

NICK
COSTANTINO

TEACHING
PORTFOLIO

CONTENTS

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY	3
INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT	5
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS	6
SYLLABUS	9
PROJECT ASSIGNMENT	15
MIDTERM FEEDBACK FORM	17
COURSE ASSESSMENT CHART	19

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Curiosity drives my art practice and is at the core of my teaching. Part of what drew me into printmaking is the endless problem solving that accompanies print projects. Added to this is a deep appreciation I feel for crafting with my hands and the labor involved in creating art objects. Through the joy of making I've gained invaluable insight into the world and how I exist within it and I have the simple but sincere desire to awaken that curiosity and insight in others. In our digital and automated present, engagement with others and the physical world around us is becoming more and more superficial and art and printmaking offer a way to reverse that trend. I've seen evidence of that possibility through teaching assistantships in drawing, bookbinding, and printmaking. In those classrooms I've watched as the realm of endless creative problems and solutions take shape for students and seen their engagement with their work and each other in the shop grow. And that is my chief goal, to give students the tools to delve more deeply into their ideas, start thinking critically, start tackling the creative problems that arise on their own and with the help of their peers, and generally be more present.

To get there, some of the best methods I use in the classroom I learned through outdoor education. In college I facilitated low and high rope course initiatives, and I also led canoeing and camping trips. During ropes courses one of the most important lessons I saw play out happened during failure. I have seen countless groups dive head first into a low rope element with little strategy or discussion, usually fail, and only then take the time to think through the problem and work together to find the solution. Standing back is not always an easy thing for me as I want to help my students as much as possible, but I would be doing a disservice if I prevented their initial failure and the resulting reflection. It is the reflection after each trial and error that spurs deeper learning, and eventually leads to a more thorough understanding of the end success. On a less pedagogical note, I want my students to know that failure is OK. In fact it is normal. It is the rare exception that someone makes something perfect the first time out learning a new process.

The experiential education of outdoor ed also taught me the value of guiding through practice rather than explanation ad nauseam. Learning printmaking skills, like outdoor skills, requires patience and practice and the best thing I can do as a teacher is not get in the way of that process. As such, in introductory printmaking I like to demonstrate the new techniques to the group and pass test plates or blocks around to have students participate in the demo to immediately get their feet wet. Then I like to turn the bulk of class time over to the students, visiting with each one individually as they work on their first trial pieces. In printmaking it is important that each student climb the learning curve, and like in low ropes, I position myself as the spotter. I'm there to point the direction and then catch and correct as they make their own way forward, not explain all of the solutions or carry them through to the end.

Another tool I use a lot from my outdoor education days, especially when teaching in advanced courses, is the debrief. Generally in outdoor education, facilitators allocate time to discussing the failures and successes of initiatives or even whole days in the backcountry. It is a great way to gauge the mood of a group to figure out what areas need addressing or further instruction, but it is also a chance to ask questions and push deeper thinking on the day's activities. In advanced print or drawing classes the new skills learned need to be tailored to the student's conceptual needs, and I see a large component of my teaching at higher levels being focused on delving into concepts and challenging my students to think about their work in different ways. By tailoring a debrief to the studio art course I can find out which skills I need to teach, and then get into the meat of getting students to consider their practice. In all, I try to embody the mentors who taught me my facilitation skills and met with me in my studio. In addition to teaching me skills, these mentors offered themselves as a soundboard for ideas, posed difficult questions, challenged my thinking, and greatly pushed my work forward.

Ultimately, I see my job as a teacher in art being focused on imparting the technical knowledge I have and being present and engaged in my student's work and ideas. By being a mentor that encourages failure, guides rather than leads, and challenges ideas, I hope to foster critical thinking and be a force that encourages my students to push themselves. And if I can instill an appreciation for crafting in the physical world, and being more engaged with objects and people through the processes of making, all the better.

INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT

I know the place of extreme privilege I occupy as a white male. I understand that in the sphere of higher education, and historically in the arts, white men have held immense power and advantage over women, people of color, people who identify as LGBTQ, first generation college students, people with disabilities, and people from underprivileged backgrounds.

My awareness of the history and reality of diversity began in college. Even in the relatively low diversity environment of a NESCAC school, I was able to understand through discussion with female peers the countless barriers, double standards, and overt sexism that women face in institutions of higher education. Additionally, though my involvement in outdoor education programs I worked with HEOP, POSSE, and international students, guiding them through low rope initiatives and on camping trips. This work gave me the knowledge that comfort and exposure to the outdoors, something second nature to me as a native Vermonter, is by no means universal. After college a much greater part of my diversity education came when I did a year with AmeriCorps. In that program I lived and worked with a group of teammates from all over the country, who were not primarily white, or middle class, and did not grow up with the same access to education that I did. This group represented the most accurate picture of America that I had ever experienced. It was a challenging year, but I gained valuable insight into truly recognizing others for who they are and not who and how I assume they should be.

