

SYLLABUS

Arth 3455

Design Theory and Practice FALL 2013

Department of Visual Arts
Weber State University

Prerequisites: ART 3430 Typography
and Publication Design and
ARTH 3451 History of Design or
consent of instructor

Meeting schedule: twice/week for
2:45 - hour sessions.

Credit hours: 3

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Course Description

A thematic investigation of selected movements, theories, and figures from the history of graphic design. Topics are selected according to relevance and significance to the design profession in our current day and include the role of design research in contemporary practice. This is a studio course oriented to the interests of the visual communication program within the art major.

Primary text

Graphic Design History, A Critical Guide, Drucker & McVarish

Additional readings

Graphic Design, A New History, Eskilson

Illustration, A Visual History, Heller & Chwast

Who we are: manifesto of the Constructivist group, Rodchenko, Stepanovac

The New Typography, Tschichold

Grid systems in graphic design, Muller-Brockmann

Ethnography and design, Crabtree and Rodden

Learning Outcomes

Successful students will demonstrate the ability to extract universals from historical periods, and to examine them in context of today's design process and practice. This will require reading, analytical and investigative skills in addition to completion of the studio component. Among the departmental outcomes objectives (as expressed on the Provost's website), the following are specifically addressed by this course:

Possess a basic knowledge of visual culture from prehistoric to contemporary times.

Have an awareness of the richness of cultural diversity through the study of creative work from many cultures.

Demonstrate advanced abilities in generating innovative solutions to traditional and non-traditional problems in 2D and 3D visual media.

Be able to demonstrate basic competencies in drawing, photography, and digital visual media and possess the knowledge and skills to be successful in their area of emphasis.

Possess skills in oral and written communication as they pertain to the visual arts.

Be able to effectively do research using contemporary and traditional methods.

Be able to think critically. Students should be able not only to analyze a work of art using traditional methods, but should also be able to develop thoughtful new interpretations.

Structure

Five to six studio projects will augment lectures and readings.

Projects include launch exercises, progress reviews, and final critiques. Late submissions will be accepted up to one week beyond the upload deadline. Expect to be penalized for late submissions.

Class time is devoted to lecture, discussion, critique, demonstration, individual conferences, and general studio activity. Attendance and productive use of classtime is required. Always bring tools and materials appropriate to assignments and be prepared to work in class.

Evaluations

Studio projects are evaluated on the timeliness of project completion, the thoroughness and success of creative investigations, craftworthy execution, and overall professionalism in presenting final work.

PROJECT FACTOR

90% of final evaluation: average of project scores, each weighted according to size / significance.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION FACTOR

During approximately half of the term's class sessions, individual participation will be recorded. You can score by simply being in attendance, or, if a review is scheduled, by having your work on the wall on time. Absences and missed reviews receive zeros for the day. At the term's end, one letter grade is deducted for each zero from the final participation score. This means, for example, that three zeros is equal to a "D" on Attendance / Participation. Five zeros and beyond seriously compromises your ability to pass.

Grades are calculated as follows:

average of project scores: 90%
attendance / participation: 10%

Extended reading list

Learning from Las Vegas: The forgotten symbolism of architectural form, Ventura, Brown, Izenour

Design and reflexivity, van Toorn

Deconstruction and post-structuralist literary theory in design, McCoy

Six memos for the next millennium, Calvino

Design rhetoric, Buchanan

The designer as author, Rock
First things first manifestos (1964, 2000, 2011)

COGNITION

Visual Intelligence: Perception, Image, and Manipulation in Visual Communication; Barry, Ann; Albany, 1997.
Elements of Semiology, trans.; Barthes; Roland (Annette Laviers and Colin Smith); New York, 1964.
Things that Make Us Smart; Norman, Donald; New York 1993.
Acting with Technology: Activity Theory and Interaction Design; Kaptelinin, Victor and Bonnie Nardi; Cambridge, MA, 2006.
Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design; Kress, Gunther and Theo van Leeuwen; New York 2005.
Metaphors We Live By; Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson; Chicago, 1980.
The Image of the City; Lynch, Kevin; Cambridge, MA, 1960.

CULTURE

Social Cognition; Augoustinos, Martha and Ian Walker; London, 1996.
Simulation and Simulacra, trans; Baudrillard, Jean (Sheila Glaser); Ann Arbor, 2004.
Stories, Scripts, and Scenes: Aspects of Schema Theory; Mandler, Jean Matter; New York, 1984.
Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture; Geertz, Clifford; New York, 1973.
Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman; Hall, Stuart; London, 1996.

