JUNIOR GRAPHIC DESIGN

Spring 2014

CFA AR 382

LEVEL	BFA · Junior core studio
CREDITS	4
MEETS	[confirm]
DATES	Spring 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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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, 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.

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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 January 20

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.

Process Book

Individual · due at final review

You will be required to design and produce a book showcasing your project process and documentation throughout the semester. There are no requirements.

Project 01 — Visual Storytelling

Individual · motion graphics · 30–60 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 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. Dimensions should be 1280×720 px.

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

Project 02 — Designer's Voice

Partnered · two A0 portrait posters · research document

Listen: Bob Gill, Design Observer interview.

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 or organization to use as the subject matter for your project — for example PETA, the NRA, the Tea Party, MoveOn, Greenpeace or WikiLeaks, though you may choose any cause or organization you like. Spend the first hour choosing one and print an 8.5 × 11 sheet with its name and a one-paragraph description.

Once everyone has chosen, you will exchange your cause with someone else in the class. You will explore both the pros and cons of the cause you are given, so that you understand all perspectives and weigh the issue thoughtfully. More often than not, your work as a designer is a collaboration with someone else, usually a client — in this case the person who selected your organization. That person will help you develop the project as a partner, though you are responsible for all of the design work.

- Create 1 poster **in support of** your given cause and 1 poster **against** it.
- Both posters are A0 portrait (841 × 1189 mm, 33.1 × 46.8 in).

Next class: a designed 11 × 8.5 (landscape) research document, printed, in three parts — In support of… · Against… · a general overview of related and unrelated cause-based design work. Be prepared to present it, and bring preliminary sketches, concepts and visual inspiration.

05 Assessment

Your grade in this class will be based primarily on the body of work you produce over the course of the class. In addition, the following specific points will be factored into your final grade for the course:

- **Attendance.** Attendance at each class is mandatory. This is your core studio for your major, and therefore is the most important class you are taking. 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 unexcused 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. 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 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. 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.
- **Collaborative 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 collaboratively. Your contribution to the collaboration will be assessed along with the final result.
- **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, craft and attention to detail.
- **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 be asked to make a process book as part of your project work this semester.

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.

Check-ins and Final Reviews

We will also be having 2 individual, monthly check-in meetings, February 19 and March 19, 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.

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 the following criteria:

- **A** — You demonstrate an advanced understanding of concepts presented and are able to complete work above and beyond suggested parameters.
- **B** — You exhibit a more than competent understanding of concepts presented and utilize these concepts in an articulate and noteworthy manner.
- **C** — You demonstrate a basic understanding of the information studied and apply this information to assigned problems meeting basic expectations but not going beyond suggested parameters.

- **D** — You exhibit limited understanding of the concepts and complete work below the level required for satisfactory performance.
- **F** — You demonstrate little or no understanding of course material, show little desire or motivation to complete the work or turn in incomplete projects.

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Calendar

DATE	EVENT
Jan 20	First Graphic Response due
Feb 19	Monthly check-in 1
Mar 19	Monthly check-in 2
Semester end	Final reviews · Process Book due

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Materials & Tools

- **Basecamp** — central portal for class discussion outside of class and a digital library of class resources, such as this syllabus, project briefs, certain readings and the class calendar.