JUNIOR GRAPHIC DESIGN

Fall 2012

CFA AR 381

LEVEL	BFA · Junior core studio
CREDITS	4
MEETS	Once a week
DATES	Fall 2012
LOCATION	[confirm]
INSTRUCTOR	Professor Nicholas Rock
OFFICE	[confirm]
CONTACT	nickrock@bu.edu
OFFICE HOURS	Mondays and Wednesdays 12–2, by appointment

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Overview

Designers are more than just makers of beautiful things. We are communicators and thinkers. We have the ability to inspire and motivate. Constantly interacting with all fields and professions being exposed to countless new things. It is important to express our opinions and that we as designers make relevant work while challenging the concept of what is graphic design and what can it be used for.

There doesn't have to be two worlds of design, one that clings to smart, well-articulated thought out projects and another of so called surface design that focuses on making things that just look pretty. All choices should relate back to the message. Everything has meaning and should be treated as such.

All designers have a unique and powerful responsibility to affect how, when, why and where people receive information. The challenge we face is to reveal this information through the filter of our own perspective. Design is ultimately about both discovering and revealing new ideas, opinions and information.

The goal of this studio is to help you begin to develop or at least consider your own voice as a designer. You will be asked to complete a series of projects that are designed to help you have opinions and points of view and your own ways of thinking and working, your own creative process. Our goal as designers is to be in a place where we have our own method or process or way of thinking which we can apply to any design

problem that comes our way. Our goal is to become design thinkers. At the end of this class you should be on your way towards this goal, however it is not expected that you will have this philosophy defined.

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Course Structure

Class Rules

- Work hard.
- Be respectful.
- Show up. And show up on time.
- Work harder.
- Show your work, process, everything you have or be prepared to, daily. The more you are getting feedback from the class the better. It makes your work better and it helps you evolve as a designer.
- Questions. Ask them. Often. Questions are ALWAYS beneficial to the entire class, not just the person asking.
- Experiment. Sketch. Test. Sample. Prototype.
- The project is never complete.
- The printer is always broken.
- Collaborate.
- Dish it out and take it.
- Laugh.
- Be opinionated. Debate. Ask more questions.
- Don’t take it personally. Critique is for everyone’s benefit.
- I will challenge your ideas, be prepared to defend them.

Communication

It is expected that you as a class will help and support each other throughout this course and others for that matter.

That said, I am of course fully accessible in class, at my office (general office hours are Mondays and Wednesdays 12–2; however please make an appointment with me), and via email: nickrock@bu.edu. Please do not use any other email address to contact me. All communication should go through my BU email address or via Basecamp. In addition to these avenues of communication we will also be using an online collaboration tool called Basecamp for centralized class communication.

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Projects

The projects in this class will be sequential, however we will also have work that happens simultaneously. There will be small weekly homework assignments as well.

These weekly assignments are designed as exercise, to keep your brain moving, and are not designed to be too demanding.

Weekly Homework — Graphic Response

Individual · due by class every Monday · first post due September 10

Every Monday, you will be expected to post a graphic response to a news story from the previous week. You will post these to our Basecamp site, and you can post any time throughout the week, as long as you have one BY MONDAY. We may or may not discuss these in class, but we should engage in discussion via comments in Basecamp.

Requirements: PDF · 8.5 x 11 portrait orientation · Black & White only · Must include source (link, newspaper etc) · Must include date of story.

Class Blog

Individual · weekly

We will be keeping a class blog on Posterous (bugd.posterous.com). You will be given access to this blog today. Everyone will be expected to post at least one thing each week. You may post more if you choose. The only requirement is that you participate. This means you can post an image, video, etc or write a critique of a design. Really anything you would like to post that is design related. The idea is that you begin to form your own opinions about design by way of curating this blog.

Project 01 — Designer as Communicator

Teams of 2 · client project · the entire semester · due 12 December 2012

We have an opportunity to work on a project with The Boston Children's Chorus.

To celebrate the Boston Children's Chorus's (BCC) 10th Anniversary, it has partnered with the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston to commission a new choral-dance piece by Haitian-American artist Daniel Bernard Roumain (DBR). Daniel will work with Amy Seiwert (choreographer) and Marc Bamuthi Joseph (librettist) in the creation of a new work for children's chorus, 1–2 instruments, and 2 dancers. KING will be a re-telling of the story of King Kong, replacing the role of an ape with that of a man.

This would be a love story between a young, black boy and an older, white woman: King is a young, disfigured black boy who falls in love with an older, glamorous white woman. King was born so ugly, his mother named him as heir to an imaginary throne. Subsequently, he treats the world as his own, strangers as subjects, and "rules" ruthlessly. He's a troubled child looking for more trouble. He meets this woman, and in his mind, she is his queen. The work will begin with singing alone, then the instruments will be introduced in support of the singing. Finally, the dancers will enter and all of the individual parts will come together in service of the story. The work will challenge the

audience to ponder the role of race, gender, and age in today's world. The work will push the concept of traditional "children's" chorus music. For the last 10 years, BCC has used the power of music to unite Boston's diverse communities to inspire social change. However, understanding why coming together is important first starts with understanding what keeps us apart.

For our part we will be developing a visual language with which to promote the performance. Your job as designers will be to interpret the message of the show and effectively communicate that message to a potential audience. You will need to design a poster, mailer and a concept for a promotional 1-page website. This project will take the entire semester as we develop and refine concepts and present them to our client. For this project we will work in teams of 2. We will pair up today in class so you can begin immediately. Since this will take the entire semester, we will be starting another project in a couple of weeks that will happen simultaneously. Each week we will check in on this project and have larger milestones along the way.