TECHNOLOGY

The Language of New Media; Manovich, Lev; Cambridge, MA 2001.
Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition; Thorburn, David and Henry Jenkins; Cambridge, MA 2004.
Ambient Findability; Morville, Peter; 2005.
Everything is Miscellaneous; Weinberger, David; 2008.

Sample projects

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Design Theory and Practice

FALL 2013

Music packaging on a historical theme: Constructivism	Typophoto & Gesamkunstwerk	Swiss Modernism and Instructional Design	Manifesto & Conference	New Meaning for Restroom Icons
<p>Reading</p> <p><i>Who we are: manifesto of the Constructivist group, Rodchenko, Stepanova</i></p> <p>Taking the bold structure of Constructivism and the expressive power of photomontage as exploited by the Dadaists as your primary influences, prepare a design for music packaging. Think as if you were Rodchenko or Klutis. Russian Constructivism had strong political motives associated with building the new communist state. We're not involved in a world war, especially of the magnitude of WWI, but there are many persuasive forces at work in our current day politically, socially, economically, and historically. Your music and design should be set up to drive an agenda.</p> <p>The finished solution should visibly link to the historical antecedents while it reflects the music of our present day. All elements in the package (music, title, group, design) should unify into a coherent, comprehensive, aesthetic whole.</p>	<p>Reading</p> <p><i>The Bauhaus work of Moholy-Nagy on Typophoto</i></p> <p>During the 1920s typography and photography were regarded to be the ultimate communication tools. Because they were generated with different technologies, however, little had been accomplished in unifying them into wholistic form. Moholy-Nagy, Tschichold, Bayer, and others explored the integration of typography and photography more intimately in both a formal and conceptual sense. This would naturally lead to a "gesamkunstwerk" effect (total work of art).</p> <p>Phase I</p> <p>Design three typographic compositions investigating the synthesis of typography and photography. Both form and meaning should be unified in each design although conceptual redundancy should be avoided.</p> <p>Phase II</p> <p>Extend one of your typophoto experiments towards a package design for a food product and exploit the typophoto effect to full advantage.</p>	<p>Reading</p> <p><i>Katherine McCoy on rational functionalism</i></p> <p><i>Muller-Brockmann on the use of modular grids</i></p> <p>After WWII, Switzerland became the design center of the western world. Their processes were rational and analytical. There was a heavy reliance on the use of grids. Spaces were economical in service to simple and direct communication.</p> <p>In our current age, where free appropriation and radical experimentation frequently threaten communication goals, Swiss Modernism deserves a critical look.</p> <p>Identify a skill, game, or procedure in which to instruct a reader using words and pictures.</p> <p>Required: 10 photographs minimum, 400 words of text</p> <p>Build your solution on a modular grid. Following the mandate of a terse problem analysis and no-nonsense clarity, both meaning and form should unite. According to Swiss theory, the grid is there not to control, in a totalitarian sense, but to influence in a way that is transparent to the reader.</p>	<p>Reading</p> <p><i>Design manifestos by Garland, Gill, Glaser, Mari, Mau, Mills, Nowogradski, Petris and Stark, Sagmeister, and Vignelli</i></p> <p>Review the series of design manifestos published in 2010 by Tankboys and Cosimo Bizzarri in 2010. After discussion of key issues, identify points of agreement / disagreement and develop a vision of your own for the current status and future direction for design.</p> <p>Prepare a manifesto and design a professional conference around its central themes including the following elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Event schedule, speaker roster, breakout session themes2. Conference branding materials: title, visual identity, colors, typographic format3. Collateral material: conference poster, program, website	<p>Reading</p> <p><i>Comparison of Shannon/Weaver model of communication with the constructionist views of Emmert/Donaghy (Communication Models chapter from Graphic Design Theory, Meredith Davis)</i></p> <p>Restroom icons are ubiquitous in public spaces and most are built with common, geometric forms. The fact that they all look alike is actually a good thing in that visual communication is quick and efficient no matter the location. But this makes the icons vulnerable to alterations meaning with even the slightest change.</p> <p>Adjust or re-design the standard restroom icons according to the following objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. icons that only a Utah audience would understand2. icons that tell a multi-stage story3. icons that communicate a contemporary social message instead of, or in addition to, what they were intended to convey. <p>Designs should remain stylistically consistent with the original icons in all cases.</p>