Introduction to Graphic Design
Typography for Print and Video

Session B
June 29–July 31
* The entire course will meet online

Course Description
This studio course will introduce you to graphic design as a discipline and a practice. The class will focus on the various ways design functions—how visual communication takes form and is recognized by an audience. We will learn and use design principles and processes, and begin to understand the context and impact of graphic design.

This class is taught through a series of weekly studio assignments, both during class and outside meeting times. Each week, we will discuss your work in group critiques and analyze assigned readings. There will also be occasional workshops, lectures, and presentations.

We will focus on developing the ability to skillfully create and manipulate core graphic elements, such as type and image. We’ll practice how to translate ideas, information, and emotions into meaningful and evocative visual expressions. We’ll investigate the nature and use of key visual tools such as composition, color, contrast, hierarchy, scale, rhythm, and visual metaphor.

To help foster an appreciation of craft and materials and their relationship to visual form, as well as to develop a broad visual vocabulary, in the first half of the class we’ll work primarily with abstract shape and form. We’ll gradually transition to using letters and words, exploring typography at both reading and display scales. Through a series of interrelated, progressively complex assignments, you’ll develop a process intended to help you create a body of accomplished visual work, a vocabulary for critically engaging that work, and a better understanding of the discipline as a whole, providing a strong foundation for more advanced study and skill development.

Goals
— Obtain an understanding of the relationship between form and content.
— Ability to describe the rationale and logic behind design decisions.
— Understand how to identify and communicate to a specific audience.
— Apply a reflective and iterative process.
— Develop an ability for self and group critique.
— Situate your work within the context of historical and contemporary graphic design.

Objectives
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
— Demonstrate a foundational understanding of graphic principles and techniques (composition, hierarchy, structure).
— Demonstrate a design process that incorporates research methods, iteration, and feedback.
— Articulate the role of design or the designer while gaining exposure to a variety of historical and contemporary working designers, their philosophies, and working methodologies.
— Develop an individual design process.
Course Format

Class sessions will be structured around group critiques, reading discussions, and informal presentations, with occasional guest critics.

Critiques

Each student should be prepared to present visual progress to the class every week. You should also be ready to offer constructive criticism to peers, on both concept and form.

Reading and Class Discussion

Readings will be required each week. Students are expected to come to class having read the material prior to class and be prepared to participate. One student each week will be responsible for moderating the class discussion of the reading. The moderator should summarize the key arguments of the text, and pose at least 3 questions to the entire class about the reading.

Writing

In addition, every couple weeks, students will write short posts (at least 300 words) on at least one of the readings. You may not use the first person in your writing.

Show and tell

Each week, post a piece of graphic design that you appreciate on our shared class website. There will be different prompts each week (specific formats like books or websites, or specific subjects, like identity design or political advocacy). While part of your appreciation can be about the content, you should be prepared to dissect the form of the piece — design details like typography, layout, production techniques, etc.

Be prepared to write a brief close reading (at least 10 words) of the design and how it operates in relation to the subject.

In-class exercises

In the beginning weeks, we’ll do in-class exercises on various design principles. Be prepared to work in Adobe or Figma during class. Occasionally, I’ll also give tutorials on software for more in-depth training specific to assignments. However this class is not predicated on learning software and you’ll be partly responsible for teaching yourselves.

Presentations

1. Each student will be required to give a class presentation on a historical or contemporary designer or studio. These screen-based presentations should be 15 minutes long, and showcase visual documentation of their design approach (no text slides allowed).

2. At the class final critique, you will also be evaluated for your presentation format. You may only present visual content (if you are presenting on screen, there can be no type slides). How you document, compile, and share your work with the class should be just as considered as the final design. What is the best format or tool? What is shown on screen and how do you verbally describe your work?
Grading

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gestalt 1</td>
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<td>Gestalt 2</td>
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<td>Framing and laying</td>
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<td>Hierarchy</td>
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<td>Book type</td>
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<td>Display type</td>
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<td>Animation</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
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Projects and participation are evaluated according to the following criteria:

Projects

- Ability to translate conceptual ideas into visual forms or outputs.
- Commitment to in-depth research and an iterative process.
- Receptiveness to feedback.
- Prolific output and inquisitiveness that expands beyond the assignment.
- Designing communications that consider and engage a specific audience.
- Ability to contextualize your work against historical and contemporary design.
- Quality of craft and production, across media.

Participation

(Speaking, Writing, Presenting)

- Showing studio progress every week.
- Willingness to engage with new techniques and technologies.
- Speak critically and knowledgeably about design, visual culture, and technology.
- Ability to analyze questions from multiple perspectives, in both verbal and written form.
- Thoughtfully present your work.

Responsibility

Students are responsible for all assignments, even if they are absent or sick. Late assignments or failure to complete assignments before the beginning of class will jeopardize your evaluation in this course. Being unprepared for presentations, failure to do assigned readings, or missing deadlines for writing posts, will also effect your final grade.

Assignments not completed by due date are automatically downgraded—this can include assignments turned in severely late.