Moving from these experiences into the classroom, I choose to recognize my students for the individuals they are and that the traditional class archetype probably was not designed for them. As such, on the first day of class during introductions I tell my students my willingness to see and listen to them, and my ability to be flexible. I also express that as a printmaker it is part of my ethos to hold that the shop is a communal space where projects and ideas are often made better by working with others. It is my expectation that each member do their best to understand and respect each and every other member in the class, in order to form a cohesive group and a culture of acceptance and cooperation. That means using preferred pronouns, providing constructive feedback to move an idea forward, and being courteous in dissent of ideas or opinions, to name just a few specifics.

In all it is my aim to foster an environment where each of my students is able to learn to the best of their ability, while forging the group dynamics of a prosperous and harmonious print shop.

PROPOSED COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PRINT

Open Elective

Open to Undergraduates and Graduates

No Prerequisites

14 Seats

3 Credits

LETTERPRESS PRINTING: SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING – OR THE QUIXOTIC PATH

At the intersection of commercial and fine art printing, letterpress printing offers the opportunity to employ craftsmanship in design and hone message making through the process of creating visually and tactilely interesting, physically present work. The processes also allow for high volume multiples for greater dissemination of information, without eliminating the human presence from the process. The goal of the course is to enable students to use their voices on the public stage to better engage, confront, protest, and push for a more present and informed citizenry.

This course will serve as an introduction to letterpress printing, where students will learn to operate and troubleshoot a Vandercook Universal II proof press. Techniques to be covered will include handset typesetting, printing and routine troubleshooting on the Vandercook proof press, photopolymer platemaking from digital and mechanically produced film, and multicolor printing and registration.

Students will leave the course with the essential letterpress printing toolbox and the beginnings of an effective portfolio for social activism. Students will also be introduced to the friendly world of print shops through collaborative printing and print exchanges. Evaluations will be based on demonstrated proficiency of acquired skills and effectiveness of messaging for activist content.

PRINT

Open Elective

Open to Undergraduates and Graduates

No Prerequisites

14 Seats

3 Credits

BOOK ARTS: OPPOSABLE THUMBS ARE NOT JUST FOR SLIDING OVER SMOOTH GLASS

How often have you heard someone say how much they enjoy holding a book? Learning to craft books is not the Luddite's final stand in an increasingly niche struggle for the elevation of anachronisms. An exploration into book arts is a journey into the appreciation of craftsmanship, presence, and intimacy. Through bookbinding, students have the opportunity to add a versatile and progressive tool that functions as 2D, 3D, work for a large audience, and work for an audience of one. The humble artist book is a gateway practice into understanding the value of the physical world.

Outcomes for the course will include proficiency in multiple binding techniques, an increased perception on what an artist book is and can be, and the ability to integrate the artist book into your current practice. Evaluation will be based on proficiency of technique in multiple bindings. By the end of the course, students will have the ability to create objects that jerk people back into reality and reclaim appreciation for beauty and craftsmanship.

DRAWING

Open Elective

Open to Undergraduates and Graduates

No Prerequisites

14 Seats

3 Credits

HALF BAKED: BRINGING FOOD INTO THE STUDIO

Normally not a wise choice, but in this course we will be drawing on food and meals, both for inspiration and application of materials and concepts. The goal of the course is for students to be able to tap into the incredible concept of food and integrate cooking, baking, and art making in a conceptually sound and aesthetically successful practice.

Beginning with an exploration of self and comfort food, moving to the larger realm of cuisines, and finishing with a focus on different food systems the class will examine the personal, cultural, historical, and environmental implications of food. From theory to practice students then will be challenged to integrate chosen concepts of food into actual food art with attention paid to craft, aesthetics, audience, and of course taste.

Outcomes will be the ability to appropriately merge food and art in a conceptually meaningful way. Students will gain experience in studio research as well as in working with non-traditional materials and substrates. As food art is generally non-archival, students will also be trained in professional documentation of work for portfolios.

Only students with an intermediate knowledge and experience of cooking and/or baking are encouraged to enroll. You do not have to have a professional chef, but the course is not designed as an introduction to basic cooking and baking.

