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Teaching Philosophy

A vital educator prepares students to be keen responders to the shifting parameters of their field and the urgent issues of our time. As the discipline of graphic design is currently under redefinition, we face unique challenges as we meet this epoch of new cultural and technological systems, as well as recognize the importance of fostering inclusive learning environments of diverse identities and communities. A well-rounded graphic design education sets the foundation for students to enter their profession with confidence and flexibility. As an advisor and mentor, I bring to this curricular perspective integrating conventional design pedagogy (typography, problem solving, print-based media), in-field experience from technology companies and museum contexts (trans-media identity system, user/viewer experience), as well as a facility in digital multimedia processes (interactive screen-based media).

My time as an immigrant designer in the US and graduate student at RISD provided a well-rounded experience working with wonderful people from the diversity of backgrounds. As an educator, one of my largest goals is to promote diversity and inclusion. I want to ensure that diversity of thought, experience, and approach are encouraged. I will create a positive environment and guidelines that students can understand the diversity of sexual orientations, cultures, races, genders, beliefs, abilities, and learning styles to see beyond assumptions in order to build authentic relationships across differences.

From my own educational experience, I understand that the ideal learning environments are function as a laboratory of ideas and creation. To inspire students' creative thinking, I explore and introduce current art and design issues for students to respond to our contemporary condition. My students have a dialectical relationship with their subjects. That is to say, students use graphic design as a medium to ask questions about their personal inquiries or urgent social issues. I strive to teach in a way that puts students' interests and goals first. As an advisor and mentor, I design the discussion and critique sessions to be lead by students. During the research and making process, every student has opportunities to share their topic with class peers. By generating dialogue and active interaction in the classroom, students will pursue their ideas with confidence and as a community.

Teaching Philosophy

Graphic design performs for the functioning of language and communication. As an educator, I see typography as an efficient tool to learn visual language creation. We start the typographic practice by understanding context first, and then ask consistently: What is the tone and voice of the contents? Who is speaking it? For whom did they write it? Which media will it be published? The properties of typefaces and the hierarchy of elements are the variables the student has to play with. In terms of typography, making a particular typographic choice creates meaning. The intellectual exercise of deploying these simple typographic conventions in response to a specific text is an excellent way to learn composition. Also, developing an idea considering digital-media publication opportunities helps students open and proficient with new technology and tools beyond traditional graphic design tools.

Currently, I work as an educator and a professional graphic designer, collaborating with different industries and cultural institutions. While I maintain my research on Post-Internet culture, New Digital Technology, and Speculative Design, I bring my professional insight and network into the classroom as well to expand students' perspective. By doing both academic research and practice in the professional world, I believe I can achieve my goal to be a lifelong learner, exemplary designer, and educator. As an advisor and companion of students, I understand my responsibility of caring students. To support students' diverse desires and goals, I teach critical art and design theory, and also the practical knowledge and gained from the professional field. With this evolving knowledge base, I can offer an education relevant to their own interests and contemporary culture.

Inclusivity statement

My time as an immigrant designer in the US and graduate student at RISD provided a well-rounded experience working with wonderful people from the diversity of backgrounds. As an educator, one of my largest goals is to promote diversity and inclusion. I want to ensure that diversity of thought, experience, and approach are encouraged. I will create a positive environment and guidelines that students can understand the diversity of sexual orientations, cultures, races, genders, beliefs, abilities, and learning styles to see beyond assumptions in order to build authentic relationships across differences.

Course Proposal

Graph 2020-01

Typography: Intro to Typography

Credits: 3 Elective Credits. (12 students max)

Instructor: S. Ahn (sahn04@risd.edu)

This course is an introduction to the fundamentals of typography and the study of letterforms. This course examines typographic knowledge, as well as a brief history of the development of typographic forms and printing technologies. Students will learn and explore the knowledge and essence of typographic design through the course works. Course work is comprised of weekly exercises, projects, reading assignments, as well as in-class lectures, presentations, discussions, workshops, and critiques.

Graph 2020-02

Information Design: Data to Visual

Credits: 3 Elective Credits. (12 students max)

Instructor: S. Ahn (sahn04@risd.edu)

The communication of information within data visualization requires sophisticated design treatment. This course designed for the following questions: What are the graphic and typographic decisions for visualizing information and data? How can the designer maximize the viewer's understanding of complicated visual information through the use of consistent typography and graphic styles? Students will explore the theoretical foundation of information design and try to make their way of visualizing information.

