JUNIOR GRAPHIC DESIGN

Spring 2020

CFA AR 382

LEVEL	BFA · Junior core studio
CREDITS	4
MEETS	Section A1 3:30–6:15 · Section B1 12:30–3:15 · Tuesdays and Thursdays
DATES	January 21 – April 29, 2020
LOCATION	[confirm]
INSTRUCTOR	Professor Nicholas Rock
OFFICE	808 Commonwealth Ave — 406A
CONTACT	nickrock@bu.edu
OFFICE HOURS	By appointment — Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30–12:30, Wednesdays 11:30–2:30

01

Overview

Designers are more than just makers of beautiful things—we are communicators and thinkers with the ability to inspire and motivate—constantly interacting with all fields and professions, exposing ourselves to countless new things. It is essential to express our opinions and that we, as designers, create relevant work while challenging the concept of what graphic design is and why it is necessary. There doesn't have to be two worlds of design, one that clings to smart, well-articulated thought out projects and another of so-called surface design that focuses on making things that just look pretty. All choices should relate to the message. Everything has meaning and should be treated as such. All designers have a unique and powerful responsibility to affect how, when, why, and where people receive information. The challenge we face is to reveal this information through the filter of our perspective. Design is ultimately about both discovering and revealing new ideas, opinions, and information.

The goal of this studio is to help you continue to develop and more deeply consider your voice as a designer. You will complete a series of projects designed to help you form opinions and points of view and ways of thinking and working, your creative process. Our goal as designers is to be in a place where we have a method or process or way of thinking which we can apply to any design problem that comes our way. Our goal is to

become design thinkers. At the end of this course, you should be on your way towards this goal. However, there is no expectation that you will have this philosophy defined.

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Learning Outcomes

You will be evaluated throughout the class and will be assessed according to the primary 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 Structure

Classes will be a mixture of mini lectures, discussions, individual and small group meetings, critiques, studio work time and presentations. We will always try to balance each week with in-studio work time so that you are able to work while I am in the studio with you and give you direct and immediate advice and guidance.

Working Groups

This semester you will be organized into groups of 4–5 students. The groups will be used to structure class meetings in a way that makes best use of in-studio time as well as creating a design team structure reminiscent of how you may actually work in a real world environment.

The additional objective here is for you to practice balancing your voice as a designer with that of others on the team as design is nearly always about working with someone else.

Four groups per section: Section A1 (3:30–6:15) and Section B1 (12:30–3:15).

Homework

In addition to major projects, each week you will receive a miniature homework assignment. These are quick things to do, things to read, things to watch etc. and will change up weekly.

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.

Monthly Check-ins

We will be having 2 individual, monthly check-in meetings, the week of February 17 and the week of March 23, 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 — 406A on the 4th floor of 808 — 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

This is a loose schedule of our projects for the semester. These are just major milestones and may shift as needed. I will adjust the semester to fit the class. If we need extra time on a project we will take it, if we need to move on quicker, we will do that as well.

PROJECT	LENGTH	DUE
01 Borders Book	2 weeks	Week 03

PROJECT	LENGTH	DUE
02 Makers Lab — 01	2 weeks	Week 04
02 Makers Lab — 02	2 weeks	Week 06
02 Makers Lab, Pt. 3	3 weeks	Week 09
02 Makers Lab, Pt. 4	2 weeks	Week 11
02 Makers Lab, Pt. 5	2 weeks	Week 13
03 Noticing	7 weeks	Week 10
04 Project TBD	5 weeks	04/20

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Assessment

You will be evaluated throughout the class and will be assessed according to the primary 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. I expect that you will be an active member of the class, particularly during critiques, as all feedback is valuable. Discussion is an essential 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 required 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 time and should be completed according to the project brief. Late work will affect your grade. 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.
- **Professionalism.** As you are learning to be designers, one of the most important aspects of your work 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, how you present your work, etc. 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.

OBJECTIVE	LEVEL 1 — UNSATISFACTORY	LEVEL 2 — COMPETENT	LEVEL 3 — ACCOMPLISHED
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.
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

WEEK	DATES	NOTES
W01	01/21	First class
W02	01/28 – 01/30	
W03	02/04 – 02/06	**Borders Book due**

WEEK	DATES	NOTES
W04	02/11 – 02/13	**Makers Lab 01 due**
W05	02/18 – 02/20	Check-in
W06	02/25 – 02/27	**Makers Lab 02 due**
W07	03/03 – 03/05	
W08	03/10 – 03/12	Spring break
W09	03/17 – 03/19	**Makers Lab Pt. 3 due**
W10	03/24 – 03/26	**Noticing due** · check-in
W11	03/31 – 04/02	**Makers Lab Pt. 4 due**
W12	04/07 – 04/09	
W13	04/14 – 04/16	**Makers Lab Pt. 5 due**
W14	04/21 – 04/23	**Project 04 due 04/20**
W15	04/29	Final review — Wednesday, April 29, times TBD

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Materials & Tools

The Essentials

- Laptop
- Flash drive
- Camera
- Sketchbook
- X-Acto knife
- Bone folder
- A flatfile drawer
- A sense of humor

Recommended

- Music
- Coffee
- A projector adapter

- A tripod
- Gaffer tape
- Bookbinding materials

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 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.