JUNIOR GRAPHIC DESIGN

Fall 2014

CFA AR 381

LEVEL	BFA · Junior core studio
CREDITS	4
MEETS	Mondays and Wednesdays
DATES	September 3 – December 8, 2014
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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Learning Outcomes

You will be evaluated over the course of the class and assessed according to the major learning objectives of a Graphic Design major — Process, Master Key Principles, Authorship, Design Agility, History and Context, and Professionalism. The full rubric is under Assessment.

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Course Structure

Class Rules

1. This class is a lot of work,
2. so work hard.
3. and be respectful. Yes to me, but also to your peers.
4. Make sure you show up,
5. and show up on time.
6. Work harder.
7. 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.
8. Questions. Ask them. Often. Questions are ALWAYS beneficial to the entire class, not just the person asking.
9. Experiment. Sketch. Test. Sample. Prototype. Rinse. Repeat.
10. The project is never complete.
11. The printer is always broken.
12. Collaborate.
13. Dish it out and take it.
14. Laugh. Don’t cry.
15. Be opinionated. Debate. Ask more questions.
16. Don’t take it personally.
17. I will help you be a better designer.
18. There are no favorites. If you do good work, or work hard it will be recognized. Likewise for poor work or laziness.
19. 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.

We will be using Basecamp to consolidate class communications. You all will have access to our Basecamp site after the first class; this will act as a central portal for class discussion outside of class as well as a digital library of class resources, such as this syllabus, project briefs, certain readings as well as our class calendar.

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Projects

PROJECT	WEEKS
1A — Incomplete Manifesto (warm-up)	1–2
1B	3–4
2	3–9
3 — Designer's Voice (design installation)	8–12
4 — Visual Storytelling	11–15

Project 1A — Incomplete Manifesto

Individual · warm-up poster · 17 × 22 in · black, white + 1 color · type + imagery

Read the entire *Incomplete Manifesto for Growth* by Bruce Mau. It's good reference and easy reading. Then choose one item from the list and create a poster with that text. This is a fast warm up project to get you all readjusted. I encourage you to work quickly, and not to over think this. Use your instincts. Don't be literal or obvious. Experiment. Take chances. You don't lose credit for failed ideas. You lose credit for not trying. For this project, forget about your audience, there is no audience. You are making something for yourself. So choose carefully and wisely but choose something you like, or that resonates with you. Same advice for your design solution. This project is about you.

Reading: Bruce Mau, *Incomplete Manifesto for Growth* (handout in class).

Due: first draft, 50% scale, at least 2 concepts — September 10 · final printed poster — September 17.

Project 3 — Designer's Voice

Individual · two printed research documents, then an installation in the environment · installed by November 24

This project is intended to challenge your flexibility and skills as designers in multiple 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, that could be considered a controversial organization, to use as the subject matter for your project. Here are some examples, but you may choose any cause or organization you like: PETA, NRA, The Tea Party, MoveOn, Greenpeace, WikiLeaks, Anonymous, Occupy, etc. Spend the next hour choosing a cause / organization.

For the first part of the project you will research the organization and create 2 designed and printed documents. 1 document will present research in support of, or FOR, your organization, and the other document will present research AGAINST your organization. These can take any form you choose, any size, any format. They should represent 2 sides or 2 perspectives on a story. They can take a point of view based on a specific issue, or generally about the organization. They should be well designed but don't over think the concept. **Drafts of these documents are due Monday, October 27.**

For the next part of the project, choose either your FOR or AGAINST idea and create something designed to live in the environment (projection, wheat-pasted banners, billboards etc. but not arbitrarily placed). In other words, rather than printing and hanging a poster, develop an idea and explore a location where your concept will be noticed, or have an effect on a larger audience. Design 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. **You must plan to have installed your project by Thanksgiving Break (November 24).** Documentation and presentation of concept will be due at final reviews.

