

# Introduction to Graphic Design

**Instructor:** Kirsli Spinks

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**office hours:** by appointment before and on Thursdays

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Note that messages left after 4:30 will not be received until the following day.

**room:** Priscilla Payne Hurd (South) Campus  
Hill Room 309

ONE HUNDRED THIRTY ONE  
MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS  
6:30-9

## **course description:**

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 142 or permission of instructor.

## **required textbooks:**

*Design Elements: A Graphic Design Manual*; by Timothy Samara

## **required supplies:**

- portable mass storage device: one or more USB Flash Drives (at least 4GB total) OR firewire or USB portable hard drive of comparable or larger size
- one large sketchbook for thumbnails, reflections, ideas and design specimen collection etc.
- folder/notebook for handouts and note-taking
- several (2-3 sheets) black mat board (32"x40" NOT foam core)
- pen/pencil and eraser & extra fine sharpies (or other writing implement) for sketching
- Although cutting boards, spray mount and x-acto 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.

## **students will:**

- Be introduced to the basic principles and techniques of graphic design and their application
- 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 critical thinking and the creative use of images and text
- Gain valuable skills in strong and rapid idea generation through thumbnail sketches
- Demonstrate understanding of the principles of design through the sharing of ideas during group critiques
- Analyze and critically evaluate graphic design work and its intention using vocabulary germane to the discipline
- Gain an intermediate knowledge of the three main types of design programs on the Macintosh platform: 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. The classes will consist of computer instruction, assignment conceptualization, ideation (sketchbook exercises and thumbnails), quizzes, project execution and critique. They will focus on the practical application of design principles; theory, concepts and terminology presented in the project introductions. Class work will consist of work on exercises, tutorials and projects. Specifically, preliminary class exercises, which involve idea generation, design principles and will be seminal to each major project. It is extremely important whatever your career, that you have the ability to interpret, express, and communicate ideas to others. Each project will be subject to individual and group class critique. Note that the purpose of the critique is to improve the end product; it is not a critique of the individual.

## **on critiques:**

- Critiques are an integral part of the learning process of this class. It is a participatory activity and not a passive experience. You must participate in each critique. Part of your grade depends on your engagement in group discussions and your responses to the work of your classmates.
- Critiques will usually take the form of posing questions intended to stimulate original thought and the formation of opinion. True learning is the result of personal discovery.
- Discussions may seem to stray from the specific topic of a project. This is a natural part of the process of becoming

aware of the association between things that are often overlooked or seen as unrelated. Sharing our experience of the world around us results in exchanges from which ideas are born.

#### **attendance:**

The Art Department established this department-wide attendance policy to apply to students in all art classes, beginning with the Fall 2007 semester.

- For classes that meet twice a week (most full-unit studio courses, most day art history classes): After the second unexcused absence, final grade will be dropped by one full letter. After the fourth unexcused absence, student will receive a failing final grade.
- For classes that meet once a week (half-unit studio courses, seminars, evening art history courses): After the first unexcused absence, final grade will be dropped by one full letter. After the third unexcused absence, student will receive a failing final grade.
- For classes that meet three times a week (MWF day art history classes): After the third unexcused absence, final grade will be dropped by one full letter. After the fifth unexcused absence, student will receive a failing final grade.
- An excused absence is one confirmed by a note from the Dean's Office, Student Services, the Learning Center, or verified with a doctor's note (within 24 hours of illness). Death in family should be confirmed with Student Services.
- Documentation is required for sports. Coach should email a note to instructor confirming matches, meets, departure time for away games, or anything that would require absence from class. Practice is not an excused absence.
- Job interviews or doctor's/dentist's appointments are not to be scheduled during class.

#### **missing portions of class:**

##### **the following count as unexcused absences**

- More than 15 minutes late for class
- Failure to bring supplies to class
- Failure to return from break
- Leaving class half an hour or more early
- Being tardy more than 3 times. Tardiness: being 5 to 15 minutes late for class

**If you are late or absent, it is your responsibility (not the professor's) to find out what you missed and to catch up in a timely manner.**

#### **disability statement:**

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

#### **academic honesty policy:**

Plagiarism of design in any form will not be tolerated and will result in a zero or F. Concepts and layouts must be your thoughts and ideas. Be aware that I am well versed in historical and current design trends.

#### **class etiquette:**

Come to class prepared and ready to work. Projects must be finished by the beginning of class unless otherwise noted. Ichat, AIM, ICQ, MSN, Facebook, e-mail, online games or anything not related to class assignments will not be tolerated. If found on one of these sites or using one of these programs you will be asked to leave and you will be considered absent from class. You may listen to music on headphones, however this must be kept at a minimum volume (I should not be able to hear your music) while the whole group is doing work.

