

Department of Arts,  
Culture & Media

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Assistant Professor

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Office hours:  
By appointment

**Department Chair:**  
Dr. Ian Watson

Course pre-requisites:  
As specified by  
Major sequence

\*This course is a BA & BFA in  
Graphic Design Requirement.

QUOTE

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**“In graphic circles, form-follows-function is reconfigured as form-follows-content. If content is the source of form, always preceding it and imbuing it with meaning, form without content (as if that is even possible) is some kind of empty shell.”**

**Michael Rock**

## COURSE INTRODUCTION

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This course is the initiation of your student portfolio development. The projects are designed to instill a system for creative problem solving in preparation for professional work in graphic design. The emphasis will be on three things; problem analysis, the relation between form and content, and executing your ideas.

Based on an understanding that contemporary designers don't just create objects, they create experiences, you will be translating complexity into manageable and meaningful solutions. In other words, you will begin to develop a visual narrative that conveys your message and impacts your audience in order to contribute with responsible additions to society.

Assignments will follow a typical client/designer process:  
conducting research > grasping context > introducing an idea > developing and/or shaping content > creating form

Projects will cover a variety of formats, which will include all or some of the following: brand identity, multifaceted layouts, publications and typographic systems design. You will become familiar with basic information on paper and printing techniques, and will expand from the printed page to digital environments when appropriate. Course work will also emphasize a development and understanding of student's individual aesthetic and sensibilities as designers.

We will discuss the creative process and how it is linked to your influences and personal expression. And at all times, you will focus on asking questions about intent and efficacy of your design solutions in relation to the interconnectivity of all things to ensure a mindful placement of design interventions within the social milieu.

### Questions we will explore:

- + How is designing for interactive experience similar to / different from developing other design solutions?
- + When communication / graphic design has as a core element interactivity, what is unique about what it can achieve?
- + What is the nature of a designed experience that includes participation of an audience or user?
- + How do we integrate user testing into the design process?
- + How are the artifacts and systems we design "experiences?"
- + Notions of "experience design" (design of form, content, and behavior)

## OBJECTIVES

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- + Explore the wide range of methods, tools, mediums and fundamentals of design.
- + Pursue conceptual and process-driven visual problem solving.
- + Develop message-making skills through form (syntax) and meaning (semantics).
- + Encourage class members to be critical observers of design. Make observations verbal.
- + Refine your eye for detail and impeccable, appropriate presentation.
- + Give shape to design solutions by understanding context and defining problem constraints.
- + Implement sketching, storyboarding, wireframing, and creation of functional prototypes in the creation of design solutions
- + Set high technical standards

## EXPECTATIONS

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You will be expected to apply previously gained notions in printed and digital means, where typographic principles, the relationships between form and meaning, sign and symbols, visual/informational hierarchy, type specifications, comprehensive understanding of composition, grid systems & problem solving process skills, are habitual considerations.

Throughout the semester, you will be required to conduct research and make use of the DANA Library archives for further assessment. I will also expect you to actively participate in class critiques, make use of critical analysis towards your work and the work of your peers, apply your design vocabulary, formally present and defend your work, read all assigned materials, write your own content, improve your craft skills as much as your competency in design software, explore alternative media, and to pursue references beyond the fields of art and design to broaden your perspectives and add depth to your work.

## CLASS FORMAT & PROCESS

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This course will operate as an experimental “laboratory,” and will be grounded in collaborative learning. Individual projects will be realized both through outside efforts and directed experiments within the classroom laboratory. Students should be prepared for each class session with appropriate materials and completed outside assignments. They are expected to work diligently throughout the duration of each session. Students will also be responsible for the overall success of the studio through participation in peer reviews and peer tutoring.

The course content will be presented through various lectures, readings, demonstrations, slide presentations, critiques, class discussions, one on one meetings, as well as homework assignments.

When you start working on a project, and throughout its course, consider these elements within your process:

Concept > Ideas; your intellectual or emotional intentions.

Content > The message. The information intended to be communicated.

