

Introduction to Graphic Design

WINTERSESSION 2014
T & TH / 1–6 PM
Design Center / RM 501

KELLY WALTERS
kwalters@risd.edu
Graphic Design Dept.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Graphic Design influences our lives daily, from the way we think, what we buy and even how we express ourselves. In Introduction to Graphic Design we will examine the basic principles, techniques and tools of graphic design. By learning about artists such as William Morris to designers like Paula Scher. You will learn about the history of graphic design through its notable figures as well as learn about form, typography and image making. The class structure will consist of lectures, computer tutorials, short/long term projects and critiques. An emphasis will be placed on learning basic design principles through a series of experimental exercises that incorporate drawing, collage, and the use of the computer. You will be expected to develop your technical skills through research, sketches and conceptual development.

Open to majors and non-majors | 3 credits + max. class size 14

AIMS / GOALS

The principal goal of Introduction to Graphic Design is to help you gain a better understanding of design vocabulary, and learn how to integrate that language into your ideas, both visually and verbally. As stated by, Sharon Helmer Poggenpohl, "Graphic design is a creative process that combines art and technology to communicate ideas. The designer works with a variety of communication tools in order to convey a message from a client to a particular audience. The main tools are image and typography." By the end you will come away with 5 quality pieces that you can use to build to your graphic design portfolio. The course will use graphic design thinking and making, as a way to examine cultural perspectives and their impact on design work via language, symbols or formal treatments.

LEARNING & GRADING OUTCOMES

Grades will be based on the quality of the assignments, in-class work, quizzes, attendance and active participation in the classroom.

50%

All major projects, in-class work and homework
(Influenced by process, concept, communication and craft)

Project 1 / Visual languages and styles

Project 2 / Geometric and organic compositions

Project 3 / Ability to develop comprehensive brand identity systems

Project 4 / Narrative and sequence through type & image

Project 5 / Contemporary/historical design knowledge

30%

All major exams and quizzes
(Understanding of design fundamentals and history)

20%

Attendance and participation
(In class critique and discussion)

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

It is expected that you come to class prepared and ready to work. That means bringing the required materials needed for class and being engaged in class discussion. Also, please be courteous. Cell phones, ipods, iPhones, droids, blackberrys and other addictive shiny devices must be silenced and put away during class. It's not cool to text while I'm speaking, so please don't.

COMPUTER LABS & FEES

I recommend that you use either your own personal computers with the latest software, or the available computer labs to do your work. The Advanced Media Lab in room 206 is on the second floor of Design Center and is open daily. Please note that the estimated cost of printing using the RISD facilities will be around \$100-150 for the course.

ATTENDANCE

Don't be late. Seriously, not cool. Class attendance is required. Given the amount of material covered in this course, missing more than two classes is unacceptable. Please notify me via e-mail if you anticipate missing a class or afterward if the circumstances dictate. Your final letter grade will drop a letter for every absence past two. It is still your responsibility to turn in assignments and find out what you missed.

ASSIGNMENTS & DEADLINES

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class. Not in the middle, not at the end, at the beginning. Be prepared to spend substantial amounts of time inside and outside class preparing and executing your work. Your grade will be deducted a letter grade for every day an assignment is late.

REQUIRED BOOK

Graphic Design: The New Basics
Ellen Lupton & Jennifer Cole Phillips



RECOMMENDED READING

Design Elements: A Graphic Style Manual
Timothy Samara

The History of Graphic Design
Phillip Meggs

REQUIRED MATERIALS & TOOLS

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| + Sketchbook | + Digital Camera & Laptop | + Metal Ruler (12" or 18") |
| + Tracing Paper | + Pencils & Pens | + Photocopier access money/card |
| + X-Acto Knife (w/extra blades) | + Erasers | + Adobe Illustrator & InDesign |
| + Cutting Matt (12" x 18") | + Bristol Board Pad (11" x 14") | + External Harddrive or Flash Drive |
| + Scissors | + Black Sharpie Markers
(fine, medium and thick sizes) | + Pushpins for critique |
| + Glue Sticks | | |

Graphic Design is...