References: *Bus Station Sonata* · *Piano Stairs* · *Lion King* subway · Scott Stowell, Everyone Chair · Yale graphic design show · Shepard Fairey · Vitra · past student examples.

Project 4 — Visual Storytelling

Individual · motion graphics · 30–60 seconds · 1280 × 720 px

> 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 at least 30 seconds but less than 1 minute. You may use any combination of type, imagery, video and sound that you like. The only software requirements are that you may not use PowerPoint, Keynote or Flash to complete this project.

References: *Sugar Water · Remembering · Dan Harding · It's Time · The Longest Way · Make It Count.*

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Assessment

You will be evaluated over the course of the class and will be assessed according to the major learning objectives of a Graphic Design major. In addition, the following specific points will be factored into your final grade for the course:

- **Attendance.** Attendance at each class is mandatory. As the core studio course for your major it will make up some of the most important work you are doing here. 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. At my discretion, if you have more than one unexcused absence your mark will be lowered by as much as one full grade. If you are late, or absent you must follow up with me, as you will still be responsible for the work. I will not chase you down to catch you up. You should be scheduling appointments around your classes since you know your class schedule, and not the other way around.
- **Class Participation.** Part of a designer's job 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. Discussion is an important part of the design process. If you are not participating regularly in the discussion you will be asked for your opinion. Lack of participation will negatively impact your final grade.
- **Group Work.** Designers rarely work independently. Completed work is almost always the result of a team effort of some sort, whether it be just designers, designer and client, designer, developer, writer etc. In this class there will be times when you will be asked to work as part of a team. Your contribution to the team will be assessed along with the final output of the team's work.

- **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. All parts of your projects in this class will be evaluated including process and research documents. You will be given an opportunity to improve upon each project following that project's final critique.
- **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. Your documents will be given the same attention to detail as your design work. The process for each project will make up a portion of your grade.

You will not be graded on your projects individually. While we will have final critiques for each project, you may continue to work on an individual project and re-present the work at the semester final review.

Evaluation: Learning Objectives

OBJECTIVE	LEVEL 1 — UNSATISFACTORY	LEVEL 2 — COMPETENT	LEVEL 3 — ACCOMPLISHED
Process	Student struggles with defining problems, researching, generating ideas and / or developing concepts. Student fails to participate in critiques. Student doesn't employ any method of documentation of work. Student fails to demonstrate research as part of the design process. Student rarely uses research to develop content and ideas. Student struggles to meet deadlines. Student does not set goals or is unable to achieve stated goals. Student struggles to balance workload.	Student is able to define a problem, employ methods, develop concepts, research and develop concepts. Student participates in critiques and is able to document work. Student understands the value of thorough research in a graphic design process and is able to employ research into their design process. Student understands value of goal setting Student is able to meet deadlines. Student satisfactorily balances workload	Student shows thorough understanding of a graphic design studio process; is able to define a problem, employ methods of research and idea generation, develop concepts, critiques and documents work as a way of developing smart, informed and carefully considered solutions to design problems. Student understands the value of thorough research in a graphic design process and consistently explores a variety of methods of gathering, collecting and documenting as a way of developing content and ideas. Student manages time efficiently, sets and achieves goals and deadlines and is able to confidently balance a full studio workload.