Graph 2020-03

Branding: Building Identity System

Credits: 3 Elective Credits. (12 students max)

Instructor: S. Ahn (sahn04@risd.edu)

The most successful brands effectively use the visual communication tools of branding to influence their customers. In this course, students will create their own imaginary business or service and develop a branding strategy. This course takes students through the entire design process, from ideation to proposal. Students will also develop a logotype and key visual elements to visually represent the company, as well as apply that visual system to different applications.

Syllabus

Typography
Course Overview/Syllabus
GRAPH 2020-01
Wintersession 2020
Mon, Tues, (Wed) 1:10 – 6:10 pm
Design Center, Room 211

Instructor: Seyong Ahn
sahn04@risd.edu
Meeting by appointment

Course introduction

This course is an introduction to the fundamentals of typography and the study of letterforms. This course examines typographic knowledge, as well as a brief history of the development of typographic forms and printing technologies.

Objective

The student will study basic knowledge of typeface, layout, sequencing, grids, and system of hierarchy. The students will learn fundamental skills in working and evaluating typography. Also, the student will gain professional terminologies and knowledge to communicate in graphic design field.

Class structure

Class time will consist of lectures, studio work hours, in-process critiques - both in small groups and individually - full class critiques when projects are due. We will visit type shop to learn how to use printing and binding facilities, hold a bookbinding workshop.

Expectations

Students are expected to consult with required readings in developing concepts for coursework. Students must arrive on time and be prepared to work with all necessary materials and tools. Progress and projects that are due must be cut, trimmed, and assembled before arriving to class. Regular attendance and punctuality are mandatory. If

you must miss class you must give prior notice, and two unexcused absences or late will affect the grades.

Evaluation

Attendance/participation/punctuality Design process: an exploration of varied ideas, thoughtful concept development, execution of multiple iterations Body of work: quality of all assignments. Active challenge of each assignment.

Required materials

Laptop with Adobe Indesign
Pencils, Sharpies
Notebook, sketchbook
X-acto or Olfa knife
Cutting Mat

Project

1. Letter as a Form
2. Expressive Type
3. Typographic System
4. Poster
5. Mapping Narrative
6. Book Design

+ Google Folder with Daily Articles
Weekly Readings 11 x 17”
Typographic/Visual Responses

Syllabus

WEEK 1

January 6 Monday

Lecture: Introduction to Typography History, Anatomy & Classifications

Demo: Indesign demo

Introduce: Letter as a Form

Visit: Typeshop

*exercise: Letter as a form

January 7 Tuesday

Due: Letter as a Form

Introduce: Expressive Type

*exercise: Kerning your name

Screening: Helvetica

January 8 Wednesday

Due: Kerning your name

Progress: Expressive Type

Reading response 01

WEEK 2

January 13 Monday

Lecture: Grid, Paragraph, Kerning, Leading

Due: Expressive Type

Demo: Indesign Grid

Introduce: Typographic System

*exercise: Finding Grids

*exercise: Typographic System Round 1

January 14 Tuesday

Lecture: Contemporary Typography

Due: Typographic System Round 1

Progress: Typographic System Round 2,3

Introduce: Poster

Reading response 02

– Schedule

WEEK 3

January 21 Tuesday

Due: Typographic System

Progress: Poster full sketch small group crit

*studio works hour

January 22 Wednesday

Progress: Full class poster sketch crit

Lecture: Mapping Narrative

Introduce: Mapping Narrative

WEEK 4

January 27 Monday

Progress: Poster, Mapping Narrative full sketch

January 28 Tuesday

Due: Poster

Progress: Mapping Narrative, Text selection for Book Design

Introduce: Book Design

Lecture: Book design

Indesign Demo: Character style, Paragraph style

WEEK 5

February 3 Monday

Progress: Book Design

Demo: Bookbinding

February 4 Tuesday

Progress: Book Design

February 5 Wednesday

FINAL REVIEW

Due: Book design, Mapping narrative, Poster

All Revised Projects (Exhibition in Commons)