Mobile phones will not be tolerated. They must be switched off at the beginning of class and not turned back on until leaving. No playing with phones while I am speaking, demonstrating or presenting material. This is considered rude and disrespectful.

You may not leave class early unless I have given you permission.

When class is in session we will behave as if we were in a professional environment. Think about how you would behave if you were at your job. Once again, this is an advance level class in preparation for the next step, please behave like a professional.

#### **grading:**

Standard numeric grading scale:

A = 95-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69	F = 59 and Below
A- = 90-94	B = 84-86	C = 74-76	D = 64-66	
	B- = 80-83	C- = 70-73	D- = 60-63	

- Grading for a course in studio art must be in harmony with its goals. Competency and understanding of the methods and materials of this course is easily measured objectively. Creativity (concept) and craftsmanship (form) is more a matter of subjective determination. Effort, time and progress, along with participation, will also be a factor in determining grades. Projects receive a grade that is based on technical accomplishment and concept.
- Grades for an unexcused absence from a scheduled critique will be penalized 10%. No extensions will be given for an assignment without a legitimate reason.
- Missing critiques, test, or presentations are not permitted.
- Late projects will receive a penalty of 1/3 of a grade for each week it is past due.
- Incompletes will not be given except under the most extreme circumstances.

**A grade of A is a special accomplishment and is the result of consistently going beyond the basic requirements laid out for the course. Grades are earned.**

Here is a summary of the requirements for a grade of A for this course:

- Consistent, On Time Attendance.

Week	Date	Monday	Date	Wednesday
1	1/16	<p>Intro to Course and Lab Discuss Syllabus and Requirements, Sketchbook and Grading Intro to Mac/Systems/Servers/Suitcase Blog Lecture: "20 Rules for Good Design"</p> <p>Homework: 5 Successful and 5 unsuccessful Designs for the blog 5 Successful and 5 Unsuccessful designs in print (no internet images) Due 1/23</p> <p>Read Chapter 1 in Design Elements (DE) (pages. 30-57)</p>	1/18	<p>Intro to Illustrator/Tutorials Lecture: Form and Space (definition of form and space, layout, (vertical vs. horizontal), positive and negative space, clarity and decisiveness, dot-line-plane, geometric vs. organic shapes)</p> <p>Exercises in: Dots Line Plane, Negative and positive space, geometric vs. organic shapes, surface activity</p> <p>Handout: Graphic Design terminology</p> <p>HW: Read in DE Pages 58-69 Spend time in the lab with Illustrator</p>
2	1/23	<p>Illustrator Tutorial Discuss good vs. bad design</p> <p>Lecture: surface activity, breaking space (static and dynamic) near and far, movement, symmetry and asymmetry, activating space</p> <p>Continue working on Form and Space Design Words/feelings/objects</p> <p>Exercises in: Movement, activity,</p> <p>Homework: Continue to get to know Illustrator</p> <p>Read in DE pages 70-79</p>	1/25	<p>Illustrator Tutorial Show: Compositional contrast, proportional systems, ID and difference</p> <p>Exercises in Proportions and interplay</p> <p>Project 1: Abstract words Choose 5 words to illustrate Due: Middle of class 1/30 with 10 thumbnail sketches of each word</p> <p>Homework: Read in DE pages 80-113</p>

Week	Date	Monday	Date	Wednesday
3	1/30	Illustrator Tutorial Work on 5 Illustrations Printing and Mounting Lesson  Critique on Project 1  After critique go back and add color.  HW: Colorize word abstractions into: Single Hue, Complementary, analogous, triadic value, temperature Due: 2/1 Bring in self portrait photo Work on pen tool	2/1	Illustrator Tutorial/Photoshop Tutorial Work on Pen tool Scanning tutorial  Project 2: Avatar with pen tool Due: Feb 8  HW: Read from DE pages 114-163
4	2/6	Work on Project 2 Discuss Blog work so far Illustrator/Indesign tutorials  Lecture: Typography	2/8	Project 2 Due Work on Type specimen exercises Project 3: Gallery Invite Postcards Due: Feb 22 20 Thumbnails Due: 2/13
5	2/13	Due: 20 thumbnails Lecture on History of Design Assign Graphic Designers Due: Feb 27  Work on Gallery Invite HW: Read from DE pages 164-195	2/15	Photoshop/Indesign/Illustrator tutorials Lecture: Vector vs. Raster Images  Work on Postcards in class
6	2/20	Photoshop/Indesign/Illustrator Tutorials  Lecture on Logo and Identity  Work on Postcards in class	2/22	Project 3 Due Critique  Project 4: Festival Poster and Ticket Due: March 14
7	2/27	Designer Presentations  Work on Project 4 20 Thumbnails due	2/29	Designer Presentations  Work on Project 4  HW: Read in DE pages 196-269
8	3/5	<b>Spring Break</b>	3/7	<b>Spring Break</b>
9	3/12	Work on Project 4  Lecture: Layout and Grids	3/14	Project 4 Due Critique  Project 5: Logo and Identity Due: March 28 20 sketches/thumbnails due March 19 Color watches and sketches due: March 21
10	3/19	Program Tutorials  Due: 20 Thumbnails  Work on Project 5  HW: Research Designers Choose 3 designers and research them. Writing assignment: 1000 words Due: April 4	3/21	Due: Color Swatches with descriptions Finalized sketches  Work on Project 5

