

George Mason University
Course Syllabus

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| Course Title: | Editorial Illustration (Special Topics) |
| Course Code/Section: | AVT 399, Section 4 |
| Session/Year: | Fall, 2007 |
| Meeting: | Tuesday, Thursday, 4:30–7:10 PM, FAB B204 |
| Professor: | Jandos Rothstein |
| Contact Info: | jrothste@gmu.edu |
| Class information: | www.jandos.com/for students |
| Office Hours: | Tuesdays, 3:20–4:20, and by appointment |

Course Description: This class is designed to introduce students to the art of illustration. Sharing the the tools and techniques of gallery artists and the communicative goals of graphic designers, illustrators work across media to make concepts understandable and powerful in the service of editorial, informational or persuasive goals. Successful illustration comes in a staggering range of forms and objectives, it is unified by clarity in formal voice and objectives. Although most illustration emerges from a collaborative commissioned process, illustrators have wide creative latitude for determining their own voice, style and topics.

Objectives

Develop professional visual sensitivity and competency in graphic communication and art through the discipline of the illustration process. Explore a range of communication problems and solutions through assigned and self-directed projects.

By the end of class students should:

1. Have a basic familiarity with the art and business of illustration;
2. Have experienced a number of commonly used illustration media, making evaluations about what is suitable for further personal exploration;
3. Have made progress in development of the concepting ability necessary for an illustration, graphic design or commercial photography career;
4. Have sustained a style and done a body of work around a single self-directed theme or project.

Content

Students will produce a series of illustrations, developing them from rough through **camera-ready**. Students will be expected to show adequate progress in the development of rendering and visual communications skills.

Attendance Policy

Studio courses, by their nature, are 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. In short, your presence 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 accumulate three or more absences will receive a reduced or failing grade.
- There are no excused absences.

TEXT AND REFERENCES

Required:

There is no required text for this class, however you will be expected to purchase at least one magazine and pay attention to the illustration field during your time in this course, including how illustration is used in various print and online media contexts. As you look at illustration (and READ the related text) you should evaluate how the work effectively meets the needs of editorial communication goals. At a minimum, students should take at least one trip weekly to the magazine rack of a large bookstore or the library's periodical collection to see illustration in use.

Exhibit

Students are required to attend the as-of-yet unscheduled illustration show opening later this semester.

Suggested:

American Illustration, current and previous volumes.

Communications Arts magazine, particularly the illustration annual

Print magazine

3x3 magazine (In each issue, three illustrators write about three other illustrators)

Society of Publication Designers Annual, current and previous volumes.

Society for News Design Annual, current and previous volumes.

Heller, Steven and Marshall Arisman, *Inside the Business of Illustration*, Allworth Press, 2004.

Heller, Steven and Marshall Arisman, *The Education of an Illustrator*, Allworth Press, 2000.

Zeegan, Lawrence and Crush, *The Fundamentals of Illustration*, AVA Academia, 2005.

Sabin, Roger, *Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels: A History of Comic Art*, Phaidon, 1996.

Materials & Supplies:

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

Material choices effect working .

graphite pencils in a range of hardnesses from 6b to 4h

Kneadable and Art Gum erasers.

ruler marked in inches and picas

masking/drafting/artist tape

Art Alternatives 18" x 24" metal-edged drawing board or similar

11" x 14" pad bristol board or cold-pressed watercolor paper

Complete set 16 or more acrylic (preferred) or gouache artists colors, brushes, pallet and container for water.

Old Magazines, paper, etc. for collage assignment.

Students may be required to purchase additional supplies, and to replenish material as it is consumed.

A note on computers:

While we will be focusing on traditional methods this semester, many illustrators incorporate computers in whole or in part into their professional practice. Some merely scan original work for digital delivery to clients, some modify or revise handmade work on the computer, others work entirely digitally. At one time, computer-generated work had a distinctly digital work, these days it can be hard to tell if an illustration was created using traditional or electronic methods. While there will not be computer instruction as part of this class, students who have software fluency and a portable system may use it for later projects. Illustrators most often use Photoshop, Painter, (both of these are raster-based) Illustrator and Freehand, which are vector-based programs.

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, appropriateness of technique and style to solution
- Presentation: Craftsmanship, effective use of materials

Class 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 incorporated 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 22, OCTOBER 20 and NOVEMBER 17. If you need ArtsBus credit for this semester, you MUST enroll in AVT 300 before September 11. 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**

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| Last Day to Add (Full-Semester Course) | September 11, 2007 |
| Last Day to Drop (Full-Semester Course) | September 28, 2007 |
| Elective Withdrawal Period (Full-Semester Course) | September 29-October 26, 2007 |

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 project, students will turn in an envelope containing documentation of creative preparatory work. Each envelope should contain at least 8 distinct concepts and 4 pencil refinements of the chosen idea. The envelope need not be expensive but must be easily resealable—such as a manila envelope with metal clasp or string tie.