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To understand the meaning of design is...to understand the part form and content play...and to realize that design is also commentary, opinion, a point of view, and social responsibility. To design is much more simply to assemble, to order, or even to edit; it is to add value and meaning to illuminate, to simplify, to clarify, to modify, to dignify, to dramatize, to persuade, and perhaps even to amuse.

Design is both a verb and a noun. It is the beginning as well as the end, the process and product of imagination.

Paul Rand
Design, Form, and Chaos

A graphic designer is a communicator: someone who takes ideas and gives them visual form so that others can understand them. The designer uses **imagery, symbols, type, color and material** – whether it's concrete like printing on a page, or somewhat intangible, like pixels on a computer screen or light in a video – to represent the ideas that must be conveyed and to organize them into a unified message. Graphic designers perform this service on behalf of a company or an organization to help the entity get its message out to its audience and, in so doing evoke a particular response.

Graphic design, as an industry, is a cousin to advertising, both of which were born from the tumultuous period of the Industrial revolution of the late 1700s and early 1800s, when the working class – finding itself with time on its hands and money to spend in the pursuit of comfort – began to look for stuff to buy and things to do. Graphic design and advertising share one particular goal – to inform the public about goods, services, events, or ideas that someone believes will be important to them; but graphic design parts company with advertising when it comes to ultimate purpose. Once advertising informs its audience about some product or event, it cajoles the audience into spending money. Graphic design however, simply seeks to clarify the message and craft into an emotional experience. **Granted, graphic design often is used by advertising to sell; but the designing of messages is, at its core, its own endeavor altogether.**

This purpose is what differentiates graphic design from other disciplines in visual arts – a purpose defined by a client and manifested by a designer, rather than a purpose generated from within the designer. True, the fine arts patron historically was often a client to the great painters, but, up until nineteenth century, artistic creation was understood to be intrinsically a service industry. It wasn't until the 1830s that the mystique of the bohemian painter as “expresser of self” arose and, even more recently – since the mid 1970s – the idea of the graphic designer as “author”

In the fifty-odd years since the design industry began to ask business to take it seriously as a profession, the graphic designer has been touted as everything from visual strategist

to cultural arbiter – shaping not only the corporate bottom line through clever visual manipulation of the brand-hungry public, but also the larger visual language of the postmodern environment. All these functions are important to graphic design... but, lest we forget the simplicity of the designer's true nature, let us return to what a graphic designer does.

A graphic designer assimilates verbal concepts and gives them form into a tangible, navigable experience. The quality of the experience is dependent on the designer's skill and sensibility in creating or selecting forms with which to manifest concepts, or messages. A designer is responsible for intellectual and emotional vitality of the experience he or she visits upon the audience for such message.

The designer's task is to elevate the experience of the message above the banality of literal transmission and the confusing self-indulgent egoism of mere eye-candy or self-fulfillment – although these might be important to the designer. Beauty is a function, after all, of any relevant visual message. Just as prose can be dull and straightforward or well edited by and lyrical, so too can a utilitarian object be designed to be more than just simply what it is.

Some time around 1932, Adolf Loos the noted Viennese architect, said, “There is great difference between an urn and a chamber pot, and in the difference there is leeway for culture.” That's a lot of leeway. Designing is a discipline that integrates an enormous amount of knowledge and skill with intuition, but it's more than just the various aspects that go into it: understanding the fundamentals of form and composition; applying those fundamentals to evoke emotion and signify higher-order concepts; manipulating color messages; understanding semiotics and the relationship between different kinds of visual signs; controlling the pacing of material and informational hierarchy; integrating type and image for unified, coherent messaging; and planning the fabrication of the work and ensuring its physical quality as an object, whether it's printed, animated on screen, or built.