Requirements: A0 promotional poster · promotional mailer (size is up to you) · 1-page promotional website concept.

Project 02 — The Designer's Voice in Three Parts

Individual · three parts

This project will be broken into 3 parts. Each part will challenge your flexibility and skills as designers in different ways and will also ask you to begin to bring your own opinions and voices into the work.

You will choose a cause / organization from the following list to use as the subject matter for your project: PETA · NRA · The Tea Party · Move On · Greenpeace · Wikileaks.

Part 1 — The Tradition of the Poster. In the first part of this project you will explore both the pros and cons related to your cause. This will allow you to understand all perspectives and weigh the issue thoughtfully. Create 1 poster IN SUPPORT OF your chosen cause and 1 poster AGAINST your chosen cause. The only design requirement is that both posters should be A0 / portrait in size and proportion. (A0 is an ISO standard size. Dimensions are 841mm x 1189mm, 33.1in x 46.8in.)

In class: Spend 30 minutes exploring the organizations. Draw numbers to determine who gets to choose first. Sign up for one of the causes / organizations (no more than 2 students per cause / organization). Begin to research your cause as well as cause based posters. Be sure to begin to separate your research into IN SUPPORT OF and AGAINST your chosen cause.

Next class: Put together an 11 x 8.5 (landscape) research document and post on Basecamp for everyone to review. Your research document should be broken into 3 parts: IN SUPPORT OF · AGAINST · General overview of related and unrelated cause based design work. Bring preliminary sketches, concepts, ideas, visual inspiration to class.

Part 2 — Environmental Evolution. For the next part of the project, choose either your FOR or AGAINST idea and extend the concept to something designed to live in the environment (projection, wheat-pasted banners, billboards etc but not arbitrarily placed). In other words, rather than printing and posting your A0 poster, expand on your idea and explore a location where your concept will be noticed, or have an effect on a larger audience. Evolve your concept to fit a location. Consider the context of your message. How will the placement of your message help to enhance its visibility, create more awareness or cause the most controversy.

Requirements: You must actually be able to install your concept somewhere, or at least be able to adequately demonstrate / simulate the idea. Whatever you choose as your approach, document the entire process either with photography or video. Initial concepts due 15 October 2012; these should be detailed ideas and include sketches and research (visual inspiration, etc).

Part 3 — Everything Is Digital. For the final iteration of this project you should once again revisit your for or against concept and evolve it for the web. What happens when your topic needs to live on the internet, as something with much more exposure, but has less control than a printed piece for example. Is this a website? a blog? an app maybe? It's for you to decide. I encourage you to think beyond the website here … what does existing on the internet mean to you? This is entirely a conceptual project. You will be expected to mockup your concepts, but are not expected to fully execute them. No coding / development skills are required.

Project 03 — Visual Storytelling

Individual · motion graphics · about 30 seconds

> A story should have a beginning, a middle, and an end… but not necessarily in that order. —Jean-Luc Godard

In 30 seconds or less, tell me about… For the final project of the semester you will be required to create a motion graphics piece about someone else in the class. You will be randomly assigned a person from class to create a motion graphics piece about.

Talk with your assigned person to learn a little more about them, something biographical, a funny story, a unique character trait. Find something that would be interesting to communicate in 30 seconds. Your goal is to get a point across, not tell a life story. You are visualizing something about that person filtered through the lens of your own perspective.

The only requirement is that your piece needs to be approximately 30 seconds. It can be longer or shorter within reason and subject to approval. You may use any combination of type, imagery, video and sound that you like. There are no software requirements. You can create this project in any software you choose, as long as that software allows you to link sound and image together over time. Dimensions should be

at least 720x480 px but actual final dimensions and aspect ratio are completely up to you.

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Assessment

Your grade in this class will be based on a number of factors:

- **Attendance.** Attendance at each class is mandatory, we meet only once a week so each class is important. Class discussion and critique are not things that are easily made up and happen regularly. You must contact me in advance if you need to miss a class. If you have more than one un-excused absence your mark will be lowered by one full grade. If you are late, or absent you must follow up with me, as you will still be responsible for the work. You should be scheduling appointments around your classes since you know your class schedule, and not the other way around.
- **Class Participation.** Part of the job as a designer is communicating effectively, on a design team, in a studio environment or with clients. You will be expected to be an active member of the class, particularly during critiques as all feedback is important. The weekly homework assignments are also considered part of your class participation requirements.
- **Project Execution.** All projects should be given your full attention and effort. Each component of your projects will be reviewed, projects need to be submitted on deadline and should be complete according to project brief. Projects must be completed by the due date. Late work will be penalized.
- **Project Process.** You are expected to document the process of each of your projects throughout the semester. This means, saving all sketches, writings mock ups etc. You are not required to formally document your process, however it may be helpful as we may ask to refer to your process documentation in order to understand how you arrived at a solution. It will be particularly important to have this with you during final critiques for each project.

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Calendar

DATE	EVENT
Sep 10	First Graphic Response due
Oct 15	Designer's Voice Part 2 — initial concepts due
Dec 12	Designer as Communicator (Boston Children's Chorus) due

07

Materials & Tools

- **Basecamp** — central portal for class discussion and a digital library of class resources.
- **Posterous** — the class blog, bugd.posterous.com.