studio class—work on presentations and/or Figure Ground Individual meetings to see Figure Ground thumbnails DE: 146-163 How: Massimo Vignelli 213-224 (due Wed 10/01) Finish up Figure Ground (for next class) Work on Contemporary Design Presentation (for next Tuesday)
09.24/Wed	<b>Due</b> Lecture Lesson  Assignment	<b>Critique on Project #2: Figure Ground</b> Discuss reading, review for Quiz Type study: Thrill of the Skill exercise Studio to work on presentations: due next class Finish Presentation due Monday QUIZ on type readings
09.29/Mon	<b>Due</b>  Lecture Reading Assignment	<b>QUIZ on type readings</b> <b>Contemporary Design Presentations</b> Presentations DE: 82-113 Reaction Paper (Vignelli)

10.01/Wed	<b>Due</b> Lecture	<b>Reaction paper (Vignelli)</b> Finish Presentations Discuss reading on color Impact of color in design layout examples of logo design and use of type with imagery
	Assignment	find examples of logos that you like (at least 5 to review)

## MIDTERM

10.06/Mon OFF- Fall Break

10.08/Wed	Lecture Lesson	more on logos and type with imagery (review) Pen tool lesson to be handed in changing letter forms ambiguous type Color printing tutorial Introduction to Logo/Identity project (part 1)
	Classwork Reading Assignment	Studio class—working on Logo/Identity project How: Michael Bierut 5-17 (due Mon 10/20) 10 thumbnails for Logo/Identity (5 for two categories)

10.13/Mon	<b>Due</b> Lesson	<b>10 thumbnails Logo/Identity</b> Searching images on web Live Trace tool in Illustrator Red Ladder logo exercise
	Classwork	Studio class—working on Logo/Identity project Individual meetings to discuss thumbnails
	Reading Assignment	DE: 164-171 Work on Logo/Identity project

10.15/Wed	Lecture Lesson	discuss reading Taking Logo/Identity one step further: letterhead & business card InDesign tutorial—importing illustrator files into InDesign
	Classwork	set up files for Business Cards and Letter Heads Studio class—working on Logo/Identity project
	Assignment	Logo design due for working critique (save in PAWN folder) Reaction Paper (Bierut) Lay out letterhead and business card in InDesign

10.20/Mon	<b>Due</b>	<b>Reaction paper (Bierut)</b> <b>Working critique (not mounted—save in PAWN folder)</b>
	Classwork Assignment	Studio class—finishing up Logo/Identity project work on Logo/Identity Project

10.22/Wed	Classwork Reading Assignment	Studio class—finishing up Logo/Identity project How: Chip Kidd 135-144 (due Mon 11/03) Finish and mount Logo/Identity Project for crit next class
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10.27/Mon	<b>Due</b> Lecture Reading	<b>Critique on Project #3: Logo/Identity Design</b> Video (Pentagram group) DE: 172-187
10.29/Wed	Lecture Lesson Classwork  Assignment	Discuss reading InDesign—Key commands & how to set type Exercise in how to set type <b>Introduction to Type study: focusing on Rags</b> Studio to begin Type study assignment Typographic Studies assignment Reaction paper (Kidd)
11.03/Mon	<b>Due</b>  Lesson  Classwork Reading Assignment	<b>Reaction paper (Kidd)</b> <b>Typographic Studies: focusing on Rags</b> More on InDesign, key commands & type setting Tutorial on layout: Trapped design <b>Introduction to type design/feature story layout</b> Studio: type design/feature story layout DE: 188-195 Work on type design/feature story layout
11.05/Wed	Lecture Lesson Classwork  Reading  Assignment	Discuss reading Grid systems Exercise in how to set up a grid system <b>Introduction to Type study: focusing on Grid Systems</b> Studio to begin Type study/grids assignment or work on Feature design DE: 198-217 How: Paula Scher 41-51 (due Mon 11/17) Typographic Studies assignment (due Wed) Feature design (due Wed)

## WITHDRAW BY FRIDAY

11.10/Mon	Lesson  Classwork Reading Assignment	PhotoShop Tutorial: creating a clipping path InDesign Tutorial: creating text wraps Studio: type design/feature story layout or grid study DE: 218-235 Finish and mount Feature story layout
11.12/Wed	<b>Due</b>  Reading  Assignment	<b>Feature design critique</b> <b>Typographic Studies: focusing on Grids</b> DE: 236-245 How: Jessica Helfand 145-154 Reaction paper (Scher) start studying for Quiz on readings (next Wed)

11.17/Mon	<b>Due</b> Lecture  Classwork Assignment	<b>Reaction paper (Scher)</b> Discuss reading review for QUIZ look at <i>package</i> designs Introduction to Final project Studio Study for QUIZ bring at least 5 concepts for Final to discuss next class bring one sample of <i>package</i> design
11.19/Wed	<b>Due</b>  Lesson Classwork  Assignment	<b>QUIZ</b> <b>5 Concepts for final package design sample</b> Look at package design samples Individual meetings to discuss concepts for Final Studio Thumbnails for Final: at least 5 thumbnails for poster and 5 for ticket (10 total)
11.24/Mon	Classwork  Reading  Assignment	Individual meetings to review thumbnails for Final (poster & ticket) Studio How: Lucille Tenazas 161-172 DE: 246-269 (by next Wed) Reaction paper (Tenazas: due Mon)
11.26/Wed	<b>OFF</b>	<b>Thanksgiving</b>
12.01/Mon	Classwork Reading Assignment	Studio finish DE: 246-269 Thumbnails: at least 5 for the mailer
12.03/Wed	<b>Due</b> Lecture Classwork  Assignment	<b>Thumbnails for mailer</b> Discuss reading Individual meetings to review mailer thumbnails Studio work on Final <b>Scrapbooks Due</b>
12.08/Mon	<b>Due</b> Classwork	<b>Scrapbooks to be handed in</b> Studio class—final project
12.10/Wed	Classwork	Studio class—final project

Final due next week  
Sign up for individual reviews