Design Elements: A Graphic Style Manual
Timothy Samara

Course Schedule Overview

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WEEK ONE Visual Languages	thursday 1/9	Introductions/Lecture 1 (Arts & Craft, Art Nouveau) Introduce Project 1 (Visual Scavenger Hunt) Field Trip to Picture Library	Homework Reading 1: Texture & Framing Find and Scan Imagery for Project 1	Notes:
	friday 1/10	Lecture 2 (Cubism, Point, Line, Plane) Small Group Critique	Homework: Reading 2: Point, Line, Plane Finish Project 1	Notes:
WEEK TWO Form, Space and Color	wednesday 1/15	Lecture 3 (Futurism, Dada, Form) / Critique Project 1 Introduce Project 2 (Geometric Abstractions)	Homework: Reading 3: Figure/Ground & Scale Create Black & White Compositions	Notes:
	thursday 1/16	Lecture 4 (De Stijl, Constructivism, Color) Small Group Critique / Work Session	Homework: Reading 4: Rhythm & Balance Finish Project 2	Notes:
	friday 1/17	Lecture 5 (Corp. ID), Critique Project 2 Introduce Project 3 Part I (Brand System) Work Session	Homework: Reading 5: Color Find Logo Examples	Notes:
WEEK THREE Typography and Grids	thursday 1/23	Lecture 6 (Bauhaus, Type & Grids) Small Group Critique / Work Session Introduce Project 3 Part II (Brochure & Letterhead)	Homework: Reading 6: Typography & Hierarchy Design layout for Project 3 Collateral	Notes:
	friday 1/24	Lecture 7 (Typography) / Critique Project 3	Homework: Reading 7: Grids	Notes:
WEEK FOUR Type & Image, Narrative /Sequence	wednesday 1/29	Lecture 8 (Type & Image Methods) Introduce Project 4 (Posters) Research Designers and prepare presentations	Homework: Reading 8: Image & Type Finish presentations	Notes:
	thursday 1/30	Individual Presentations Introduce Project 5 (Postcards)	Homework: Reading 9: Time & Motion Finish Poster Draft 1	Notes:
	friday 1/31	Critique of Poster Drafts / Work Session	Homework: Reading 10: Rules and Randomness Finish Postcard Draft 1	Notes:
WEEK FIVE	thursday 2/6	History Exam Small Group Critique of posters and postcards	Homework: Revise and finish Projects 4 & 5 Next class bring in all projects for review	Notes:
	friday 2/7	View work of other Wintersession Studios / Final Critique of all work		

Weekly Schedule

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WEEK ONE Visual Languages / Identifying style, aesthetics and texture

Day	Subject	Assignment in Class	Resources	Lecture/Crit	Tools/ Materials	Homework
Thursday 1/9	Project 1 Scavenger Hunt	1. Select images from Picture Library 2. Thumbnail sketches of several basic concepts	RISD Picture Library	1. Introduction of course 2. Introduction and demonstration of project 1	Laptop, pencil and paper	For next Thursday bring in 25 photo cards at size
Wednesday 1/15	Project 2 Geometric Abstractions	Investigate the relationship of positive and negative space	<i>Graphic Style Manual</i> Timothy Samara	1. Introduction to form and space 2. Introduction and demonstration of project 2	Laptop, pencil and paper	For next Thursday bring in 10 black and white compositions mounted onto bristol board
Friday 1/17	Project 3 Branding	Revise or update Project 3. Review books on branding.	<i>The New Big Book of Logos</i> David E. Carter	1. Review and crit homework 2. Demonstration and introduction of Project 3	Laptop, pencil and paper	For next Thursday bring in 3 logo directions printed on 8" x 8" paper.

