FIRST YEAR GRADUATE STUDIO

Fall 2015

CFA AR 881

LEVEL	MFA 1 · Graduate studio
CREDITS	8
MEETS	Once a week
DATES	Fall 2015
LOCATION	[confirm]
INSTRUCTOR	Nicholas Rock
OFFICE	[confirm]
CONTACT	nickrock@bu.edu
OFFICE HOURS	Wednesdays and Thursdays 12–2 (drop in or by appointment); Mondays 12–2 by special appointment

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Overview

One day in November, Ferran Adrià, the Spanish chef who turned foods into foams and pioneered a new era in gastronomic innovation while running one of the world's most popular restaurants, bounced through a loft space in Barcelona. He peered at pencil-sketched mind maps tacked to plastic foam bulletin boards and examined books jammed on narrow shelves — until he reached the end of a display table featuring a variety of Asian soup spoons. Then he stopped.

"I have a question," he said in Catalan to the small group of visitors and staff members trailing him. "What is wine?"

There was silence. Four seconds, five seconds, 10 seconds. Finally, cautiously, someone offered, "A drink?" Mr. Adrià's eyes widened. "Maybe it is a drink if I put it in a cup. But what if I make it into a sauce and cook with it?" His voice was sharp. More silence. Mr. Adrià spun away and began walking again. "Now," he said over his shoulder as the crowd shuffled in his wake, "what if I turn the wine into ice cream? What is it then?"

—"Ferran Adrià Feeds the Hungry Mind," *The New York Times*

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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. You will talk in this class.
8. You will write in this class.
9. You are required to be in the studio working with your peers.
10. 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.
11. Questions. Ask them. Often. Questions are ALWAYS beneficial to the entire class, not just the person asking.
12. Experiment. Sketch. Test. Sample. Prototype.
13. The project is never complete.

14. The printer is always broken.
15. Collaborate.
16. Dish it out and take it.
17. Laugh. Don't Cry.
18. Be opinionated. Debate. Ask more questions.
19. Don't take it personally.
20. There are no favorites. If you do good work, or work hard it will be recognized. Likewise for poor work or laziness.
21. I will challenge your ideas, your concepts, your work, be prepared to defend them.
22. I will help you be a better designer.

Monthly Check-ins

We will, at least once a month, but sometimes more frequently, have individual meetings to discuss your work. This will also be a time to discuss anything else on your mind for the semester, whether it is directly related to our class or not. This is also a time for me to bring concerns that I may have to your attention.

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 as well as by office hours and email: nickrock@bu.edu. Please do not use any other email address to contact me.

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, 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.

- **Effective Participation + Communication.** 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 collaborative 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 expected to work with others. Your contribution to the collaboration will be assessed along with the final output of the 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.

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 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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Materials & Tools

- **Basecamp** — a 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.
- **Slack** — for more informal communication and group conversation.