Syllabus

– Resources

Designers

Armin Hofmann
Josef Müller-Brockmann
Emil Ruder
Max Bill
Wolfgang Weingart
April Greiman
Herbert Matter
Ikko Tanaka
Studio Dumbar
Jessica Svendsen
Cyrus Highsmith

Website

Fontstand
I Love Typography
Typedia
Typographica
Type Radio
Fonts In Use
Type Directors Club
Font Shop
Google Fonts
Letterform Archive
Design Observer
Typotheque (Peter Bi'lak)

Type foundries

Monotype
Colophon
Commercial Type
Grilli Type
Hoefler & Co.
FontBureau

Readings

Carl Dair, Design with Type
John Kane, A Type Primer
Kimberly Elam, Grid Systems in Graphic Design
Jan Middendorp Shaping Text
Ellen Lupton, Thinking with Type
Erik Spiekerman, Stop Stealing Sheep
Baines & Haslam, Type and Typography
Derek Birdsall, Notes on Book Design
Emile Ruder Typography
James Craig, Designing with Type
James Felici, The Complete Manual of Typography
Nigel French, InDesign Type
Timothy Samara, Making and Breaking the Grid
Fred Smeijers, Counterpunch
Jan Tschichold, Asymmetric Typography
Wolfgang Weingart, My Life in Typography
Sebastian Carter, Twentieth Century Type Designers
Carter, Meggs, & Day, Typographic Design: Form & Communication
Warren Chappell, Short History of the Printed Word
Stephen Coles, The Anatomy of Type
F. Friedl, Typography
Adrian Frutiger, Type Sign Symbol
Jost Hochuli, Detail in Typography
Wili Kunz, Typography: Macro Micro Aesthetics

Class Project

Letter as a Form



Cover of TM Magazine, André Gürtler Bruno Pfäffli, 1962

Text is made of letters which are essentially abstract forms that, when arranged in an agreed upon manner, symbolize certain sounds (phonemes) which point to meaning (signs and signifiers). Removed from context and content, letters are pure form. A refined sensitivity to form is an essential characteristic of the typographer. A typographer must be sensitive to the power of proximity; to the interactions of contrast and harmony, resonance and dissonance.

Make a composition: collage/crop/merge/rotate/crush letters to understand the detail of the letterform and negative spaces they carve. Maximum three letters

Final Submission: Select the most refined 5 compositions, print them into 10x10" size print

Course Evaluation

Typography
Course Overview/Syllabus
GRAPH 2020-01
Wintersession 2020

Instructor: Seyong Ahn
sahn04@risd.edu
Meeting by appointment

Course Goals:

- Attain the necessary vocabulary to be able to communicate with a graphic designer.
- Learn fundamental skills in working and evaluating typography.
- Learn how to react to a complex and layered typographical composition and organize it clearly by creating sophisticated and clean hierarchies.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following questions, 5 being absolutely, 1 being not at all:

1. The instructor communicates class expectations clearly.

(strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

2. The instructor has been flexible, altering the schedule to match the growth of the students.

(strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

3. The discussions contribute to my conceptual interest and understanding of the material.

(strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

4. I am encouraged to participate and feel that my opinions are valued.

(strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

5. The critiques are functioning well and connecting to concepts within the class.

(strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

Course Evaluation

6. What are the most useful aspects of this class?

7. What are some areas of improvement in the instructor's teaching methods?

8. Additional comments/questions:

Grading Rubric

Conceptual Development - 30%

Needs improvement	Competent	Excellent
Displays the lack of conceptual understanding of the material given through discussion, lectures, and reading	Proves fair awareness of theories and ideas	Demonstrates excellent understanding and interpretation of terms, theories, and concepts

Critical Thinking - 30%

Needs improvement	Competent	Excellent
Consistently shows a lack of interest in class subjects	Contributes relevant questions and thinking regarding theories discussed in class	Displays a high level of interest in pursuing knowledge beyond the material offered

Class Participation - 20%

Needs improvement	Competent	Excellent
Rarely contributes during class discussion/crit	Is attentive and present during all activities	Is interested, and active in participating in all activities and discussions, and make rooms for others to contribute

Assignments / Projects - 20%

Needs improvement	Competent	Excellent
Does not complete assignments on time	Ready to display and share work prepared on time	Presents at class with all assignments completed and displays diverse attempts and ways of thinking