EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Fall 2015

CFA AR 597

LEVEL	Elective
CREDITS	2
MEETS	Once a week
DATES	Fall 2015
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

The term experience design is actually slightly misleading. We do not actually design an experience. We design or develop a plan to create opportunities for experiences, and interactions. As designers we have to draw from all of our own life experiences, influences and exposures to different things, as a way of developing opportunities for new experiences. We also need to understand that our audience or users will in turn bring their own experiences and influences to the project as well. These influences then affect what their actual experience will be.

Experience is something that can be defined in terms of scale. For example, something that's personal, something that's intimate that you experience with others, something that you experience on your own or with others in the environment. It may even be something much larger, that may transcend focused objects and locations such as a brand experience. In this class we're going to test out this theory of experience at scale through a broad range of projects, case studies, readings and lectures in an attempt to frame that scale of small to large. We will attempt to cover a lot in a short amount of time so we will move pretty quickly. This class is a design studio so we will be emphasizing design concepts and how a process of research and discovery support and provide the basis for the concepts.

The goal of this studio is to help you begin to develop a process of approaching, defining and solving design problems, taking into consideration both your voice as a designer and the needs of your audience. You will be asked to complete a series of projects which confront this idea at different levels of scale. The intent is not to focus on a

specific aspect of experience design but to set you up to become a better design thinker.

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Course Structure

Scales of Experience

We will be talking about Experience Design through different scales of experience. You will have 4 projects in this class that will take us through 4 scales of experience:

1. Experience is personal.
2. Experience is individual. Experience is shared.
3. Experience is for anyone and everyone.
4. Experience is everything.

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 they will overlap because subject matter overlaps. Projects in the real world are rarely complete before the next project begins. In addition to your project work you may be given short readings that relate in some way to the project or topic of discussion that week. These readings are for your own benefit and I may refer to them in class.

Experience Is Personal

Individual · September 10–24

You will be creating a personal scale object. You may define what this is exactly whether it's part calendar, daily journal, a personal diary, a photo journal, a fitness log, a deck of brainstorming cards, a cooking journal or even your own device for carrying all your stuff. It is entirely up to you. In the end this will be an actual object for you to carry so the scale is something that fits in your pocket or backpack etc. The goal is that it is for you to use by yourself, even if you would plan to share with others. YOU are the audience for this project.

You will be defining all the parts to create an opportunity for experience, based on your own experiences, influences and ideals.

Requirements: Research document that contains your needs / wants, concepts, inspiration and sketching. Sketches and prototypes as needed. Actual object — a designed object, something you carry and physically / manually interact with. Care about your craft, don't be sloppy, work to the best of your ability.

What not to do: This project is to make an actual, physical thing. You are not designing an app. Don't waste time. You are the client, so you can work quickly. This project is short.

Experience Is Individual. Experience Is Shared.

Individual · mobile application

> “There is a strong case to be made that companies cannot fully control experiences, because experiences inevitably involve perception, emotion, and unexpected behaviors on the parts of customers. People don’t behave like robots, and no matter how well we craft an experience, they will not perceive exactly as we anticipate or hope. With that said, companies cannot afford to throw up their hands and give up in the face of unpredictability. Instead, they need to plan for the worst and aim for the ideal when considering the experiences they want to create.” —Adam Richardson, Frog Design

Many things that we encounter are meant to be experienced individually, by lots of people. In order to design for this we need to research the needs of a particular group of users typically by creating scenarios or personas of these potential users. We can’t possibly accommodate for everyone, however the process should identify key points, attributes and needs in the context of planning for the worst and aiming for the ideal.

Our next project will deal specifically with this idea of individual yet shared experience. One thing that most people share in common that fits well with this concept is money, and how we deal with money … banking. We will leave out in person banking for now, as that is a different discussion about user experience. There are 3 major junctions for an individual / shared banking experience: the ATM, the online banking website and the mobile application. All 3 of these in my opinion have tremendous room for improvement, with most major banks trying and failing at creating a satisfying user experience. The goal in solving the problems with any of these experiences is to first and foremost understand the needs of the users and make decisions based on those perceived needs. Not, as many companies believe, placing the needs of the company ahead of the user or customer. Without customers and users, there would be no business after all. In the end, the only way these standards of everyday life experience are ever improved is when a designer decides that what exists, just isn’t good enough.

Your assignment is to research and come up with a product or service that deserves disrupting. I would like you to find something that has an existing software, application or web based interface. The goal of this project is to design a mobile application to disrupt the product or service on an individual / shared scale.

Project 03 — Experience Is for Everyone and Anyone

Teams of 3 · two parts

> “People think that design is styling. Design is not style. It’s not about giving shape to the shell and not giving a damn about the guts. Good design is a renaissance attitude that combines technology, cognitive science, human need, and beauty to produce something that the world didn’t know it was missing.” —Paola Antonelli, Senior Curator of Architecture and Design, MoMA

Often overlooked and unconsidered, however extremely important, is the experience of public space. Most spaces have been considered by both architects and designers, and therefore are, at a minimum, not memorable. Well designed spaces often adhere to the Dieter Rams principle “Good design is as little design as possible. Less, but better – because it concentrates on the essential aspects, and the products are not burdened with non-essentials. Back to purity, back to simplicity.”

That said, carefully considered design decisions can in fact enhance a person’s opportunity for experience in a place. This can be achieved through a number of channels; wayfinding and signage, colors, lighting, imagery and artwork, sound, scent … etc.

For this project, you will work in teams of 3. Your project will consist of 2 parts:

- **A** — Design a new system of signage, wayfinding, navigation and / or place for public information for the CFA building / 855 Commonwealth. Your system must accommodate for each level of the building, so the needs of each floor’s elevator lobbies for example should be considered. Through your research you can determine the needs and deficiencies of the space, however I encourage you to think beyond existing solutions and deficiencies.
- **B** — The second part of the project will be to develop your concept further to be temporarily installed for a day in the third floor elevator lobby. We will plan to install the first concept on April 24th, with each team installing and documenting their process each consecutive day.

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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, 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 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.
- **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 group will be assessed along with the final output of the group'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.
- **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. We will also be having individual, midterm check-in meetings in which we will discuss your status in the class half way through the semester, to ensure that you all know where you stand and that we are all on the same page.

We will have a final review of work on the last day of the course. 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
Sep 10	Experience Is Personal — research, concept, sketches due
Sep 17	Experience Is Personal — draft designs due
Sep 24	Experience Is Personal — final design due (crit)
Midsemester	Individual midterm check-ins
Last day of course	Final review

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Materials & Tools

- **Basecamp** — an online collaboration tool for centralized class communication: a central portal for class discussion outside of class and a digital library of class resources.