Function > The purpose. Practical use of the work.

Structure > Organization of how the content is arranged. Hierarchy by placement.

Form > The physical manifestation. Both the media used and the appearance of your piece.

Context > The environment where your work will live and in which it will be understood.

## ONGOING PROJECT: PROCESS BOOK

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Along with your assignments, you will be expected to keep track of your process, research and evaluations visually. This documentation may be manifested as a sketch/scrap book or a digital representation of it, like a personal blog or folder structures of process that backup your projects, but photographs of handmade pieces and sketches must be scanned and uploaded. (see pg. 10)

## ATTENDANCE

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Consistent and prompt attendance develops responsible professional behavior and insures that students have access to the full range of experiences and information necessary to complete class assignments and acquire the skills and knowledge emphasized in a university education.

Attendance is required during the scheduled class periods. Punctual arrival, effective use of the full studio period, and participation in assigned work is required. For this course, only two excused absences for the semester are acceptable. Allotted absences are to accommodate illness only. Doctor appointments, advisor conferences, trips to supply stores and labs, employment, etc., should not be scheduled to conflict with class. All students are expected to attend class on a regular basis. Prolonged illness should be verified by a physician and may require the student to withdraw from class if he/she cannot complete work in a comprehensive and timely manner. In some instances, unsatisfactory attendance may result in a failing grade.

Excessive lateness, early departures, excessive break time, lack of participation in assigned studio activities and not having homework will count as equivalent to an absence (2=1 absence). Lateness is defined as being ten minutes late for class or departing before the class has been formally dismissed by the instructor. Lateness that exceeds one hour will be counted as one absence. More than 2 absences equals a letter grade (without a note from the Doctor or a pre-arranged excuse).

## PREPARATION FOR CLASS

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Students are to be prepared at the start of each class with assigned work and supplies. This includes the presentation of sketches and comps for projects, in required form, for class critiques. Students who are not prepared and do not participate in class critiques or individual discussions with faculty when scheduled to do so should not expect private critiques at a later date. Students are also responsible for the knowledge and practice of tools, materials and methods previously covered in class.

Students who miss lectures and class discussion due to absences must obtain notes and assignments for subsequent classes from a responsible student prior to the next class period. While I will be happy to clarify information for students who are confused, I cannot repeat lectures or elaborate project descriptions on an individual basis. Students should make every attempt to obtain general information from classmates before discussing details with me. For students who need to reach me outside of class time, my email address is listed above on the top left of this handout.

## DEADLINES

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This course is structured so that all work can be completed during a normal semester. There will be no incomplete grades given without a serious, documented excuse. Completion of ALL required projects is mandatory to pass the course. Projects not seen in progress will not be graded. Any project not completed by the deadline must be turned in by the beginning of the next class at which time it will automatically receive one grade lower. All projects must be handed in at the deadline but may be redone for the final portfolio review. The new grade assigned will be the average of the original and new project.

## EVALUATION

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Your final grade will be determined using the following criteria: *design process* – idea generation and exploration, evaluation of ideas, verbal presentation of work, responding to constructive criticism *final projects* – quality of ideas, extent of exploration and experimentation, execution of concept, abiding by constraints, craft, organization, *presentation & professionalism* – participation, meeting deadlines, attendance, punctuality, contribution to critiques, respect for your work and that of others.

## ASSESSMENT & GRADING

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**A** Excellent without exception.

The student displays an exceptional attitude in critique participation, response to criticism, professional conduct, an advanced understanding of course material, and is able to achieve remarkable results above and beyond suggested project parameters.

**B+** Well above average

**B** Above average

**B-** Above average

The student displays a positive attitude in critique participation, response to criticism, professional conduct, a competent understanding of course material, and is able to achieve above average results while fulfilling suggested project parameters.

**C+** Average

**C** Average

In some instances the student displays a positive attitude in critique participation, response to criticism, professional conduct, an understanding of course material, and applies it to assigned problems satisfactorily, meeting basic expectations but not pushing beyond suggested project parameters.

