

Special Topics in Digital Technology & Culture, Advanced Composition & Design  
Class Number 07452 • Section 02  
Tues/Thurs, 1:25pm-2:40pm • Avery 105

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00am–1:00pm in Avery 479

## Course Description

*Advanced Composition & Design* is a special topics course conceived as a sequel to ENGL/DTC 336: *Composition & Design*. It reviews the fundamental elements of 2D design—such as shape, line, texture, color, and typography—and engages them at an intermediate to advanced level. Students are challenged to complete more in-depth and detailed projects, using the more complex principles of design, such as scale, balance, pattern, rhythm, and hierarchy. A major goal of the course continues to be the ability *to see* and *to describe*—and therefore *to design*—compositions in an abstract sense, using the visual language of graphic design. The ability to see abstractly is crucial for a designer, making him or her better equipped to estimate how visual choices may affect comprehension of a specific message. Emphasis is also placed on independent learning initiative for all stages of projects (research, exploratory work, technical expertise, etc.), as dictated by the individual solution a student wishes to engage for each project.

The course is taught primarily from a graphic design perspective, both in terms of history and current practice, but perspectives from fine art, illustration, information design, and product design may also be included. Material is introduced and assimilated through hands-on projects, readings, lectures, discussions, critiques, and writing activities. In graphic design, creative process is just as important as final presentation, and students are expected to sketch, brainstorm, find sources of inspiration, and engage in trial-and-error by making multiple drafts—both by hand and using digital tools. Advanced and personalized exploration of graphic design-oriented computer programs (Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop) is encouraged, primarily through individual initiative, though some in-class lectures will serve as tutorials. Professional presentation is expected for the final files and printouts for each project. If possible, the course will include practical opportunities to gain collaborative and/or client-based graphic design experience in one major project. Practical graphic design experience will also be offered through a visiting designer and/or campus field trip.

## Learning Outcomes

- Advanced ability to create clear, decisive, imaginative compositions demonstrating sensitivity to the elements and principles that make up the visual language of 2-D design
- Advanced ability to communicate using the vocabulary of 2-D design, verbally and in writing, during critiques and discussions, and for writing assignments
- Effort to engage in and document an in-depth creative process, attempting multiple sketches and drafts before committing to a final design solution, and assimilating feedback from in-progress critiques
- Ability to engage in the design process in both digital and physical realms

- Professional presentation and organization of projects and assignments
- Intermediate to advanced skills in the digital tools and programs used for graphic design, including InDesign, Illustrator, and Photoshop
- Familiarity with the history of graphic design, with current practice in the graphic design field, as well as with some significant designers of the last century
- Independent learning initiative: Substantial effort to conduct research independently to improve outcomes of individual solutions to specific design problems

## Evaluations & Grades

Overall, students will be evaluated and graded according to the learning objectives listed above. Specific objectives will be provided for each of the course's major projects. A final grade will be determined through consideration of the following items:

- 5 Major Design Projects
- Short Assignments, serving as stepping stones for Major Design Projects
- Blog Posts with Visual Examples, required 5 times throughout the semester
- Attendance, Participation & Professionalism in class

Evaluation takes place on a scale of 0 to 5:

- 5 = Excellent, above and beyond expectations
- 4 = Very good
- 3 = Average performance
- 2 = Failure to meet some requirements
- 1 = Failure to meet most requirements
- 0 = Failure to turn in project on time (late work will not be accepted)

The Major Design Projects will be rated according to this scale in multiple categories, such as:

- Exploratory Work and Research: Sketches created and sources collected for initial ideation
- Design Resolution: Exploratory work and initial drafts used to form coherent solution to the design problem
- Refinement: Once discovered, design solution is fine-tuned with great attention to detail
- Technical/Digital Skills: Coherent, organized use of programs and files, with attention to good craft in both digital and printed output. Files saved for flexibility (CS6 and PDF with no layers).
- Critique: Attentiveness and participation in critiques, with assimilation of feedback from in-progress critiques into final draft

## Readings & Design Blog

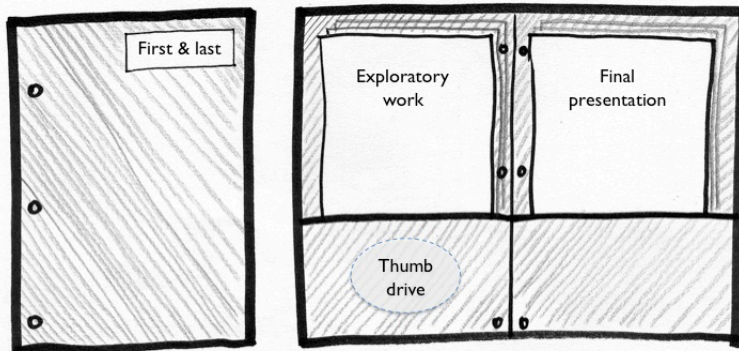
For five of the semester's readings you are required to post on the class design blog, which is a shared blog for both *Composition & Design* and *Advanced Composition & Design*. Your post should contribute written analysis using one visual example\* to demonstrate your understanding of a major concept from that day's reading. Make sure to use the vocabulary of design you are gaining from the class to explain how your visual example illustrates the concept. Be descriptive

but concise: 250–400 words. Three days before the reading and blog post is due, your instructor will post some questions relevant to the upcoming reading on the blog. You may use these questions to inspire a response. Make sure you are looking at the questions posed for *DTC338: Advanced Composition & Design*, as opposed to *ENGL/DTC336: Composition & Design* (however, feel free to read any and all posts from the other class, as they will be enlightening too).