SYLLABUS

Rhode Island School of Design
PRINT 4640 – Winterserssion 2019
Introductory - Elective
3 Credits
Memorial Hall 111
Thursdays and Fridays 1-6pm
Wednesday 1/16 & 1/30 1-6pm

Nick Costantino
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Office Hours:
by appointment

LETTERPRESS: SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING – OR THE QUIXOTIC PATH

COURSE DESCRIPTION

At the intersection of commercial and fine art printing, letterpress printing offers the opportunity to employ craftsmanship in design and hone message making through the process of creating visually and tactilely interesting, physically present work. The processes also allows for high volume multiples for greater dissemination of information, without eliminating the human presence from the equation. The goal of the course is to enable students to use their voices on the public stage to better engage, confront, protest, and push for a more present and informed citizenry.

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Students will leave the course with the essential letterpress printing toolbox and the beginnings of a portfolio for social activism that expresses political and/or personal public messaging. Students will also be introduced to the friendly world of print shops through collaborative printing and print exchanges. Evaluations will be based on demonstrated proficiency of acquired skills and effectiveness of messaging for activist content.

GOALS

- To develop letterpress printing techniques for use in studio practice
- To identify problems in the world that need addressing, present information worth seeing, and improve messaging through design
- To become a better citizen through communal studio civic-mindedness and through engaging in the democratic practices made sacrosanct in the first amendment of the US Constitution

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Knowledge of the historical and contemporary role of letterpress printmaking in activism and protest -
- A better understanding of the philosophy and practice of collective action as well as new skills in communal practices 20%
- Letterpress printing skills that include handset typesetting, linocut, and photopolymer platemaking 20%
- Growth in defining personal activist content and beginnings of a portfolio focused on activism and protest 60%

ASSESSMENT

- Shop Etiquette and Civic Mindedness 20%
- Attendance and Participation 20%
- Assignment 1 – Say Something 20%
- Assignment 2 – Books for the Masses 20%
- Final Project 20%

SHOP ETIQUETTE AND CIVIC MINDEDNESS

The print shop is a shared space and it is a place that can foster artistic communities. As such, even when working solo, conscientiousness of the space and others must be at the forefront of our minds. Take responsibility for yourself and keep the space clean and organized. As the shop is communal, individual assessment of shop etiquette is based on the performance of the class as a whole. Moreover, the final projects will be developed and produced collectively.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Naturally, attendance in class is expected. The course will be following RISD's class attendance policy: <https://policies.risd.edu/academic/class-attendance/>

Isolationist phone and music practices during class time are not permitted.

Participation in group discussions and critiques is essential to the goals and outcomes of the course. Students need to be engaged with their work and the work and ideas of their classmates, open to suggestions, and respectful of differing opinions and viewpoints. Furthermore, the printing of the final projects will be a collective action and thus it is important for everyone to be engaged for them to be successful.

CRITIQUE STATEMENT

As mentioned above, critical dialogue is a vitally important part of this course. Simply put, concepts will not progress without an open and honest discussion around form and content. Critiques and group discussions are also an integral part of building the community that drives the print shop. Critique formats will vary from spoken to written, and in keeping with the theme of community the class as a whole will decide on and agree to the governing principals and methods.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Say Something
Using handset type alone or type and image plates/linocuts, create a piece that addresses something you know needs more public attention. Edition of 15 or more.
- Books for the Masses
While continuing to develop personal, activist content, use photopolymer plates to create a single sheet, eight-page folded book. Edition of 25 or more.

FINAL PROJECT

Using any one or a combination of the techniques learned, create a large edition both for classmate portfolios and for wide scale dissemination. Work can take any shape and should be a refined expression of personal activist content developed through research and class discussion.

MATERIALS

A sketchbook is expected for ideas, notes, and miscellanea.

Course readings/media will be made available to the class. Additionally, each student is expected to provide one reading/media/activist art example to the group by the end of the first week for discussion in week two.

Inks, proofing paper, and printed digital positives will be provided; students are encouraged in consultation with the instructor and peers to obtain additional paper for the assignments and final project, as the type of paper is an important consideration to the overall work. Students may also want acetate for hand-drawn positives for photopolymer plates.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

You are an individual and as such the traditional classroom archetype created by and primarily for privileged straight white men may not be designed for you and your success. I would like to create a learning environment that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc). To achieve this I will listen to your needs and will offer flexibility where possible. But more importantly we as a class will need to work together to achieve this goal by truly listening to and respecting each other, using preferred names and pronouns, providing constructive feedback to move ideas forward, and being courteous in dissent of ideas or opinions, to name just a few specifics.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Instruction and supervised use of the shop materials and equipment will be conducted before students can use the materials and equipment independently.

