SOPHOMORE GRAPHIC DESIGN

Spring 2015

CFA AR 226

Form, Content, Influence

LEVEL	BFA · Sophomore core studio
CREDITS	4
MEETS	Mondays and Wednesdays
DATES	January 21 – April 29, 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 title of the course could be Form, Content, Influence. You can't understand who you are as a designer without first understanding form making, the relationship of content and form and what you are influenced by. We, as designers, are makers and thinkers and problem solvers. We believe in the meaning of our work. We believe in content and in bringing form to that content. We believe in communicating our ideas and the ideas of others. We believe in leveraging our experiences and influences of our lives to act as a filter of perspective through which we view the world.

The goal of this course is to help you begin to develop a way of working, thinking and making, a process that yields successful solutions to problems and challenges. We will navigate issues such as form, rapid iteration, concept development, content and form relationships. We will immerse ourselves in influences and learn ways to best gather, collect and, as designers, be influenced by the artifacts and experiences surrounding us.

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Learning Outcomes

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: 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.

Meetings, Appointments, Reviews

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 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 semester runs four projects. Project 1 runs the full semester; Project 2 has four parts (A–D).

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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 prob lems, 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 de velop content and ideas Student struggles to meet deadlines Student does not set goals or is un able to achieve stated goals Student struggles to balance work load	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 under standing 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, col lecting 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
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 under standing 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

OBJECTIVE	LEVEL 1 — UNSATISFACTORY	LEVEL 2 — COMPETENT	LEVEL 3 — ACCOMPLISHED
Authorship	Student struggles to generate, curate or develop their own content for as signed 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 com-munication	Student understands the role of the graphic designer in professional prac tice 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, me dia or tool to successfully complete a design project	Student is able to use and understand many tools, media and forms of com-munication 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 understand ing of a tools, services and a full range of media and forms of com-munication by exploring problems using print, interactive, spatial and experiential, web, interactive, static and dynamic. Is able to choose appropriate mode of technology and media to success fully 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 rec ognize 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 practic ing 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

Check-ins and Final Reviews

We will also be having 2 individual, monthly check-in meetings, February 23 and March 30, 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 Graphic Design Learning Objectives, Attendance, Project Process + Execution and Participation:

- **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

WEEK	DATES	PROJECTS	NOTES
1	1/21	Project 1 begins · Project 2A	First day
2	1/26 – 1/28	Project 2B	
3	2/2 – 2/4	Project 2C	
4	2/9 – 2/11	Project 2D	
5	2/16 – 2/18	Project 3 begins	
6	2/23 – 2/25	Project 3	Monthly check-in #1
7	3/4 – 3/6	Project 3	
8	—	—	Spring break
9	3/16 – 3/18	Project 3	
10	3/23 – 3/25	Project 4 begins	
11	3/30 – 4/1	Project 4	Monthly check-in #2
12	4/6 – 4/8	Project 4	
13	4/13 – 4/15	Project 4	
14	4/19 – 4/21	Project 4	
15	4/27 – 4/29	Project 1 ends	Final review TBD

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Materials & Tools

Requirements

- A laptop
- A flash drive
- A camera
- A sketchbook

Books to Read

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

We will be using Basecamp to consolidate class communications: 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.