Week	Date	Monday	Date	Wednesday
11	3/26	Program Tutorials Working Critique  Discussion on Blog findings  Work on Project 5	3/28	Project 5 Due Critique  Project 6: Social Conscience poster Due: April 11 20 thumbnails/sketches due April 4
12	4/2	Program Tutorials  Discuss topics for posters Work on Posters	4/4	Due: Thumbnails/Sketches  Project 7: Feature Designer Spread Due 4/28 20 thumbnails due April 9th  Research assigned designers Work on Project 6
13	4/9	Research Assigned Designer Work on Project 6  Work on Project 7	4/11	Due: Project 6 Critique  Lecture on Final Portfolio CDs Due 4/25
14	4/16	Work on Project 7	4/18	Due: Project 7 Critique
15	4/23	Work on Final Portfolio CD	4/25	Due: Final Portfolio CD  Turn in Redesigns

- All Work Submitted On Time.
- Class Participation as Described in Syllabus.
- Innovative & Meaningful Solutions for all Assignments
- Technical Expertise.
- Productive Use of Class Time.
- Regular Use of Open Lab Time.
- Clean, Well-Crafted Presentation.

**projects: (subject to change):**

**grades:**

**successful completion of projects: 50%**

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.

**projects MUST be ready to hand in or present at the BEGINNING of class on the due date.**

Grade penalties are as follows:

- 10% - after beginning of class ON due date TO next class • 40% - TWO weeks after deadline
- 20% - ONE week after deadline • 60% - beyond TWO weeks after deadline

**quizzes & papers: 10%**

Quizzes on handouts, reading assignments and computer skills will be given periodically. Writing assignments will be based on self assessments, theories as well as visual engagement (also known as reaction papers) and other topics as assigned.

**reaction paper:**

A reaction paper is an informal one-page writing about a piece or series of artworks viewed in person at a gallery or museum. The art department arranges for several opportunities to visit museums and galleries in the surrounding areas. It should be more than a simple summary of the material; it should contain your opinion or reaction to viewing the artwork. This may take on a variety of forms. You may compare the work to other related artwork and talk about why you were so drawn to the work. You may discuss why you think the artist made the decision that they made and/or 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.

**participation: 10%**

Participation in critiques, discussions and presentations refers to your positive engagement in dialogue and is the heart and soul of this course. Not only does your active involvement in this important aspect of the class have a significant impact on your grade, it is an essential part of the learning experience and life of this class. Lack of participation will be reflected in the final grade.

**participation also includes:**

- Promptness and attendance at all labs, lectures and critiques AND being prepared for each class (readings, supplies, etc.)
- Using class time efficiently and effectively
- Respectful use and care of computer systems, peripherals, equipment and supplies
- Being self-reliant enough to try and answer your own questions instead of immediately relying on someone else to think for you. You will have a hard time making progress in this class unless you learn to discover things for yourself.
- Coming to class with opinions and ideas!

**sketchbook: 10%**

Your sketchbook will become an extension of you while in this class. This book will become your “think tank.” I will view them periodically throughout the semester. For each project, you will be expected to come up with many thumbnail sketches before you even think about designing on the computer. Resist the urge! This does not come easy to most. You will be expected to continually collect design specimens and attach them in your sketchbook. 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 and literature; packaging and clothing tags; scan and print, or 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. Jot down why you decided to include each item. This will benefit you and act as a resource for inspiration.

**presentations: 10%**

Each student is required to research the work of a contemporary graphic designer who has made an important contribution to the design world and prepare a 10–15 minute presentation. Specifics to be determined. Presentations that are not prepared for their due dates will receive an automatic zero.

**final portfolio: 10%**

Each student is required to create a CD portfolio of all projects and sketchbook pages to be handed in at the end of the course. This will consist of gathering, organizing, scanning, exporting and renaming all work and burning and labeling a CD-R according to instructions. This will be due the last day of class.

**PLEASE NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to make changes in any aspect of this syllabus/schedule for the sake of content improvement of scheduling changes due to class cancellations or due date rescheduling.**