

PROJECT 3

Rico Frederick
Adjunct Professor

Graphic Design II
201:085:232
Spring 2026
T/TH 8:30am - 11:20am

Book Cover System

Objectives:

Through a series of permutations we are going to develop a visual narrative that engages our audience and communicates the content of 3 different, but related books. We will achieve this through a study of signs using icon, index, symbol as our base vocabulary. The following definitions are derived from several sources including *This Means This, This Means That: A User's Guide to Semiotics* by Sean Hall and *Type & Image: The Language of Graphic Design* by Philip B. Meggs.

Icon - resembles the thing it represents. A pictorial representation, a photograph, an architect's model of a building are all icons, because they imitate or copy aspects of their subjects. (ex: your drivers license)



Signifie

Line Drawing
Sculptured portrait in clay
Color photograph

resembles
resembles
resembles

Signifie

The place depicted
The person portrayed
The object photographed

Index - has a factual or casual connection that points towards its object. Wet streets are a sign that it has rained recently. Smoke signifies fire.



Signifie

A black eye
A thermometer changing
Smoke
A rash
A defensive posture
Handwriting

caused by
caused by
caused by
caused by
caused by

Signifie

A punch
A rise or fall in temperature
Fire
An infection
An emotional attitude (fear)
A person writing

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Symbol - has an arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signified. The interpreter understands the symbol through previous knowledge or experience. Spoken or written words are symbols.



Signifie	Signifie	Signifie
Shaking hands	arbitrary relationship	A greeting
Black tie	arbitrary relationship	A formal occasion
Scale	arbitrary relationship	Justice
Dove	arbitrary relationship	Peace
Lion	arbitrary relationship	Strength

PROCESS

Choose 3 books, can be from different genres, that supports your Matrix central word or concept. From your image matrix, evaluate the visuals as to their strengths and weaknesses in communicating your message (based on your various defined conceptual directions), the word/concept and its meaning. Select the images that are most appropriate and best describe your word and/or concept (you may use additional visuals to help describe the word/theme/concept, either similar in meaning or the opposite). Then, begin composing, manipulating and recreating these images into more elaborate visuals.

STAGE 1: Digital Sketches in Black/White (minimum 9 permutations) DUE: Mar. 18th

- Version 1: composition using an icon for 3 book covers.
- Version 2: composition using an index for 3 book covers.
- Version 3: composition using an symbol for 3 book covers.

STAGE 2: Introduction of structure and image/word interplay DUE: Mar. 20th

(minimum 6 permutations - choose two composition paths from Stage 1 sketches)

Constant Parameters:

- > Grid
- > 2 spot colors (Examples: black + 1 PMS color)
- > at least 1 side bleed
- > Title
- > Author's Name
- > 1 Typeface - DO NOT USE DISPLAY FONTS

STAGE 3: Selecting 1 direction DUE: Mar. 26th

(3 permutations - choose one composition paths from Stage 2)

Constant Parameters:

- > Grid
- > 3 spot colors (Examples: black + 2 PMS colors)
- > 4 side bleed using the entire canvas
- > Title
- > Author's Name
- > Texture
- > 2 Typefaces - DO NOT USE DISPLAY FONTS

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STAGE 4: Refinement

Same as the above permutations with the addition of unlimited textures, layered images and colors. Design a meaningful narrative through the use of type, image, form, color and structure. Include:

- > **Front Cover:** Title, Author's Name
- > **Spine:** Title, Author's Name, Publisher's logo
- > **Back Cover:** Praise for the Book, Title, Author's Name, Publisher's logo, Bar Code, Price & ISBN
- > **FINAL DUE: Apr. 2th**

DESIGN STRATEGIES

Metaphor

a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in or to suggest a resemblance, as in "the curtain of night" or "all the world's a stage."

Irony

a method of humorous or subtly sarcastic expression in which the intended meaning of words used is the direct opposite of their usual sense, as in "The irony of calling a stupid plan 'clever.'"

Humor

the quality that makes something seem funny, amusing, or ludicrous.

Factual

containing facts, real, actual.

Compare and Contrast.

Surprise

playing against ones expectations.

Substitution

swapping one element for another to create and unexpected result.

1 + 1 = 3

using two clichés in a unique way.

COMPOSITIONAL CONSIDERATION

Texture	simple/complex layered/unlayered
Tone	dark/light
Scale	small/large
Dimension	flat/deep opaque/transparent
Interval	narrow/wide
Rhythm	regular/irregular regular/progressive regular/alternative
Direction	vertical/horizontal divergent/convergent vertical/circular
Width	thin/thick
Weight	light/heavy

Slant	oblique/vertical
Shape	geometric/organic
Space	positive/negative
Joinery	connected/disconnected
Grouping	consonance/dissonance
Hierarchy	dominate/subordinate
Focus	micro/macro
Randomness	order/chaos
Distortion	integrated/mutilated
Tension	relieved/unrelieved

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DESIGN COMPONENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Front Cover

Title
Authors Name

Spine

Title
Authors Name
Publisher's logo

Back Cover

Back Matter: Praise for the Book
Title
Authors Name
Publisher's logo
Retail: Bar Code, Price and ISBN

You may only use two type families, a sans serif and a serif typeface. You must refer to the Carter, Day, Meggs book, *Typographic Design* for your typeface choice. You may use any sizes, weight, and combination of these type families.

Formal Considerations

- A system that helps relate all the various components (Cover/Spine/Back)
- How type may play a role, How color may play a role.
- Isolation of the sign - cropping down to the essentials.
- Hierarchy
- Classification of information.
- Image and word interplay.
- Positive and negative space.
- Positive and negative forms.
- Center images.
- Supporting images.