

George Mason University Course Syllabus

Course Title:	Editorial Design
Course Code/Section:	AVT 313, Sections 1 and 2
Session/Year:	Fall, 2008
Meeting:	Tuesday, Thursday, 10:30am–1:10 pm, IN 129, 1:30–4:10 FAB B208
Professor:	Jandos Rothstein
Contact Info:	jrothste@gmu.edu
Class information:	www.jandos.com/for students
Office Hours:	TBA, and by appointment

Course Description: This semester we will be exploring long-form graphic design. While our focus will be on magazines, the skills developed—creating continuity and variety across a range of pages, presenting different kinds of information in context-appropriate formats, and developing brand identity and continuity, is also applicable to other common design tasks—annual reports, business documents, newspapers, brochures, books and other multipage documents.

Objectives

Develop professional visual sensitivity and competency in graphic communication through discipline of the magazine design process. Continuing development of professional computer design skills in drawing, page layout, and image manipulation using appropriate software. Develop a series of professional portfolio pieces including magazine brands, feature layouts, news section layouts and information graphics.

Content

This is a design class—not a software training class.

Students will produce a series of design projects, developing them from thumbnail rough to smooths to final. Students will be expected to have, or to develop, the technical and computer skills necessary to complete their projects.

Attendance Policy

Studio courses include a substantial critique/discussion components and lab component. By their nature, studios are dynamic educational environments. During critique periods and 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. In short, your attendance is just as important as mine. 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 the class is dismissed will be marked absent.
- Students who are having difficulty with the attendance requirement may be asked to drop the class.
- Students who accumulate three or more absences will receive a reduced or failing grade.
- There are no excused absences.

TEXT AND REFERENCES

Required:

Rothstein, Jandos, *Designing Magazines*, Allworth Press, New York, 2007. Students are also expected to purchase two magazines for the mash-up assignment, and **at least three copies** of the magazine they are redesigning during the course of the semester.

Suggested:

Adobe CS2 Illustrator Classroom in a Book, Adobe Press, Salinas, California, 2005.

Adobe CS2 Photoshop Classroom in a Book, Adobe Press, Salinas, California, 2005.

The Adobe Type Reference, Adobe Press, Salinas, California, 2005.

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* (1st. not 2nd. ed.), Peachpit Press, 1990.

Materials & Supplies:

You will need the following tools and materials for this course, and should have them with you at each session.

CD or DVD ROMs, thumb or hard drive recommended	drawing supplies (sketch pad, eraser, etc.)
ruler marked in picas—Design School Ruler or Schadler	recommended: 14" × 17" tracing or marker paper
masking/drafting/artist tape	other material as assigned/required by project
mounting board, mounting supplies—depending on how the final is presented.	

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 and beauty
- Presentation: Craftsmanship, effective use of materials
- Ambition and Scope: complexity of undertaking may impact final grade

Class, Department and University 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. The final project is due on the last day of class. No extensions will be given.
- This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran's status, or physical ability.
- As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the Department of Art and Visual Technology adheres to the ethical standards and practices incor-

porated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

- Students in this class are bound by the Honor Code, as stated in the George Mason University Catalog. The honor code requires that the work you do as an individual be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas. (This does not prohibit collaborative work when it is approved by the instructor.) Violations must be reported to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously. Using someone else's words or ideas without attribution is plagiarism, a very serious Honor Code offense. Plagiarism will also result in 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. Working on the design portion of projects on platforms and software other than Macintosh QuarkXpress is by permission of instructor only.
- 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.
- Students who are in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). The services of the Writing Center are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis.
- Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Students are responsible for the content of university and class communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.
- Cell phones and pagers must be turned off during class. The use of headphones is permitted during work periods.
- Students may redo work for a higher grade if the piece was originally turned in on time. Revisions must be a substantial reconsideration of the original—not merely a correction of errors. The deadline for revised work is the last day of class.