PLAN FOR THE COURSE

<p><u>Week 1</u> Learning Outcomes: - Letterpress techniques of hand-setting type, linocut relief, and using pantone colors - Introductory knowledge of activism, protest, craft, and sincerity in art - Understanding of the shop as a communal space</p>	
<p>1/3/19 Introduction Demonstration Practice Homework</p>	<p>- Introduction to class, syllabus, studio, letterpress history, activism through art - Full Value Agreement for class and use of the shop - Demonstration on handset typesetting, proofing, lock up, registration, printing, and cleaning - Use remaining class time to practice with handset typesetting, proofing, and using the Vandercook printing press - Homework: - Readings: - Claire Bishop: Artificial Hells, Introduction - Nato Thompson: Living as Form - Inka Essenhigh: Sincerity's Checkered Past - Gather own readings/media/art for the class concerning a cause and/or activism</p>
<p>1/4/19 Discussion Demonstrations Practice Assignment 1 Homework</p>	<p>- Discuss readings - Demonstrations of linocut relief and using pantone colors - Practice with linocut and handset typesetting - Review Assignment 1- Say Something - Homework: - Readings: - Sylvette Babin: In Praise of Virtuosity - Glen Adamson: Thinking Through Craft - Exploring peer provided readings/media/art - Practice printing handset type and linocuts - Begin work on Assignment 1- Say Something</p>
<p><u>Week 2</u> Learning Outcomes: - Improved understanding of how art and letterpress can be used in activism and protest - First letterpress printed activist focused work</p>	
<p>1/10/19 Discussion Visit Work Session Homework</p>	<p>- Discuss readings and peer provided readings/media/art - Visit RISD Museum Prints, Drawings, and Photographs Department - Use class time to work on Assignment 1- Say Something - Homework: - Finish Assignment 1- Say Something</p>

1/11/19 Visit Critique Demonstration Assignment 2 Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit Providence Public Library Special Collections - Critique Assignment 1- Say Something - Demonstration of photopolymer plates - Review Assignment 2- Books for the Masses - Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anne Bogart: What's the Story: Introduction and Chapter 1 - Margaret Atwood: Excerpt from Negotiating with the Dead - Finish reviewing peer provided materials - Begin research for Assignment 2- Books for the Masses - Make and print a test plate
<u>Week 3</u> Learning Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to Artist Books - Understanding of the use of narrative and sequence in art and artist books 	
1/16/19 Visit Discussion Demonstration Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit DWRI Letterpress - Discuss readings and peer provided materials - Demonstration of single sheet, eight-page book - Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work on Assignment 2- Books for the Masses
1/17/19 Check-ins Work Session Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group and/or individual check-ins on Assignment 2- Books for the Masses - Use class time to work on Assignment 2- Books for the Masses - Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work on Assignment 2- Books for the Masses
1/18/19 Visit Work Session Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit RISD Library Special Collections – Artist Books - Use remaining class time to work on Assignment 2- Books for the Masses - Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finish Assignment 2- Books for the Masses
<u>Week 4</u> Learning Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent creation a project that draws on acquired letterpress skills and addresses personal activist content - Embodiment of collective action by working as a team to produce meaningful, effective, beautiful, activist printed art 	
1/24/19 Critique Final Project Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critique Assignment 2- Books for the Masses - Introduce and discuss Final Project - Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a plan for Final Project
1/25/19 Check-ins Visit Work Session Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group and/or individual check-ins on planning for Final Project - Visit other Wintersession Printmaking classes to see other printmaking possibilities - Use class time to work on Final Project - Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work on Final Project

<u>Week 5</u> Learning Outcomes: - Embodiment of collective action by working as a team to produce meaningful, effective, beautiful, activist printed art	
1/30/19 Check-ins Print Production Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group and/or individual check-ins on progress and implementation for Final Project - Assist peers in printing Final Projects - Homework: - Work on Final Project
1/31/19 Print Production Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assist peers in printing Final Projects - Homework: - Finish Final Project for Final Critique
2/1/19 Critique Print Exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critique Final Projects - Exchange prints with classmates - Disseminate art to the public

PROJECT ASSIGNMENT

LETTERPRESS: SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING – OR THE QUIXOTIC PATH

ASSIGNMENT 2- BOOKS FOR THE MASSES

Description

Books offer an excellent way to engage an audience in an intensely intimate manner. Multiple pages also present new possibilities in terms of narrative and sequence. On top of this, photopolymer plates offer a modern approach that harkens back to the populist history of letterpress. While continuing to develop personal, activist content, use photopolymer plates to create a single sheet, eight-page folded book. Make an edition of 25 or more for exchange and dissemination.

