POST-BAC GRAPHIC DESIGN

Spring 2018

CFA AR 782

Form, Content, Influence

LEVEL	Post-baccalaureate graduate certificate · studio
CREDITS	8
MEETS	Wednesdays
DATES	January 24 – April 25, 2018
LOCATION	[confirm]
INSTRUCTOR	Professor Nicholas Rock
OFFICE	808 Commonwealth Ave — 406A
CONTACT	nickrock@bu.edu
OFFICE HOURS	Tuesdays and Thursdays 11–12:30, by appointment

01

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, and 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 that surround 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

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 be having individual check-in meetings tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, February 28 and Wednesday, April 4, 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. 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 — here in 808, 406A — 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

Project 01 — Process Book

Individual · semester long · Jan 24 – Apr 25

Semester long project developing, documenting and displaying your working process.

You will develop a concept, design and produce a process book that you will work on throughout the semester. You will collect and gather your process from all of your projects. You will work on the design concept from day one until spring break. This book can be any size and any shape. The book will serve as a container for showing all of your sketches and found objects, inspirations and experiments from the entire semester. The idea of the process book is both to collect evidence of your process but to also help you begin to have a better working design process. For example, if you know you need to have content for your book you will more likely save and look at your sketches, ideas and influences as a whole. This is more than a sketch book. You need to consider how you document and archive all of your work. Main design for the book must be done by spring break, remainder of semester will be adding and refining content.

References: *It Is What It Is*, 2x4 (book) · *El Bulli: Cooking in Progress* (film).

Schedule: 01/24 begin project · 02/07 discuss concepts as class · 03/21 design draft presentation · 04/25 project due.

Makers Lab

Individual · series of 3, 3-week design challenges

Every 3 weeks you will be assigned a new tool to leverage in a miniature project. The first week you will get familiar with the tool or technology, and write a brief description of a project that you would like to make, you will then have 2 weeks to execute the project.

Requirements: You will be experimenting with different tools for this project: laser cutter · vinyl cutter · projector. In addition to the 3 tools, you will have 4 themes to work within: something that inspires you · something that you think everyone should know · current event · social media. You may decide the order in which you complete each theme.

Rigorous Form

Individual · 2 form-making challenges

Form-making challenges to help get you in the habit of making many things, the process of making, the process of iteration.

02 A — 12 Iterations of a Calendar in 60 Minutes. Explore the idea of a calendar. Consider what the word means. What does calendar mean historically and across cultures. How do we interpret words, form and numbers as it relates to your interpretation of calendar. You will make 12 different iterations of a calendar based upon your exploration of the concept. Requirements: 11x17 (portrait) · Black + White only · 6 must be type only.

10 Variations on a Verb. You are all assigned a verb. You must make 10 different posters that are variations or interpretations of the verb. Think about content, context and interpretations. What does the word mean? Can you change or alter its meaning in different contexts. How can you suggest the meaning of the verb in different ways. Don't be literal. Don't use the actual word in any of your posters. Otherwise make anything you want. You have 2 hours to design and print the posters. Posters should be 11 x 17 portrait. Verbs assigned: expose, illuminate, contradict, conceal, elevate, focus, isolate, enlarge, flow.

Elements Poster

Individual

A poster project to challenge your ability to leverage constraints.

Imagine a poster series in an 8th grade classroom designed to ignite a young student's curiosity about the natural world, chemistry, physics, and the sciences in general. The posters, when seen as a series, should reflect the awe-inspiring diversity of the world around us and suggest, in abstract ways, the hidden forces that shape the environment we live in.

Your objective in this assignment is to design a poster for one of the elements on the periodic table. For this assignment, your double objective should be to: 1 — attract the attention of a hypothetical student; 2 — evoke, with letterforms and composition only, an appropriate sense of the characteristics (eg. gaseous, solid, crystalline, radioactive, unstable, etc.) of the element itself.

Think about ways to vividly evoke the quality of your element without resorting to cliches or expected solutions — these 8th graders are smart and very sophisticated.

Requirements: You should limit yourself to the use of type only in black and white. The final poster must be 20(w) x 32(h) inches. It must include the element's name, symbol, atomic number, and atomic weight, as well as a 200-word description which you will provide, based on your research. Elements assigned: hydrogen, helium, carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, neon, iron, gold and lead.

The Collections

Individual

Understand meaning of image and object and leverage metaphor in storytelling.

Curate a collection of your own artifacts or things. This could take many forms, everything you are carrying in your bag for example. Collections often help us understand or make sense of things in the world, so for this project, tell a story about yourself, your interests, or your experiences through this collection of things. The things may act as literal representations or as metaphor or both and your collection need not be everything you own, however that is one possible solution.

With your collection you will make: a 17 x 22 inside out poster (folds to 5.5 x 8.5 pamphlet) using both type and image; a 30 second video about your collection, 1280 x 720 px.

Requirements: You may choose to use color or black and white. The things in your collection must be actual objects, so a collection of quotes for example will not work for this assignment. You may only choose one type family. So choose carefully, and choose something that relates to your content. The inside out poster must include text. The text can be found or written by you. The video must be exactly 30 seconds and include audio. The video must be exported as a QuickTime H.264 video file (.mp4).

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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.
- **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.

Student Learning Objectives for Evaluation

OBJECTIVE	LEVEL 1 — UNSATISFACTORY	LEVEL 2 — COMPETENT	LEVEL 3 — ACCOMPLISHED
Process	Student struggles with defining problems, 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 develop content and ideas. Student struggles to meet deadlines. Student does not set goals or is unable to achieve stated goals. Student struggles to balance workload.	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 understanding 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, collecting 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 understanding 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 assigned 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 communication	Student understands the role of the graphic designer in professional practice 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, media or tool to successfully complete a design project.	Student is able to use and understand many tools, media and forms of communication. 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 understanding of a tools, services and a full range of media and forms of communication by exploring problems using print, interactive, spatial and experiential, web, interactive, static and dynamic. Student is able to choose appropriate mode of technology and media to successfully 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 recognize 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 practicing 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. Student has strong visual and verbal communication skills speaking in front of a group, critiquing work, writing project statements and descriptions. Student leverages design skills to enhance writing and presentation skills.

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.

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Calendar

DATE	EVENT
Jan 24	Process Book begins
Feb 7	Process Book concepts discussed as a class
Feb 28	Check-in

DATE	EVENT
Mar 21	Process Book design draft presentation
Apr 4	Check-in
Apr 25	Process Book due

07

Materials & Tools

- **Basecamp** — to consolidate class communications: a central portal for class discussion outside of class and a digital library of class resources.