\* Your visual example may *not* come from the reading that is due: It must come from another source, and it must be included in your post. There will be a number of design books on reserve at the Holland-Terrell library (see Resources below) and you are encouraged to use these as reliable sources (there are flatbed scanners in the reserve room you may use). You are also welcome to find visual examples from other print or digital sources (additional Resources will be listed on the blog site). Make sure to credit your source as part of your entry.

The class design blog is meant to enhance discussion and facilitate learning. Skim it, read it, look at the images. You are responsible for knowing what has been posted before you: The same visual example should not be used more than one time. Blog posts are due at the beginning of class. Students may be called on to share their examples during class discussion of the reading.

### Your Class Portfolio



Among other materials (see below), you must have a portfolio devoted to this class. A flat folder with pockets on each side will serve just fine. You will use this portfolio to present your work for each major project when it is due for grading. Presentation guidelines are as follows:

- 1) **Exploratory Work:** Organize sketches, sources of inspiration, and your project drafts in logical order on the left side of the folder. Feel free to label your work and make notes to explain your creative process. This demonstrates the effort you made to find your design solution and is a major part of your grade.
- 2) **Final Presentation:** Organize your final printouts on the right side of the folder. Exact materials due for final presentation will be introduced with each project. Printouts should be of professional quality: clean, sharp (no low res images), organized.
- 3) **Digital Files:** Include your thumb drive in either of the folder's pockets with your final file saved as EPS or AI (earlier versions of Illustrator) and as PDF (no layers). Also include files that are linked to your InDesign or Illustrator files.
- 4) **Your Name:** Write your first and last name clearly on the *top right* corner of the *front* of your portfolio.

- 5) Too Big? Sometimes your prints will be 11x17 or larger. In this case, do not fold the ones for your final presentation. Just sandwich the larger prints inside the folder flaps and turn in the folder. (A binder clip can be helpful to make sure the larger prints don't fall out.)
- 6) Be Relevant: Do not include anything else other than the items mentioned here (such as class handouts, papers from other projects). These belong in your class binder (see below).

### Required Materials

- 1) Textbook: *Graphic Design: The New Basics* by Ellen Lupton and Jennifer Cole Phillips (You should buy the book, but there will be one placed on reserve at Holland-Terrell with this call number: NC997.L87 2008). Additional readings will be required from other reserved books.
- 2) Class Portfolio (see above)
- 3) Thumb or flash drive\* (minimum 2 gigs). You will hand this in when projects are due, inside your folder with the printed components of your project. *NOTE: Your work should be backed-up in two different places at all times. Dropbox accounts are recommended for backing up drives.*
- 4) Paper and pencil\* for sketching
- 5) Binder\* to keep all your sketches, hand-outs, etc. (your class portfolio is only used to hand in the relevant materials for the project that is due). Make sure to save all your handouts. They will not always be readily available digitally, and you are responsible for the information they provide. Do not email me with questions that are clearly addressed in your handouts.
- 6) Printing: Occasionally you may need to pay for printing services outside those offered as part of your AML lab fee (such as printing at CougarCopies in the Compton Union Building)

\* Starred items should be with you at every class (exception: your flash drive if it's been handed in for grading)

### Resources

These resources provide good starting points for finding inspiration or visual examples for your Design Blog entries. Many books are on reserve at the Holland-Terrell Library. Call numbers are listed for books on reserve. Additional resources will be listed on the class blog:

[www.compositionanddesign.wordpress.com](http://www.compositionanddesign.wordpress.com).

#### Books

- Barry, Lynda, *Picture This* (on reserve: PN6727.B36 P53 2010)
- Fraser, Tom and Adam Banks, *Designer's Color Manual: The Complete Guide to Color Theory and Application* (on reserve: ND1489 .F73 2004)
- Healey, Matthew, *Deconstructing Logo Design* (on reserve: NC1002.L63 H43 2010)
- Rosenberg, Daniel, *Cartographies of Time* (on reserve: D11.5 .R64 2010)
- Samara, Timothy, *Design Elements: A Graphic Style Manual* (on reserve: call number TBA)

- Tufte, Edward, *Beautiful Evidence* (on reserve: P93.5 .T837 2006)
- Tufte, Edward, *Envisioning Information* (on reserve: P93.5 .T84 1990)