Goals

- To create a versatile, intimate, transferable work that can reach the hands of many viewers
- To understand the range and power of a single-sided, printed sheet
- To combine narrative with design to effectively transfer knowledge of an important cause or issue to an otherwise unknowing audience

Outcomes

- Demonstrated ability to print in multiple colors with perfect registration 20%
- Further grounding in activist content and personal meaningful expression 20%
- The transformation of an idea into a product that is both art object and mass produced literature and is a combination of digital and analogue production 20%
- Creation of 25 or more printed and folded books ready for dissemination to the public 40%

Methods

- From personal research and class discussion, form the content for a digital layout, in the platform of your choice
 - Analogue methods can be added as a second layer to the initial digital layout
- Create a single-sheet layout that conforms to the single-sheet, eight-page book format
 - Plan for at least two layers to use more than one color, again additional layers can be made using previously learned techniques
- Print the layout and make the photopolymer plate(s) following instructions from the demonstration
- Proof plates and then print your edition
- Cut and fold books

Assessment

- 25 or more books made with a digital layout that consist of two or more colors 50%
- Visually striking, direct, and unencumbered messaging that explores an area of developed personal activist content 25%
- Synthesis of content and form is dynamic, thoughtful or unexpected, and a marriage of form and function 25%

Basic Competency

- 25 books printed in more than one color and address an activist issue or cause
- The book is essentially complete but lacks adaptive response and is generic or predictable
- Printing and folding are consistent but lack consideration for dynamism within the folded page and color application

Advanced Competency

- Content is integrated into the book format using methods of narrative or sequence to elevate the work beyond the broadside
- Thoughtful and powerful synthesis of the content and craft of book arts
- Original ideation of form, text, and image occurs
- Unexpected or thoughtful use of scale, format, paper, or layers
- Design is a marriage between information presentation and aesthetics where the message being presented is of chief importance and not lost through over engineering

Short Response

Which of the instructor and classmate provided materials have been the most and least useful to your learning in this class?

What have been the strengths of the instructor and the course? What could the instructor do to improve the course?

What is your impression of the feedback you have received about your work, from the instructor and your classmates?

To achieve the course goals, are there any specific topics you want to be addressed or reviewed in the second half of the course?

Name: _____ (optional)

COURSE ASSESSMENT CHART

		Excellence	Competent Achievement	Below Achievement
<i>Criteria</i>				
Shop Etiquette and Civic Mindedness (20%) Communal Assessment	Conscientiousness (10%)	- The class respects all aspects of the shop as a communal space keeping things clean, organized, and running smoothly	- Class respects the cleanliness and organization of the shop	- The class is disrespectful of shop organization and cleanliness
	Collaboration (10%)	- Individuals are aware of the needs of the group and leadership roles are shared and the group excels in production	- Peers work well together to assists each other in tasks and work is positively effected by generosity	- Class is unwilling or unable to assist each other and work is negatively effected by selfishness
Attendance and Participation (20%)	Present (5%)	-Present for class, on time, focused, available, and committed	- Present for class, on time, and undistracted	- Not present for class, often late, or exceedingly distracted
	Engagement (15%)	- Strong interest and desire for experimentation and development of own work and the work of peers - Participates respectfully, consistently, and pushes discussions forward - Provides strong and informed feedback, is aware of group and peer needs, and follows suggestions where fruitful	- Clear interest in development of own work and the work of peers - Respectfully listens and contributes to discussions - Provides informed feedback and receives input and suggestions openly	- Uninterested in own work and/or the work of peers - Does not contribute to discussions or critiques - Unwilling to listen to feedback
Assignments and Final Project (60%)	Technical Completion (30%)	- Work is completed on time and reflects proficiency as well as the ability and effort to innovate learned and demonstrated techniques	- Work is complete and shows and input of effort and understanding of learned and demonstrated techniques	- Work is incomplete or shows an obvious lack of effort and understanding of learned and demonstrated techniques
	Messaging (10%)	- Message is conveyed and elicits the desired response - Marriage between information and aesthetics where the message being presented is not muddled through over engineering	- Message is successfully conveyed to audience	- Message is lost on audience or wholly missing
	Development (20%)	- Content and research are thorough and engaging, and there is clear evidence of a honed idea through diligent effort in trials and reflection	- Content is sound and embedded in research - Planning and proofing the concept is evident in final piece	- Content underprepared or under researched - No evidence of planning, proofing, or conceptual reflection