Graphic Design Studio Practice 25

CFA AR523 A1

Spring 2025

Associate Professor Nicholas Rock

2:30–5:15, Wednesday

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Contact Information: nickrock@bu.edu

Office Hours:

By appointment—Tuesdays + Thursdays 10:30-12:30, Wednesdays 11:30-2:30

Office Hours

https://fantastical.app/nick-kSSb/office-hours

> **To experience, to engage, to endeavor, rather than to watch and to wonder—that's where the real meat of life is to be found. Inspiration and growth only come from adversity and from challenge—from stepping away from what's comfortable and familiar and stepping out into the unknown.**

—Ben Saunders

Overview

This course bridges the gap between academia and the professional design world. It focuses on professional practice and development, preparing students to navigate their careers confidently and competently. Through workshops, lectures, real-world projects,

studio visits, and guest speakers, students will refine their professional profiles, learn to manage client relationships, and explore practical skills like pricing, billing, proposal writing, and portfolio development.

The course functions as both a teaching and learning environment, offering a studio-like atmosphere where students work collaboratively and engage with real clients. Ultimately, this class emphasizes learning through experience, fostering adaptability, critical thinking, and the ability to approach design challenges with creativity and professionalism.

Class as Community

I come into this class from a place of respect and trust, and I hope that you all do too.

We are a microcosm—

of the department, the school, the university, and while small, we are still an incredibly diverse community. Our cohort includes students from all over the world with all sorts of backgrounds and experiences.

Our class is inclusive and accessible—

We come from different places, backgrounds, and walks of life. We embrace the unique identities of each member of this community and commit to learning, growing, and understanding each other through historical contexts of race, gender, religion, sexuality, and other expressions of self.

I understand that your trust is earned.

I am committed to helping you grow and learn and change or solidify your perspective and knowledge in design, and I am committed to learning from you. I will ensure that our class is a safe space to teach and learn, as I see all of us working in both capacities.

We will explore diverse content.

I am working to ensure that this course represents a vast range of perspectives, ideas, topics, people, and cultures through what I will provide and what I hope you all will bring to the conversation. I will also strive to elevate your voices in this class through the project work and the conversation.

We will be flexible, patient, and understanding.

I made a syllabus and a schedule of projects. I will shift and adjust the work and the due dates to adapt to our class. There is understandable uncertainty coming into this semester. Let’s commit to the experience and see where it takes us.

Structure

Teaching + Learning Sessions

The course includes workshops, lectures, and discussions around the following topics:

1. **Professionalism**: Communicating with clients and peers, presenting oneself as a designer.
2. **Proposals and Briefs**: Crafting scope of work, deliverables, and budgets for real-world projects.
3. **Presenting Creative Work**: Structuring and delivering impactful presentations.
4. **Client Feedback**: Managing and translating client feedback effectively.
5. **Tools and Spaces**: Exploring tools, studio environments, and digital workspaces.

Professional Engagements

- **Guest Speakers**: Industry professionals will share their experiences and insights.
- **Studio Visits**: Visits to local design studios to observe professional workflows.
- **Printing Facility Tour**: An opportunity to learn about commercial printing processes firsthand.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

- Overview of course
- Discussion: What are the first steps in presenting yourself to prospective employers and clients? What do alums have to say?
- Assignment: Bring your current resume and portfolio for review (due Week 2).

Week 2: Resume and Portfolio Workshop

- Peer review and critique.

- What makes a standout resume and portfolio?
- Workshop: Refining resumes + PDF Portfolios

Week 3: Personal Storytelling and Presentation Skills

- Workshop: Telling your personal story authentically.
- Assignment: Draft a 2-3 minute personal presentation and write your Bio.
- Pecha Kucha presentations with peer feedback.

Week 4: Presenting Creative Work

- Guest Speaker
- Workshop: Structuring client presentations.

Week 5: Presenting Creative Work + Writing Proposals

- Case studies of successful proposals.

Shareout presentations from week 4

- Assignment: Drafting a proposal for a sample project.

Week 6: Pricing, Billing, Invoicing

- Setting rates and creating invoices, tools,
- Workshop: Drafting an invoice. Drafting a print request

Week 7: Commercial Printing Facility Tour

- Learn about print production processes.
- Workshop: Preparing files for print.

Week 8: Guest Speaker Series + Beyond Design Tools

- Guest Speaker

Week 9: Advanced Portfolio Development

- Lecture: Crafting a cohesive narrative.
- Peer review: Feedback on updated portfolios.

Week 10: Studio Visit #1

- Visit to a local design studio.
- Discuss studio culture and career paths with professionals.

Week 11: TBD Portfolio Review + Networking

- Class presentations of updated portfolios + resumes.

- Feedback session.

Week 12: Studio Visit #2

- Visit to a second design studio.
- Comparative analysis of the two visits.

Week 13: Final Class Meeting

- Guest Speaker
- TBD Potential Creative Headshots session

Week 14: Monday Schedule on Wednesday

- Optional Individual meetings

Week 15: Final Review Week, No Class

Studio Visits

Upstatement (3/26)

Studio Tour and Conversation

https://upstatement.com

Pinkergreen (4/9)

Studio Tour and Conversation

https://pinkergreen.com

Print Facility Tour

Meridian Printing

https://meridianprinting.com

Required Reading

Graphic Artists Guild Handbook, 16th Edition: Pricing & Ethical Guidelines

Amazon.com: Graphic Artists Guild Handbook, 16th Edition: Pricing & Ethical Guidelines: 9780262542395: The Graphic Artists Guild: Books

https://www.amazon.com/Graphic-Artists-Guild-Handbook-16th/dp/0262542390/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2Y1TMMBESEMKZ&keywords=the+graphic+artists+guild+handbook+pricing+%26+ethical+guidelines&qid=1674668994&sprefix=the+graphic+art%2Caps%2C92&sr=8-1



Design Is a Job by Mike Monteiro

The first edition of this book taught you how to sell design, draw up contracts, work with clients, and navigate the business of design. And, yeah, that's all still (mostly) there. But design has changed, and this book

https://abookapart.com/products/design-is-a-job