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WEEK TWO Form, Space and Color/Creating geometric and organic compositions and understanding color harmony

Day	Subject	Assignment in Class	Resources	Lecture/Crit	Tools/ Materials	Homework
Wednesday 1/23	Project 3 Part II Brochure & Letterhead	1. Review Bauhaus examples 2. Thumbnail sketches of several basic concepts	<i>Letterhead & Logo Design 11</i> Design Army	1. Bauhaus History 2. Type and Grids 3. Introduction to Project 3, Part II	Laptop, pencil and paper	Prepare final work for Project 3, logo, letterhead, envelope and brochure
Thursday 1/24	Project 3 Parts I & II	Project 3 Critique	<i>Graphic Style Manual</i> Timothy Samara	Critique in small and large groups	Laptop, pencil and paper	Reading on Image and Type and narrative sequence
Friday 1/29	Project 4 Narrative and Sequence	Review poster examples	<i>Graphic Design: The New Basics</i> Jennifer Lupton	1. Type and Image Method Techniques 2. Demonstration and introduction of Project 4	Laptop, pencil and paper	Draft Poster 1 and Reading on Time and Motion

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WEEK THREE Typography and Grids / Learning to structure a document and to align based on hierarchy

Day	Subject	Assignment in Class	Resources	Lecture/Crit	Tools/ Materials	Homework
Wednesday 1/30	Project 4 Brochure & Letterhead	1. Select images from Picture Library 2. Thumbnail sketches of several basic concepts	<i>The History of Graphic Design</i> Phillip Meggs	1. Bauhaus History 2. Type and Grids 3. Introduction to Project 3, Part II	Laptop, pencil and paper	Study for History Exam and review notes and references
Thursday 1/31	Project 5 & History Exam	Investigate the relationship of positive and negative space	<i>Graphic Style Manual</i> Timothy Samara	1. Critique Project 4 2. Introduction and demonstration of project 5	Laptop, pencil and paper	Finish Project 5
Friday 2/6	Project 5	Critique of all work from semester	Design Center Classrooms	1. Critique Project 5 2. Tour other wintersession classes		Email PDFs of all work to Kelly

Feedback

Mid-Semester

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These questions are intended to help me understand your background in order to better serve your learning needs. Please answer them to the best of your ability.

What is the most important thing you have learned so far?

What assignment, lecture or demo have you liked the most and why?

What do you feel like you need the most help with and why?

Are there any specific areas that we have already covered that you feel you need more time or experience with?

What topics in graphic design interest you the most?

COURSE GOALS

The principal goal of Introduction to Graphic Design is to help you gain a better understanding of design vocabulary, and learn how to integrate that language into your ideas, both visually and verbally. By the end you will come away with 5 quality pieces that you can use to build to your graphic design portfolio.

Now that we have been working for half a semester, rate your understanding of the following:

	Don't understand				Completely understand
Form	1	2	3	4	5
Composition	1	2	3	4	5
Design History	1	2	3	4	5
Typography	1	2	3	4	5
Color	1	2	3	4	5
Collage	1	2	3	4	5

COMMENTS:

Feedback

Semester Recap

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These questions are intended to help me understand what you've learned by the end of the semester. Please answer them to the best of your ability.

What is the most important thing you have learned in Intro to GD?

What assignment, lecture or demo provided the most information?

Are there some things you are still unclear on how to do?

What improvements do you feel could be helpful if this class is taught again?

What topics would you have preferred to have received more instruction?

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Now that we are at the end of the semester, rate your understanding of the following:

	Don't understand				Completely understand
Form	1	2	3	4	5
Composition	1	2	3	4	5
Design History	1	2	3	4	5
Typography	1	2	3	4	5
Color	1	2	3	4	5
Collage	1	2	3	4	5

COMMENTS:

Grading Assessment

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+ PROCESS

Your level of exploration through sketches, research, and series of revisions throughout the course of the project. This also includes using classroom work time effectively and meeting project deadlines.

+ CONCEPT

The big idea that unifies the project, making it memorable and meaningful. There is a clear and engaging message that demonstrates a solution to the design brief.

+ COMMUNICATION

The ability to express and articulate the project direction; orally and written. This also includes participation in giving/receiving feedback in class critiques, and asking/answering questions during discussions.

+ CRAFT

The attention to detail and care you put into your work. The execution of your work should be thoughtfully considered and carefully executed. This also includes your level of proficiency and usage of both analog and digital tools. The final design should be portfolio quality work. This includes following all project specifications such as size, scale and format as outlined in the project brief.