Attendance and Punctuality

There are no unexcused absences or cuts. Students are expected to attend all classes. Each unexcused absence thereafter results in a partial letter grade reduction of your final grade (e.g. A- becomes B+). Three unexcused absences results in a failing grade.

In addition to regular attendance, punctuality to all classes is expected. Three late arrivals equals one unexcused absence.

An excused absence means that I have received notification of a legitimate excuse (such as illness or a personal or medical emergency) before class starts—preferably by the night before. To nullify an absence, you will need a Dean's note. If you miss a class you are responsible for catching up.
Software

This class is not software-oriented and you will be partly responsible for teaching yourselves. Some light skill-oriented instruction—such as software training (Adobe InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, and Figma) and craft production—will be worked into the curriculum, depending on the needs of the class members. If you have not had Mac experience, and/or you are not familiar with page layout software, it is recommended that you obtain experience/instruction outside of class early in the semester through the Digital Media Center online tutorials like lynda.com.

All graphic design courses have a lab fee of $150.

General Supplies

X-acto knife and blades
Self-healing cutting mat
18” Steel ruler
Pencils, glue stick, scissors
Bone folder or scorer
Letter-size paper

Helpful supplies (but not required):
Basic printer
Scanner
Bookbinding thread and needle

If any specific materials are required, I will try to give you enough advance notice to track them down. Otherwise, use your best judgment in determining what you’ll need to complete the assigned exercises and projects.

All readings will be provided as PDFs on the class website.
| Class 1 | In-class | Class introduction  
|        |          | Gestalt exercise 1  
|        | Reading due | Charles Eames, “What is Design?”  
|        |            | Dieter Rams, “Principles of Design”  
|        | Optional reading | Armin Hoffman, *Graphic Design Manual*  
|        | Assignment | Gestalt exercise 2  

| Class 2 | In-class | Critique Gestalt exercises  
|        |          | Reading discussion  
|        |          | Framing and layering exercise  
|        | Reading due | Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, *Typo Photo*  
|        | Optional reading | Type Basics  
|        | Assignment | Structure exercise  

| Class 3 | In-class | Critique Structure exercise  
|        |          | Reading discussion  
|        |          | Grid lecture  
|        | Reading due | Ellen Lupton and Abbott Miller, “Period Styles”  
|        |            | Marius Schwarz, *OASE 100*, “History of Oh”  
|        | Optional reading | Gerard Memorz, *Graphic Design History in the Writing*, “In Search of Typographic Histories”  
|        | Assignment | Poster Type  

Class 4

In-class  
Poster Type critique  
Word exercise

Reading  
Bruno Munari, “Shape of Words”  
Armin Hoffmann, “Thoughts on the Poster”

Presentations  
Josef Müller-Brockmann  
Otl Aicher  
Wim Crouwel  
Ikko Tanaka

Assignment  
Poster type revisions

Class 5

In-class  
Poster Type critique  
Word exercise critique

Reading  
Andrew Blauvelt, Graphic Design: Now in Production, “The Persistence of Posters”

Presentations  
Laszlo Moholy-Nagy  
Charles and Rae Eames  
Saul Bass

Assignment  
Book Type

Class 6

In-class  
Book Type critique

Reading  
Beatrice Warde, “The Crystal Goblet”

Presentations  
Grapus  
Corita Kent  
Tibor Kalman

Assignment  
Book Type revisions
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| **In-class** | Book Type critique  
Hierarchy exercise  |
| **Reading** | Jost Hochuli, *Detail in Typography*  |
| **Presentations** | Karel Martens  
Irma Boom  |
| **Assignment** | Book Type revisions  |

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| **In-class** | Book Type critique  
Hierarchy critique  |
| **Reading** | Stuart Bailey, “Hardy Perennials”  |
| **Presentations** | Muriel Cooper  
Susan Kare  
Studio Moniker (Conditional Design)  |
| **Assignment** | Animation  |

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<tr>
<td><strong>In-class</strong></td>
<td>Animation critique</td>
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| **Reading** | Andrew Blauvelt, *Graphic Design: Now in Production*, “Tool (Or Post-production for the Graphic Design)”  
| **Assignment** | Finalize all projects for final critique  |

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-class</strong></td>
<td>Final critique</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment</strong></td>
<td>Email digital files of each assignment to Jessica by midnight.</td>
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Over the course of the semester, each of you will give a presentation on a historical or contemporary interdisciplinary designer or group. Your presentations should be 15 minutes, so I’d encourage you to start spending the coming weeks researching the designer or studio.

Presentations should include

— Biography of the designer or design group
— Historical or cultural context
— Description of their design methodology, process, or approach
— Description of their contributions to the discipline
— Close readings of at least 3 projects, with a detailed case study of why the work was noteworthy.

Requirements

— Presentations should be 15 minutes long and presented on screen.
— You may only have one slide with text. The remainder of your slides should be primarily visual.

Please include a bibliography with citations from at least 5 sources, 3 of which must be from a book or print publication.

* Please consult the university policy on Academic Honesty and Integrity for the proper use of citing sources for presentations and research.