Useful Information:

- **Open Studio Hours** AVT teaching studios are open to students for extended periods of time mornings, evenings and weekends whenever classes are not in progress. Policies, procedures and schedules for studio use are established by the AVT studio faculty and are posted in the studios.
- **ArtsBus** The dates for this fall's ArtsBus trips are SEPTEMBER 27, OCTOBER 18, and NOVEMBER 15. If you need ArtsBus credit for this semester, you MUST enroll in AVT 300. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment. There will be NO exceptions. If you plan to go on multiple ArtsBus trips this term and wish to count them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300. Please go to the ArtsBus website: <http://artsbus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy.
- **Important Deadlines**

Last Day to Add (Full-Semester Course)	September 9
Last Day to Drop (Full-Semester Course)	September 26
Elective Withdrawal Period (Full-Semester)	September 27-October 4
Incomplete work from Fall due to instructor	October 24

Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for late adds (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the AVT office (or the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid processing). Requests for non-elective withdrawals and retroactive adds (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student's major is located. For AVT majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, Performing Arts Building A407.

Course Outline (Subject to change)

Workup Material With each incremental deadline, students will turn in color proofs—full-sized and cut neatly (razor or Xacto and straight edge—no scissors!) to trim (and taped into spreads as appropriate), in an envelope that also contains adequate documentation of creative preparatory work. You should include several distinct concepts (I recommend eight), pencil or computer refinements of the chosen idea (I suggest four iterations), and at least one preliminary full color proof, trimmed and taped as the final (but clearly marked as preliminary). The envelope must also contain a cd rom, dvd or zip disk with Quark or InDesign files (no thumb drives), and all supporting art and typefaces. Final pdfs must also be included. Missing components will result in a reduced grade (1/3 grade for each missing item).

Week 1–3

Magazine Content Analysis. Purchase two magazines, one each from the following two groups. You will note that nearly every magazine divides articles into sections. Generally, shorter items appear in the front and sometimes the back, (FOB, BOB) and longer pieces appear in the center “feature well.” While the content of the two magazines you purchase will vary, much of the underlying structure will be similar. Consider how both magazines use typography design and imagery, and how those choices appeal to readers. The rich visual and editorial choices the magazine’s staffs make form the personality or “brand” of each magazine. Come to the next class prepared to discuss specific features of each design and how the design relates to content. You may only use a magazine excluded from these lists if you choose mainstream newsstand consumer publication and you get my e-mailed approval before Thursday’s class. I will not approve two magazines that are too similar—for example two fashion magazines.

Group 1

Rolling Stone, Vibe, Spin, Esquire, GQ, Maxim, King, Eldr, AARP: The Magazine, Real Simple, Fortune, Black Enterprise, Forbes, Nat.Geo. Traveler, Outside, Surfer, The Progressive, National Review, American Prospect, The Nation, The National Review, The American Conservative, Martha Stewart Living

Group 2

Vouge, Vanity Fair, White Walls, Time, Newsweek, Sports Illustrated, ESPN, Mad, National Lampoon, Esopus, Boudin, Colors, Good, Gourmet, Cook’s, Cook’s Illustrated, The New York Times Magazine, Bitch, Bust, Mean, Psychology Today, The New Yorker, Scientific American, Nature, Chemical & Engineering News, 16, Glamour, CosmoGirl, Latina

08/26, 28 Tuesday: introduction to class and first assignment, Thursday: two magazines for the mash-up project due. Intro to LexusNexus and other library and internet text and image sources.
Read: Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2.

Magazine Content Part II: Mash-Up. Using the same two magazines as for the first assignment, design a feature story for one in the style of a feature from the other. You should not imitate an existing feature, but seek to simulate how magazine “A” might handle “B’s” content. Text and headlines should be real (you may find text and images on the internet, but be sure that any images you choose are adequate resolution for print), Length: minimum 5pp, but be guided by how your magazine “packages” its features. Strive for a similar density of text and ratio of text and images across pages.

09/02, 04 Tuesday: Lecture on long-form documents, defining colors in Quark, Presentation of research results, work time, Thursday: First draft of mash-

up due. Parts of a magazine handout. Work time, small-group critiques, Thursday. *Read: Chapters 27, 28, 33.*

09/09, 11 Tuesday: studio time, introduction of redesign assignment. Thursday: Final critique of Mashup. *Read: Chapters 4, 5, 8, 9.*

