

Department of Arts,
Culture & Media

Eric Ng

Adjunct Professor

ejn37@newark.rutgers.edu
Bradley Hall, Room 509

Department of Arts,
Culture & Media
Chair: Ned Drew

Course pre-requisites:
As specified by major sequence

*This course is a BFA in
Graphic Design Requirement.

acmgd.info/gd3

GRAPHIC DESIGN III

"If we really need to coin a phrase to describe an activity encompassing imaging, editing, narration, chronicling, performing, translating, organizing and directing, I'll conclude with a suggestion: designer = designer."

Michael Rock, Designer as Author

"What is exciting about making things recognisable now is that they have to be recognisable on every platform. It has to be recognisable online, on a person, in another country, in a different language, through a building or space [...]. This is totally fun because you can create some premise and the premise can extend forever."

PAULA Scher, Design Indaba: Paula Scher + Dana Arnett

"Branding is the sweet spot where strategy and design meet. It can include positioning, messaging and other tools to help build an emotional connection. Identity design is the essential phase of the process that brings the brand to life."

Bobby C. Martin Jr., Eye Magazine

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Description

This course marks the beginning of advanced design problems emphasizing visual communication as a basis for experimental work, and centered on the development of an identity system extended into a broad scope of communication formats.

In visual communication (graphic design), content is what primarily dictates or drives the expression. It is both the character of the information and the message. Through practical and experimental projects supported by research, you will determine and develop a visual language that conveys your message and impacts your audience.

Projects will emphasize and support the creation of meaning through word + image integration, visual synthesis and, self generated text and imagery.

This course will take you through the evolution of an idea (concept), and critique its relationship to context (specific factors surrounding your audience) to find the appropriate communication strategy & visual language to support your message. In other words, you will be: conducting research > grasping context > introducing an idea > developing and/ or shaping content > creating form.

Classes will balance lectures, discussions, critiques and student presentations of design work.

PROCESS

Over the semester, you'll work on a single, large-scale brand identity project broken into phases. This project mirrors the real-world design thinking process used across the industry. You'll gain hands-on experience with identity development, branding, layout, and design terminology—taking a concept from initial ideation all the way through to final production.

You will conceive, brand and promote a conference that discusses/examines a topic of your choice. Through the course of four project phases, you will create an identity system that will inform, connect with and excite your audience. This process of ideation, research and experimentation will extend through towards a final comprehensive and a systematic body of work. 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 > Appearance.** The physical manifestation of your piece.
- **Context > The environment where your piece lives** & the circumstances around it.

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Learning Objectives

- Utilize a systematic method of researching, collecting & organizing information.
- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the principles and methodologies of communications design as means for problem solving in order to identify the relationships between form, content and context.
- Further exploration of semiotic theory as it applies to development of visual concepts.
- Continued study of various typographic grid systems in single page, short-form multiple page, and dimensional formats which might include: booklets, posters, signage, environmental design, motion graphics, interactive applications.
- Practice various design strategies and processes that support organizing complex verbal and pictorial information.
- Finesse independent critical thinking to solve communication problems through design.
- Embrace and exploit technology to satisfy your message.
- Build verbal presentation skills.
- Refine your eye for detail and impeccable, appropriate visual presentation.
- Learn how to properly document and present work.
- Apply writing as a tool to strengthen critical thinking.
- Make observations verbal by making use of the professional design vocabulary.

Expectations

You will be expected to apply previously gained notions in typographic principles, the relationships between form and meaning, sign and symbols, visual/informational hierarchy, type specifications, comprehensive understanding of composition, problem solving process and skills, as considerations for every project.

Through the semester, 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, extend 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, perform mindful research, and to pursue references beyond the fields of art and design to broaden your perspectives and add depth to your work.

Process Book

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 notes, sketches and visual revisions must be uploaded.

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Required Reading

Text: Samara, Making & Breaking the Grid (Third Edition)

Additional readings may be assigned over the course of the semester, and will be posted to our class site: <http://acmgd.info/gd3>

Materials

You should have materials for sketching and idea-generation for all classes (sketchbook, pencils, pens, etc), and a device for backing up your work on a source other than your computer.

Preparation for Class

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

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. 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 further developed and refined for the final review. The new grade assigned will be the average of the original and new project.

Attendance

Consistent and prompt attendance develops responsible professional behaviour and ensures 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.

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Prolonged illness should be verified by a physician and may require the student to withdraw from class if he/she/they 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 unexcused absences equals a lower letter grade (without a note from the Doctor or a pre-arranged excuse).

Evaluation and Assessment

Throughout the semester we will use a combination of formative assessment (discussion and critique) leading to summative evaluation (a grade). You are expected to play an active role in this process. Final grades will be determined using the following criteria:

Process & Realization: The quality of your design process, including...

- Quality of Research
- Conceptual Strength
- Conceptual Development (sketches, roughs, drafts)
- Attention to Detail / Craft / Presentation of Work
- Syntactic Quality of Work (form, composition, interactivity)
- Semantic Quality of Work (message, communication)
- Pragmatic Quality of Work (function)
- Successful completion of all Final Deliverables

Professionalism: Your role as a member of the studio and conduct, including...