**C-** or below Failing

**INC** Incomplete

A grade of incomplete may be given if due to non-academic reasons the student finds it impossible to complete all assignments. If a student wishes to receive an incomplete for a course, they must request it in writing no later than the last scheduled meeting for the course. Failure to meet this deadline will result in a failing grade for the course.

\*Reading assignments might be quizzed or require a complimentary writing assignment.

## REQUIRED & SUGGESTED READING

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Readings will be assigned over the course of the semester, and will be posted to our class website. In addition, a bibliography of additional sources will be provided for further reference. Our class site is: <http://acmgd.info/gd5/>

*Required:*

- > Typographic Design: Form and Communication (Carter/Day/Meggs)
- > Graphic Design Solutions (Robin Landa)

*Suggested:*

- > Graphic Design Theory, Readings From the Field (Helen Armstrong)
- > Graphic Design: A User's Manual (Adrian Shaughnessy)

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#### DIGITAL POLICY

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The responsibility for backing up digital files lies solely with the individual student. Corruption of files containing coursework will not be considered a valid excuse for missing a deadline. It is each student's responsibility to consistently back up work on multiple devices in case of file corruption, disk or computer failure.

**MATERIALS**

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Students should have materials for sketching and idea-generation for all class sessions, and a device for backing up their work on a source other than their computer (USB drives, etc). A sketchbook should also be kept for the class throughout the semester to record ideas, draw, write notes, etc. Sketchbooks will be reviewed periodically, and handed in with other class Final Deliverables at the end of the semester.

**RESOURCES**

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In addition to resources posted on our class Website, each student should become familiar with the following design magazines, journals, and annuals. Some of these are available at Dana Library (Basement), Newark & NJIT Libraries:

**Magazines**

Graphis  
Print  
Communication Arts  
ID Magazine  
GOOD  
Emigre  
Eye  
Baseline  
Wired  
X-height  
Raygun (in Dana Library only)

**Annuals**

AIGA Graphic Design USA  
Art Directors Club  
Graphis  
Print Regional Design  
Type Directors Club  
Communication Arts  
Society of Publications Designers  
Society of Environmental Designers  
American Corporate Identity  
American Center for Design 100 Show  
Society of Typographic Design

**Journals**

AIGA Journal of Graphic Design  
American Center For Design  
Visible Language  
Design Quarterly  
Design Issues  
TypoGraphic

**SUGGESTED READING LIST**

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Some books are on reserve at Dana Library. Use the library computer and type "Reserve Dana Art" in the space provided for the instructor then go to the Reseve Desk and ask for the book.

- > A Designers Art by Paul Rand
- > American Typography Today by Rob Carter
- > An Essay on Typography by Eric Gill
- > Armin Hofmann: His Work Quest and Philosophy  
by Armin Hofmann
- > Asymmetric Typography by Jan Tschichold
- > By Design by Ralph Caplan
- > Bruno Monguzzi: A Designer's Perspective  
by Franc Nunoo-Quarcoo
- > Bruno Munari: Design as Art Aldo Tanchis
- > Calligrammes by Guillaume Apollinaire
- > Conceptual Blockbusting by James Adams
- > Concrete Poetry: A World View Mary Ellen Solt
- > Concrete Poetry: A Study in Metaphor Visible  
by Robert Klanten
- > Design, Form and Chaos by Paul Rand
- > Design Quarterly 133 : Does It Make Sense  
by April Greiman

