GRADUATE TYPOGRAPHY

Fall 2018

CFA AR 601

LEVEL	MFA · Graduate studio
CREDITS	4
MEETS	[confirm]
DATES	Fall 2018
LOCATION	[confirm]
INSTRUCTOR	Professor Nicholas Rock
OFFICE	808 Commonwealth Ave, 406A (4th floor, connected to the graduate graphic design studios)
CONTACT	nickrock@bu.edu
OFFICE HOURS	Mondays 12:30–2:30; Tuesdays and Thursdays 11–12:30, by appointment

01

Overview

> “[typography] is a craft by which the meanings of text (or its absence of meaning) can be clarified, honored and shared…” —Robert Bringhurst

As designers, we use typography as one of our tools to affect how, when, why and where people receive information. In addition to the tools we use and the skills we develop, we are challenged to leave our mark, our voice on the project, to reveal the information through the filter of your own perspective.

Type is the foundation, the backbone, of graphic design. Many of the best design projects are grounded with excellent typography, whether they are print or digital, motion or interactive. Well considered typography will often help lead to a project’s success. Typography carries the message, the point, the ultimate goal of the design. Additionally, a knowledge and expertise in typography prepares designers to think about systems in general which is an important skill to have in any kind of problem solving.

The goal of this course is to present you with a series of typographic challenges. You will learn how to operate with constraints, think about systems, and the relationship of content and form.

03

Course Structure

The 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. Sarcasm and jokes are part of studio life.
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.
20. Have. Fun.

Check-ins

We will, on occasion, meet individually instead of meeting as a full group, in which we will discuss your status in the class, questions or concerns, project specifics or anything else that is sometimes easier to discuss individually, to ensure that you all know where you stand and that we are all on the same page.

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.

04

Projects

Weekly Homework — News Response

Individual · weekly

Each week you must choose 2 stories in the news that you have an interest in and make a typographic response poster for the news story. You are not making an illustration for the story, your news response is a commentary on the news story, or something inspired by the news story.

Requirements: 2 news response posters · 8.5 x 11 portrait (vertical) · Black + White only (including gray) · Type only.

Periodic Readings

You will be receiving readings occasionally which we will reference and discuss during class.

Project 01 — Aspirations, Constraints

Individual · two posters

Turn words of aspiration and inspiration into a poster to inspire and motivate your newly formed grad studio community.

First start by choosing a speech, talk or lecture that you find inspirational or motivating. Extract a passage of text from this speech and with it create 2 different posters.

Requirements: 2 posters · both posters minimum A1 in size · 5 rules for each poster (each must have a different set of 5) · must include at least 200 words of text · you must use different text on each poster.

Rules to draw from: extreme scale · only serif · only humanist · no color · no computer · hand drawn · portrait · landscape · one font · two fonts · make something loud · make something quiet · make something funny · something other than paper · create collage · use pattern · use texture · found objects · multi-lingual · illegible · poster as carpet · poster for the 17th century · things you see from 10 feet away · things you see from 100 feet away · things on page 156 · paint · use only a text editor · straight lines · curved lines · 3D · shadows · backwards · tiled · code · map · use a camera · outside · packaging · decorative · urban · heavy · broken · made of string · signage · wallpaper · system · shiny · newsprint · translucent · google translate · cards · bulletin board · .com · ticket · recipe · ugly · difficult · collection

05

Assessment

You will be evaluated over the course of the class and will be assessed according to the following major areas:

- **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.
- **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.
- **Being Professional.** As you are learning to be designers, one of the most important aspects of working professionally is the way you conduct and carry yourself in interactions with clients, employers, peers etc. Pay attention to emails you send, things you say in class. Give respect. Earn respect.

How Projects Are Evaluated

Often times design and other creative work is subjective and therefore difficult to have a precise grading system. As a result I have developed a rigorous way of focusing on a specific criteria for determining the success of a particular project. Every project is evaluated against the following on a scale of 1–5, 5 being the best:

CRITERION	QUESTION
Idea	Is this smart, clearly articulated and thoughtful. Is it original? Does it show a unique perspective, etc.
Concept Development	How well did you move from your initial idea into something real. What was your iterative process like. Did you support your development with research.
Design Execution	Once your concept of exactly what you wanted to make became clear, how well was this translated to a piece of design, did the use of form make sense, did it work etc?
Craft	Was it well made, did you consider the details, printing, rendering, materials, final experience etc. Did you cut and glue things properly, does your video have quality sound, etc.
Presentation	How does a viewer experience the work. How well do you speak about the project and what you attempted.

Basic Principles for Grading

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.

07

Materials & Tools

The Essentials

- Laptop
- Flash drive
- Camera
- Sketchbook
- X-Acto knife

- Bone folder
- Book binding supplies
- A sense of humor

Recommended

- Music
- Coffee
- A projector adapter
- A tripod
- Gaffer tape

Books

- Required for reference: Lupton, Ellen. *Thinking with Type.*
- Recommended: Bringhurst, Robert. *The Elements of Typographic Style.* · Meggs, Philip B. and Alston W. Purvis. *Meggs' History of Graphic Design.*

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 need software that can work with video. iMovie may serve your needs, but I recommend checking out something like After Effects, Final Cut Pro or Premiere. They do slightly different things but you will work with video in this class.

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.