- Participation in Critiques / Discussions
- Written Articulation
- Verbal Articulation
- Overall Attitude
- Class Attendance / Punctuality
- Deadlines / Class Preparation
- Respect for your work and the work of others
- Meeting Objectives of Assignments
- Mastery of the objectives of the course
- Motivation

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Grading

This course follows the grading system established by the University:

- **A** Excellent without exception.
- **B+** Well above average
- **B** Above average
- **C+** Average
- **C** Satisfactory
- **D** Poor
- **F** Failure
- **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.

How To Be Successful In This Class

- **Self-advocate.** If you do not understand something, or need help, make your project advisors and classmates aware of the situation. This is part of the collaborative approach to a "learning community."
- **Set individual progress milestones** as well as meeting those held in common within the class.
- **Be flexible** in your problem-solving approaches.
- **Develop project management and organizational strategies** or seek out help to it to do so, if you lack these skills.
- **Be willing to tutor another student** if you have knowledge or skills that would be useful to help them progress.
- **Critique constructively** and do not offer false praise.

Digital Policy

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.

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Academic Integrity

As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University's educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community.

The entire Academic Integrity Policy can be found here:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USAGE

In concert with Rutgers' code of conduct, which mandates that "all work submitted in a course, academic research, or other activity is the student's own and created without the aid of impermissible technologies, materials, or collaborations," this course is designed to help you develop knowledge and emerging skills that will be valuable in your professional career.

AI tools may be used as an aid in the creative process but must be accompanied by critical thinking and reflection. Students who choose to use these tools are responsible for any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies in their work. Additionally, any AI-assisted content must be fully documented in an appendix, including:

- The AI tool(s) used
- The prompts or inputs provided
- The AI-generated output
- A thoughtful reflection on its role in the work

AI-generated content must not replace original creative work or fundamental design decisions. When appropriate, students may also be asked to consider the environmental and social costs associated with AI tools.

AI Use in Visual Design Work

AI may be used to support the creative process in the following ways:

- Generating patterns or textures
- Removing backgrounds from images
- Refining or modifying images you have created
- Silhouetting elements
- Generating word lists for concept development
- Assisting with research and idea organization
- Extracting or generating minor elements (e.g., adding hair to an illustration)
- Supplement research references

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AI cannot be used in the following ways:

- Submitting AI-generated images, illustrations, or compositions as your own work / Using AI to replace essential design decisions (e.g., typography, layout, composition) / Failing to document AI use in an appendix

AI Use in Written Content

AI may be used to assist with writing in the following ways:

- Generating word lists or brainstorming ideas
- Helping structure an outline
- Refining sentence structure or grammar of your own writing
- Assisting with research (acting a supplementary tool while critically evaluating sources)

AI cannot be used in the following ways:

- Writing full project rationales, abstracts, artist statements, or critical reflections without significant student revision
- Replacing the student's personal voice, analysis, or perspective
- Submitting AI-generated content as-is, without meaningful revision
- Failing to document AI use in an appendix

Documentation Requirements

Any use of AI in an assignment must be fully documented in an appendix, detailing:

- The tool(s) used
- How AI was applied in the design process or writing
- How AI-generated content was integrated or modified within the final submission

Students should also be prepared to critically assess the role of AI in their work, considering its impact on authorship, originality, and ethical implications in visual design and writing.

Learning Resources

Rutgers Learning Center (tutoring services)

Hahne & Co.
54 Halsey Street, Newark, NJ
Room 245
973-353-5608
<https://sas.n.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center>

Writing Center (tutoring and writing workshops)

Room 126, Conklin Hall
(973) 353-5847
nwc@rutgers.edu
<https://sas.n.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center>

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Accommodation and Support

Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further its mission of access and support:

For Individuals Experiencing Disability: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) works with students with medical, physical, and/or mental conditions who encounter disabling barriers to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations for access. Students who have completed the process with ODS and have approved accommodations are provided a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) specific to each course. To initiate accommodations for their course students must both provide the LOA and have a conversation with the course instructor about the accommodations. This should occur as early in the semester as possible.

More information can be found at the RU-N ODS website (ods.newark.rutgers.edu). Contact ODS at (973) 353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-5063 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Short-term Absence Verification: The Office of the Dean of Students can help with absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (illness, personal or family emergency, etc). Students should refer to University Policy 10.2.7 for information about expectations and responsibilities.

The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (broken or sprained limbs, concussions, recovery from surgery, etc.)

Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking.

Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University's Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures located at <https://uec.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/60-1-33-current-1.pdf>

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For support related to Interpersonal Violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA) can provide any student with confidential support. VPVA is a confidential resource and does not have a reporting obligation to Title IX. Students can call the office at (973) 353-1918 or email run.vpva@rutgers.edu. VPVA also maintains a confidential text-based helpline available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support. Students do not need to be a victim/survivor of violence to receive assistance; any student can receive services, information, and support.

For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a plan of support plan and address personal situations that might impact their academic performance.

Connect with the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

For Psychological Support (Stress, Mood, Family Issues, Substance Use concerns and other personal challenges): The Rutgers University-Newark Counseling Center provides individual therapy and support groups for students dealing with psychological issues. To schedule an appointment, email counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or call (973) 353-5805.

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Bibliographic Resources (growing list)

- 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
- 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
- Data Flow 2: Visualizing Information in Graphic Design 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 Design Idea Book: Inspiration from 50 Masters by Steven Heller & Gail Anderson
- 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
- Thinking with Type by Ellen Lupton
- 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