Week 1–2

Introduction to class and illustration, First two assignments.

PROJECT 1: take a trip to Borders or another large bookstore, find an illustration you like in a magazine and purchase the magazine—note that the illustration must be credited to an author rather than a service (like PhotoDisc or The Stock Yard). Likely candidates are *Entertainment Weekly*, *Rolling Stone*, *Vibe*, *The New Yorker*, *Harper's* and *The Progressive*. However, you need not limit yourself to these, there are many other options. Identify the illustrator, find his or her web site and look at the work for themes running through it and consistency of style. Write a two-page (maximum) self-contained essay that answers the following questions in any order you like: Why were you attracted to the published illustration? What is the article about? Did the illustrator effectively illustrate the story, why or why not? What strategy did the illustrator use—is there a key scene, person, or overarching theme that the illustrator chose, or did he/she take a more conceptual approach? Could this story have been illustrated with photography, why or why not?—If yes, what advantages and disadvantages would photography have offered? Why do you think the magazine

hired this illustrator rather than another—support your answer with attached work samples printed from the illustrator’s web site.

PROJECT 2: Pick an inanimate object that can bring to class—a shoe, a telephone, a guitar, a toy, or other piece that isn’t overly simple or complex in form. Draw four 6" x 6" pencil drawings of the object each of which communicates a different one of the following meanings: • Foreboding, • Trustworthiness • Authority, • Loneliness or isolation, • Humor or levity, • Despair, • Rebirth, or • Age or decay. Students may change perspective, scale “camera angle” drawing method, line/tone quality or use distortion to accomplish the goal of bringing meaning to the object.

Week 1 Introduction to class and assignments, Tuesday.
Studio time, Thursday.

Week 2 Paper due, presentation of research results to class, Tuesday
Work time, Thursday.

Week 3 Final critique, Tuesday.
Beginning of Op-Ed project, studio time, Thursday.

Week 3-4 **Op-Ed** Using one of the provided op-ed columns from the New York Times or the Washington Post, students produce a B&W final in pen & ink illustrating the key point or points that the writer is making. Student may add ink washes or create tone with pen or pencil.

Week 4 Approval of rough, studio time, Discussion of information project, Tuesday.
Final Op-Ed illustration due, critique Thursday.

Week 5-7 **Informational illustration (A.S.F.)** Illustration has the ability to make complex arguments and concepts understandable, as the last project demonstrated. Illustration can also be used to explain a sequence of events (such as what happened between the plane hitting the tower and the tower collapsing) a microscopic or surgical process (such as appear in medical and scientific journals) and the perfect storms of unrelated events that can effect the economy (such as Forbes might use to illustrate a tumultuous week on Wall Street) Students will use illustration to explain an odd coincidence or event that happened to them, illustrate the friendships and tensions in their circle of friends, or another technical topic. Students may, but need not use words as part of their work.

Week 5 Studio time, Tuesday.
Roughs due, Studio time, small group critiques, Thursday.

Week 6 Studio time, Tuesday
“Smooth” rough due, small group critiques, Thursday.

Week 7 Studio time, introduction to caricature project, Tuesday.
Finals due, final critique, Thursday.

Week 7–9

Caricature/Portraiture Using a collage technique (which can be mixed with drawn or painted components, students will use portraiture as a jumping off point to illustrate a book or music review, or a portrait of a political figure in the news. Illustration must take into account the point of view of the author and/or the news events that inspired the article. Students may find their own article, or use one of the provided options.

Week 8 Studio time, Tuesday. revision/preliminary final due Thursday.

Week 9 Studio time, Tuesday. final due, final critique Thursday.

Week 10–15

Final Project. Students will produce a series of no less than four related illustrations for an article or book that interests them. This project is an opportunity for students to explore one of the fields of illustration sampled in the first part of this class in greater depth or to explore something new such as the illustration of fiction or long-form narratives over multiple pieces, architectural illustration, cover illustration, children's book illustration or something else. Project must be approved by instructor.

Week 10 Studio time Tuesday and Thursday.

Week 11 Studio time, Tuesday. Presentation of roughs for all four drawings Thursday.

Week 12 Studio time, Tuesday. Presentation of the first final, Thursday.

Week 13 Studio time, Tuesday. Presentation of the second final, Thursday.

Week 14 Studio time, Tuesday. Presentation of the third final, Thursday.

Week 15 Studio time, Tuesday. Presentation of the fourth final and revisions Thursday.