George Mason University
Course Syllabus

Course Title: Graphic Information Design II
Course Code   AVT 311
Session/Year:
Meeting: .
Professor: Jandos Rothstein
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Office Hours: TBA

Course Description: This is the first semester of a two-semester course intended to train students in the principles and process of communication design. Through projects, critiques, presentations and class discussion, students will develop graphic design skills and the ability to discuss their work in an articulate and persuasive manner.

Objectives

1. Develop visual sensitivity and competency in graphic communications through the discipline of the design process,

2. learn to define visual problems, research, conceptualize, establish priorities and develop graphic alternatives,

3. further develop computer design skills in drawing and image manipulation programs; and,

4. develop the ability to clearly communicate graphic design concepts visually as well as verbally.

Content:

This is a design class—not a software training class.
Students will produce a series of design projects, developing them from roughs to presentation. Students will be expected to have, or to develop, the technical and computer skills necessary to complete their projects.

Attendance Policy:

A studio courses, by its nature, is a dynamic educational environment. During critique periods; in the interaction of instructor and student on ongoing projects, the studio provides resources and learning opportunities that cannot be "made up" by other means. Therefore:

- Students are required to attend all class meetings, to arrive on time, and to stay for the duration of the class.
- Students arriving seven minutes or more late to class will be marked tardy. Students arriving 20 minutes or more late will be marked absent. Three tardy marks equals one absence. Students who leave before class is dismissed will be marked absent.
- The Maximum number of allowed absences is four.
- There are no excused absences.
- Student's final grade will be reduced by one letter for the first class missed after the maximum number of absences (or equivalent) has been reached, and one letter for every 4 classes (or equivalent) missed after that.

TEXT AND REFERENCES

Required:

Meggs, Philip, *A History of Graphic Design* (3rd ed.), John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1998, and as assigned.

Suggested:

A QuarkXpress text book, or the software manuals.

Adobe Illustrator, Classroom in a Book, Adobe Systems, Salinas, California, 1993.

Adobe Photoshop, Classroom in a Book, Adobe Systems, Salinas, California, 1993.

The Adobe Type Reference, Adobe Systems, Salinas, California, 2001.

Bringhurst, Robert, *The Elements of Typographic Style,* Hartley & Marks, Point Roberts, Washington 1992

Hurlburt, Allen, *Grid: A Modular System for the Design and Production of Newspapers, Magazines and Books,* John Wiley & Sons, 1982.

Williams, Robin, *The Mac Is Not a Typewriter,* Peachpit Press, 1990.

The Chicago Manual of Style (14th ed.)*,* The University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Materials & Supplies:

You will need the following tools & materials for this course.

Zip Disk and CD ROMs	drawing supplies, eraser, etc.
ruler marked in picas—Design School Ruler or Schadler	14" × 17" tracing and/or marker paper
masking/drafting/artist tape	other material as assigned/required by project

Student Evaluation/Methods of Assessment:

The quality of each project will be determined using the following criteria:

- Concept: Originality, creativity and effectiveness of the solution
- Aesthetics: visual impact, successful translation of concept to print medium
- Presentation: effective use of materials, construction of physical piece
- Each project will equal 20% of grade, except for the final, which will equal 40%. The first project is graded based on 50% paper, 50% designed piece.
- Students who regularly and enthusiastically participate in class discussions, critiques, and assignments will have their grade increased by up to .5 letter. Students who rarely participate may see their grades reduced.

Class Policies:

- All projects are due at the **beginning** of class on the date assigned. Late projects will be reduced one letter grade for each week late or portion thereof. After two weeks, projects will not be accepted.
- Plagiarism is grounds for a failing grade.
- Students must be completely prepared for class to be considered present, ie. they must have all necessary supplies and computer files and all ongoing (ungraded) projects with them.
- If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

Course Outline (Subject to change)

Workup Material With each project, students will turn in an envelope that contains the project, along with documentation of creative preparatory work. In general, Each envelope should contain at least 8 distinct concepts, and at least 4 pencil refinements of the chosen idea, at least one preliminary printed piece and the final (along with supporting files) on disk.

Ongoing: **Good/Bad Design Contest.** Every Monday, students will bring in samples of effective and ineffective printed pieces, that demonstrate very good, or appallingly bad solutions to a similar problem to the one the class is currently working on. This is an extra credit assignment, participation is optional.

Week 1–2 **Strategic thinking and execution.** Develop a written strategy for an advocacy advertisement. Execute roughs and sample ad based on strategy.

Week 1   Introduction to assignment, idea development.

Week 2   Design of ad based on approved strategy.

Week 2–5 **Name Tag Project.** Design a name tag for yourself, including at least your first and last name that effectively communicates something about who you are. While your tag must graphically express your personality—such as a "logo" would, it must also meet the technical requirement of a name tag—legible at a distance and in black ink on white paper only. Final size: 4 x 5 ". Final art must be executed in QuarkXpress.

Week 3   Assignment introduction, studio time, Monday. Wednesday: lecture, studio time.

Week 4   Studio time, Monday. Roughs due, critique, Wednesday.

Week 5   Studio time, Monday. Final critique, Wednesday.

Week 6–10 **Theater Poster Project,** (schedule is tentative)
This project will present an opportunity for students to create a professional-level theater poster for a George Mason production.

Week 6   Studio time, Monday. Roughs due Wednesday.

Week 7   Studio time, Monday. Roughs, critique, Wednesday.

Week 8   Studio time, Monday. "Final" art due, Wednesday.

Week 9   Studio time, Monday. Revised finals due Wednesday.

Week 10–15 **Capabilities brochure.** Find and research local service businesses, (ie a law firms, house cleaning services, printing companies, etc.) After researching at least three firms, develop a brochure for one that highlights their abilities. Final: 8 pp. minimum including front and back covers.
Pages to be completed in QuarkXpress. Minimum page size: 10×10 "

Week 10   Project introduction, theater postmortem, Monday. Studio time, Wednesday

Week 11   Thumbnails due, studio time, Monday. Studio time, Wednesday.

Week 12   Studio time Monday. Roughs due, critique, Wednesday.

Week 13   Studio time Monday. Rough pages due Wednesday.

Week 14   Studio time Monday. Critique, Wednesday.

Week 15   Studio time, Monday. Final Critique, Wednesday.

Effective and Ineffective Design

This semester, our projects will focus on advertising strategy and design, logo design, event poster design, and corporate communication. To grow as a designer, it is valuable for students to evaluate not just their own and their colleague's work; but also published projects produced by working professionals (often, but not always using generous budgets and teams of creative workers). Design is everywhere, for the successful student the world is a classroom.

To encourage students to evaluate the design around us, every Monday (promptly at the begining of class) we will have two contests—one for the best and one for the worst piece of professional design found during the previous week. Participation is not a requirement but is strongly encouraged. **How it will work:** each participating student makes a brief case for the piece he or she brought in as effective or ineffective communication. Then the entire class votes. The teacher acts as tiebreaker.

The winner is recorded. At the end of the semester the top two winners will each receive a 1/3-of-one-letter-grade bonus on their final.

Some things to consider when advocating for a piece:

• Powerful/Weak combination of words and images.

• Legibility/Readability of text

• Clutter/Visual noise

• How easy or hard it is to ignore a design (impact)

• How well a design communicates to different kinds of readers

• Use of grid and other organizing structures

There are, of course, many other possible factors the student can discuss.

Eligible Projects

Week 2	**Advocacy advertisements**
Week 3	**Advocacy ads, Logos.**
Week 4-5	**Logos**
Week 6–10	**Posters**
Week 10–15	**Collateral for service businesses**