Week 4–11

Editorial Redesign. Our major project this semester will be a complete overhaul of a magazine, or an “editorial redesign.” While this may seem like a lot of time to accomplish a small goal, as you have already seen, a magazine format is a complex, carefully balanced machine with lots of components. A vast number of decisions go into a magazine format, which relate to obvious design decisions—type, color, grid, budget—but also the less obvious, how information is distributed and presented within sections. Many redesigns go farther—considering what sections might be enhanced, reduced, eliminated, or added, as well as the overall tone or voice of the magazine. A redesign can be done with an eye towards making the magazine appeal to a younger or wealthier audience, it may be intended to make the magazine seem more serious, or more approachable, it may attempt to use art or photography more effectively. You will start this project with a magazine that you believe is “broken”—severely in need of improvement or updating. For this reason, it is recommended that you do **not** choose a major “supermarket” newsstand magazine (like *People*, *Vogue* or *Esquire*). Once you have a magazine that should function better, your first step will be the creation of a three page written proposal explaining your choice—why the magazine is not working and how it might be repaired and updated so as to better serve its users—the readers and advertisers. (Some redesigns also take budget, production efficiency and staff into account.) Your final project will include a revised version of your proposal, three separate covers, a front news section (six pages) which includes at least two information/ASF components, a column (or POV) format (1 page), a second front section or back section with a different name, format and purpose (two pages min.), a two-page table of contents (two single pages or a spread), one long feature (five pages or more) and one short feature (two or three pages) for a total of 21 designed pages minimum. You must also turn in a copy of the published magazine. You are responsible for purchasing and reading the real magazine during the duration of this project. All pages must be printed in full size, full-color, trimmed neatly to bleed, and mounted on black mounting boards, which are logically organized and stacked in the order the pages would appear in the magazine.

As with any large project, it is anticipated that later design decisions will make it necessary to rethink earlier decisions. Therefore, grades given over the course of the semester will be considered provisional. The 21 pages turned in at the end of the semester must be “of a piece.” Even though pages will be designed over time, all finals must make editorial and graphic sense when viewed together. The final grade may be adjusted up or down to reflect how well the final magazine works as a complete solution. Your final must be turned in with supporting files using Quark’s gather for output feature which puts art, page files and fonts in a single folder. You must also create usable templates from your pages (which include page grids and style sheets). Finally, your disk(s) must include PDFs of every page. **Your disk will not be returned to you. Retain all files separately for your records.**

09/16, 18 Tuesday: magazine branding, color, type, pacing. Field trip to library periodical room. Thursday: In-class project. *Read: Chapters 11, 12 and 14 (14 is a model for your written proposal)* and the *Writing for Designers* handout from jandos.com/forstudents.

09/23, 25 Tuesday: Magazine choice due. color and body assignment, Lecture: Magazine Briefs—structure: Briefs: signage, grids, points of entry.

Comments on getting started. Studio time, Tuesday and Thursday.
Read: Chapters 13 and 20.

- 09/30, 10/01 Tuesday: Studio time, DESIGN BRIEF DUE. Thursday: Color and body due, small-group critiques.
Read: Chapters 25 and 29.
- 10/07, 09 Tuesday: studio time, lecture on ASFs, Thursday: small group critique of progress on FOB Thursday.
Read: Chapters 3, 6 and 7.
- 10/14, 16 Tuesday: no class. Thursday: preliminary FOB finals due.
Read: Chapters 18 and 30.
- 10/21, 23 Tuesday: studio time. Thursday: small-group critiques of covers in progress.
Read: Chapters 22 and 23.
- 10/28, 30 Tuesday: lecture on feature design, studio time. Thursday: preliminary cover finals due.
Read: Chapter 31.
- 11/04, 06 Tuesday: lecture on the art budget, studio time. Thursday: small-group critiques of features in progress.
Read: Chapters 17, 21 and 26.

Week 13–16: Create missing sections, reconciliation of design, creation of stylesheets and templates. While that may seem like a lot to get done in two weeks (and you may start earlier) you will likely find that by this point in the semester that you will have a good feel for your magazine by now, and these last two sections will go quickly.

- 11/11, 13 Tuesday: lecture on creating templates from pages. Thursday: Preliminary feature final due.
Read: Chapters 18 and 30.
- 11/18, 20 Tuesday: lecture on options for final presentation, studio time. Thursday: studio time, optional small-group critiques.
- 11/25, 27 Tuesday: Studio time. Thursday: Thanksgiving break.
- 12/02, 04 Tuesday: optional work day, Thursday: **Final due, final critique, NO EXTENSIONS.** Have a good holiday.