### Designers

- Jason Santa Maria, [www.jasonsantamaria.com](http://www.jasonsantamaria.com)
- Malcolm Grear Designers, [www.mgrear.com](http://www.mgrear.com)
- Marian Banjes, [www.bantjes.com](http://www.bantjes.com) (typography)
- Stefan Sagmeister & Jessica Walsh, [www.sagmeisterwalsh.com](http://www.sagmeisterwalsh.com)

### Websites

- *Book Cover Archive*, [www.bookcoverarchive.com](http://www.bookcoverarchive.com) (search by designer, author, photographer, publisher, etc.)
- *Cooper Hewitt Design Museum*, <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/> (search their collection)
- *Pattern Foundry*, [www.patternfoundry.com](http://www.patternfoundry.com) (collaborative pattern projects)
- *Emigre*, [www.emigre.com](http://www.emigre.com) (digital type design studio and criticism on typography, art and design through Emigre Magazine)
- *Thinking with Type*, [www.thinkingwithtype.com](http://www.thinkingwithtype.com) (required readings for typography)

### Blogs

- *Book by its Cover*, [www.book-by-its-cover.com](http://www.book-by-its-cover.com) (showcases innovative print design for creative publications)
- *Grain Edit*, [www.grainedit.com](http://www.grainedit.com) (classic design from 1950s–1960s)
- *Under Consideration*, [www.underconsideration.com](http://www.underconsideration.com) (see *Brand New* for logo design and *Art of the Menu* for restaurant menu design)

### Films

- *Helvetica*, directed by Gary Huswit (documentary about typography, graphic design, and global visual culture)
- *Teaching to See*, <http://vimeo.com/45232468> (documentary on celebrated teacher and designer Inge Druckery)

### Technical Guides & Tutorials

- Terry White, *How To Get Started with Adobe Illustrator CS6*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgmU8RwLi28>
- Terry White, *How To Get Started with Adobe InDesign CS6*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laY3jVvktT0w>
- Christopher Smith, *Adobe InDesign CS6 Digital Classroom* (digital book available through WSU Library: see Orbis Cascade Ebook Program)
- Jennifer Smith, *Adobe Illustrator CS6 Digital Classroom* (digital book available through WSU Library: see Orbis Cascade Ebook Program)

## **How to Succeed in This Class**

- Work Outside Class: Expect to spend five to ten hours per week outside of class completing projects and readings. The majority of class time will be spent discussing and critiquing projects and introducing new material.

- **Be On Time:** Turn in your projects and assignments on time, be on time to class. Don't leave early.
- **Read Carefully:** I expect you to do your readings thoughtfully and take notes. Besides, you need to write about them on the class Design Blog.
- **Save Everything** in your binder/portfolio: Sketches, drafts, handouts, etc.
- **Participate** in critiques and discussions: share your ideas and listen when other people are talking.
- **Pay Attention** at all times, even in the computer lab. Do not work on your computer when your instructor or another student is talking to the class.
- **Be Prepared to Work** in the AML and in Thompson 209. Save your files so you can open them on the AML computers (save for CS6). Always have pencil/pen and paper.
- **Use Office Hours:** Come see me if you need extra help or are having an emergency. Excused absences and project extensions are granted rarely, but they will never be permitted if you do not provide advance notice. Email me to schedule an appointment if my office hours don't work for your schedule.

### **Things You Should Avoid**

You will always lose major participation points if you fail to observe these rules:

- **No visible cell phones.** Ever. And make sure they're silent as well as invisible.
- **No headphones** (unless you have permission to do a tutorial for class). Even on work days, headphones are off-limits. It is important to be aware of what other people in the class are doing and saying. You might learn something.
- **Avoid inappropriate computer use.** Only use your lab computer for our current class project. No Facebook, work for other classes, etc.
- **Don't be late.**
- **Don't be absent more than three times.** These freebies are for when you are sick or have an emergency. Save them for the appropriate time.

### **Attendance Policy**

You are permitted three absences for this class. Save them for when you are sick or have an emergency. Each additional absence beyond the third will result in the reduction of your final grade by one full letter. So, if your final grade is a B- and you have five total absences, your new final grade for the course is a D-.

Attendance is mandatory on critique days. Absence on a critique day will affect your grade for the project that is due that day. If you absolutely must miss class on a critique day, arrange to hand in your project early.

You are responsible for catching up on the information you miss due to absences. There is not usually time to do this during class. Plan to meet with fellow classmates or come to my office hours. If you know you will miss class ahead of time, it is always a good idea to let me know and to ask what you will be missing.

### **Other Important Information**

Campus Safety

Every semester remember to review the Campus Safety Plan (<http://safetyplan.wsu.edu/>) and visit the Office of Emergency Management web site (<http://oem.wsu.edu/>) for a comprehensive listing of university policies, procedures, statistics, and information related to campus safety, emergency management, and the health and welfare of the campus community.

Students with Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center (<http://accesscenter.wsu.edu/>).

Academic Honesty

WSU is committed to principles of truth and academic honesty. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication in the process of academic work, and can result in suspension or dismissal from the university. In the class, academic dishonesty will result in failure of the course and will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. For more information, see <http://conduct.wsu.edu/>.