PROJECT GRADES

50% All major projects, in-class work and homework (Influenced by process, concept, communication and craft).

30% All major exams and quizzes (Understanding of design fundamentals and history)

20% Attendance and participation (In class critique and discussion)

Every major project will get assessed by the following criteria:

	ADVANCED COMPETENCY 4 Points	PROFICIENT COMPETENCY 3 Points	BASIC COMPETENCY 2 Points	FAR BELOW BASIC COMPETENCY 1 Points
PROCESS	Student collection of research, notes and sketches provides a healthy trajectory for investigation and potential solutions.	Student collection of research, notes and sketches does not provide any clear direction for solution, but there is potential.	Student collection of research, notes and sketches is incomplete or lacking. Student's understanding of problem is vague.	No collection of research, notes and sketches.
CONCEPT	The graphics and text used on the project reflect an exceptional degree of student creativity in their creation and/or display.	The graphics and text used on the design project reflect a moderate level of student creativity in their creation and/or display.	The graphics and text used by the student are based on the designs or ideas of others and don't demonstrate original ideas.	Graphics and text do not demonstrate any original thought or creativity
COMMUNICATION	Message is bold, compelling and possibly multi-layered. It goes beyond the obvious.	Message is clear and compelling. It may not be as subtle as it could be.	Message is clear but fails to go beyond something simple or obvious.	Message is absent or contradictory.
CRAFT	Portfolio quality presentation, executed with great attention to detail.	Presentation meets all requirements that were described in the project brief.	Work has imperfections that create minor distractions. Poorly trimmed, adhesive failure, measurements are off, eraser or pencil marks are visible.	Not portfolio quality work. Imperfections are highly distracting and take away from the overall effectiveness.

1 / *Visual Scavenger Hunt*

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Whether setting type or depicting a tree, the designer uses texture to establish a mood, reinforce a point of view, or convey a sense of physical presence. A body of text set in *Garamond Italic* will have a delicately irregular appearance, while a text set in Univers roman will appear optically smooth with even tonality. Likewise, a smoothly drawn vector illustration will have a different feel from an image taken with a camera or created with code.

THE PURPOSE of this first assignment is to introduce you to the process of examining your environment, selecting visually different objects and learning how to curate a collection.

In this project you will be going on a scavenger hunt to find and examine visual languages. Each of you will be assigned a letter. Based on this letter, you will collect several objects for each of the 10 categories listed on the right. Every item you collect must begin with the letter you were given.

Find as many different visual examples as you can. Think about texture, line quality, organic and geometric elements as you search for your objects. Also, think about the living and working spaces you use everyday. What objects can you find in these environments that will fit with your letter?

Illustrations, hand-drawn sketches, diagrams and scientific images are all fair game. **No internet or iPhone imagery may be used.**

Your research should include a trip to the RISD Picture Collection & Rockefeller Libraries. The following can be great places to start to find source image material: flyers, posters, pamphlets, novels, text books, street signs, your office drawer/desk, greeting cards, your backpack, the cafeteria, etc.

DUE TOMORROW Jan. 10

Bring in a collection of at least 25 different images (and their physical source). As you find your images, scan them in at 300 dpi in grayscale (nothing should be in color) and print them out. We will have time in class to mount individually to 4" x 4" squares of bristol board. Please show the full image within the square, do not crop down. Materials needed for class: Laptop, Flash Drive, X-Acto, cutting mat, bristol board, glue sticks, etc.

1. The letter

Various typefaces and styles

2. Pattern or Texture

Dotted, woodgrain, zigzag, checkered

3. Location or Geography

Countries, states, cities, streets, planets

4. Animals

5. Food

6. Logos and Symbols

Notable brand identities, icons and isotypes

7. Body Parts

8. Punctuation and Graphic Elements

Commas, exclamation points and brackets

9. Basic Shapes

Squares, circles, triangles

10. Objects smaller than an iPhone

READING

Chapters: Texture & Framing
Graphic Design: The New Basics