- > Design With Type by Carl Dair
- > Dorfsman and CBS by Dick Hess & Marion Muller
- > Emigre (The Book) Graphic Design into the Digital Realm  
by R. Vanderlans & Z. Licko
- > Envisioning Information by Edward Tufte
- > Experiences in Visual Thinking by Robert H. McKim
- > Experimenta Typographica by Willem Sandberg
- > Expressive Typography: The Word as Image  
by Kimberly Elam
- > French Currents of The Letter Pioneers of Modern  
Typography by Herbert Spencer
- > From Lascaux to Brooklyn by Paul Rand
- > George Nelson: The Design of Modern Design  
by Stanley Abercrombie
- > Graphic Design Manual by Armin Hofmann
- > Graphic Design Processes by Kenneth J. Hiebert
- > Graphic Design Solutions by Robin Landa
- > Graphic Design Theory by Helen Armstrong
- > Herb Lubalin: Art Director, Designer, Typographer  
by Snyder/Peckolick
- > Information Graphics by Sandra Rendgen
- > Jan Tschichold: Typographer by Ruari McLean
- > Josef Muller-Brockmann by Lars Muller
- > Language Summer '74
- > Lateral Thinking: Creativity Step by Step by Edward deBono
- > Manual of Typographic Design by Ruari McLean
- > Milton Glaser Graphic Design by Jean Michel Folon
- > Modern Typography by Robin Kinross
- > Multiple Signatures by Michael Rock 2x4
- > Nelson On Design by George Nelson
- > Pentagram: The Compendium by Pentagram Partners
- > Problems of Design by George Nelson
- > Radical Modernism by Dan Friedman
- > Stop Stealing Sheep and Find Out How Type Works  
by Erik Spiekermann & E.M. Ginger
- > The Art of Graphic Design Bradbury Thompson
- > The Elements of Typographic Style by Robert Bringhurst
- > The Graphic Edge by Rick Poyner
- > The Graphic Language of Neville Brody I and II  
by Jon Wozencroft
- > The Liberated Page by Herbert Spencer
- > The Mind Map Book by Tony and Barry Buzan
- > The New Typography by Jan Tschichold
- > The Visible Word by Herbert Spencer
- > The Visual Display of Quantitative Information  
by Edward Tufte
- > Think by Edward deBono
- > Thoughts on Design by Paul Rand
- > Type and Image: The Language of Graphic Design  
by Philip Meggs
- > Typographic Communications Today  
by Edward Gottschall

- > Typography by Aaron Burns
- > Typography: A Manual of Design by Emil Ruder
- > Typography Now : The Next Wave by Rick Poyner
- > Visible Signs by David Crow
- > Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative by Edward Tufte
- > Women in Design: A Contemporary View by Liz McQuiston

#### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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Academic Integrity is a commitment to the core values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility and their role in ensuring the health and vigor of the academic and creative community. Please note that students are encouraged to contact their instructors and/or the University librarians for guidance in maintaining academic integrity in their work. Violations of academic integrity are considered to be acts of academic dishonesty and include (but are not limited to) cheating, plagiarizing, fabrication, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating academic dishonesty, and are subject to University policies and procedures. You may consult the University integrity website for a complete description of policies and procedures at: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI\\_Policy\\_9\\_01\\_2011.pdf](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf)

#### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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Any student eligible for and requesting academic accommodations due to a disability should provide the appropriate forms within the first two weeks of the semester.

PROCESS BOOK FORMAT

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<p><b>TITLE</b></p>	<p><b>DESCRIPTION</b></p> <p>A paragraph or two about what you did.</p> <p>Think about it like a design brief.</p>	<p><b>RESEARCH</b></p> <p>Photos, visual research. List of reference books magazines, etc.</p> <p>You WILL do research for every project.</p>
<p><b>ROUGH SKETCHES</b></p> <p>Multiple pages.</p>	<p><b>RESPONSE TO 1ST CRIT</b></p> <p>A paragraph or so about the first crit.</p>	<p><b>REFINED SKETCHES</b></p> <p>Several pages. It can be purely screen shots, but should show the different explorationsbased on your last crit.</p>
<p><b>RESPONSE TO 2ND CRIT</b></p> <p>A paragraph or so about the first crit.</p>	<p><b>RE-REFINED SKETCHES</b></p> <p>Several pages. It can be purely screen shots, but should show the different explorationsbased on your last crit.</p>	<p><b>POST MORTEM</b></p> <p>Conclusion : A paragraph or two about what failed, what worked, lessons learned, what you'll do moving forward.</p>