OBJECTIVE	LEVEL 1 — UNSATISFACTORY	LEVEL 2 — COMPETENT	LEVEL 3 — ACCOMPLISHED
Master Key Principles	Student is unable to demonstrate an understanding of the fundamentals and principles of typography and layout as a way of communicating visual and written messages.	Student has a basic understanding of the fundamentals and principles of typography and layout as a way of communicating visual and written messages and demonstrates these skills regularly in assigned projects.	Student has an advanced understanding of the fundamentals and principles of typography and layout as a way of communicating visual and written messages and is able to employ these skills in inventive ways.
Authorship	Student struggles to generate, curate or develop their own content for assigned projects	Student is able to author and curate their own content for assigned projects Student is able to use and understand many tools, media and forms of communication	Student understands the role of the graphic designer in professional practice and the ability of the designer to help define, shape and also author the content of the work they create.
Design Agility	Student has limited grasp of tools and media. Student is unable or has difficulty choosing appropriate technology, media or tool to successfully complete a design project.	Student is able to use and understand many tools, media and forms of communication. Students is explores problems through more than one form of media. Student is frequently able to choose appropriate mode of technology and media to succesfully complete their design solution.	Student exhibits a broad understanding of a tools, services and a full range of media and forms of communication by exploring problems using print, interactive, spatial and experiential, web, interactive, static and dynamic. Student is able to choose appropriate mode of technology and media to successfully complete their design solution.
History and Context	Student struggles to recall or identify major moments, works, and figures in design history.	Student is aware of major moments in design history and is able to recognize some major works and figures as well as some currently practicing designers.	Student is able to identify and reference major moments in design history, major and important figures in design history, and currently practicing designers. Student is able to cross reference and make connections across history

OBJECTIVE	LEVEL 1 — UNSATISFACTORY	LEVEL 2 — COMPETENT	LEVEL 3 — ACCOMPLISHED
Professionalism	Student has limited understanding of the vocabulary of the graphic design field and little to no understanding of related fields. Student unable to, or has difficulty presenting ideas in front of a group. Student is unable to, or has difficulty expressing ideas in writing.	Student has a basic understanding of vocabulary of the graphic design field and its related fields such as print production, web development and video production. Student competently expresses ideas visually and verbally when presenting in front of a group and writing ideas and statements.	Student has mastered and is fluent in the vocabulary of the graphic design field and its related fields such as print production, web development and video production. Student has strong visual and verbal communication skills speaking in front of a group, critiquing work, writing project statements and descriptions. Student leverages design skills to enhance writing and presentation skills. Student communicates with the highest level of form and respect in person and digitally.

Monthly Check-Ins

We will also be having 2 individual, monthly check-in meetings — **October 1** and **November 5** — in which we will discuss your status in the class, to ensure that you all know where you stand and that we are all on the same page. You are required to sign up for a time slot on both dates.

Final Reviews

We will not have a final review of work for the class. You will have your normal semester end reviews. After which you will receive a letter grade based upon Graphic Design Learning Objectives, Attendance, Project Process + Execution and Participation.

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Calendar

WEEK	DATES	PROJECTS	MILESTONES
1	9/3	1A	First day
2	9/8 – 9/10	1A	1A first draft (9/10)
3	9/15 – 9/17	1B · 2	1A final poster (9/17)
4	9/22 – 9/24	1B · 2	

WEEK	DATES	PROJECTS	MILESTONES
5	9/29 – 10/1	2	Monthly check-in #1
6	10/6 – 10/8	2	
7	10/13 – 10/15	2	
8	10/20 – 10/22	2 · 3	
9	10/27 – 10/29	2 · 3	Project 3 drafts (10/27)
10	11/3 – 11/5	3	Monthly check-in #2
11	11/10 – 11/12	3 · 4	
12	11/17 – 11/19	3 · 4	
13	11/24 – 11/26	4	Thanksgiving break · Project 3 installed (11/24)
14	12/1 – 12/3	4	
15	12/8	4	Final review (TBD)

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Materials & Tools

Requirements

- A laptop
- A flash drive
- A camera
- A sketchbook
- A projector adapter

Books to Read

- Robert Bringhurst, *The Elements of Typographic Style.*
- Ellen Lupton, *Thinking with Type.*

Software + Services

It goes without saying that you will need to have access to Adobe Creative Suite if you don't already. I don't expect this to be an issue, but wanted to be sure. You will need a Dropbox account, or you may use your BU-provided Google Drive.

You MUST have a backup solution in place after the first week. I recommend Backblaze.