JUNIOR GRAPHIC DESIGN

Spring 2022

CFA AR 382

Audience, Authorship

LEVEL	BFA · Junior core studio
CREDITS	4
MEETS	Section A1 3:30–6:15 · Sections B1 and C1 12:30–3:15 · Tuesdays and Thursdays
DATES	January 20 – May 2, 2022
LOCATION	[confirm]
INSTRUCTOR	Assistant Professor Nicholas Rock · with Lecturer Krystyn Wypasek
OFFICE	808 Commonwealth Ave — 406A
CONTACT	nickrock@bu.edu · kwypasek@bu.edu
OFFICE HOURS	By appointment — Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30–12:30, Wednesdays 11:30–2:30

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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, process, or way of

thinking that 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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Course Structure

Class as Community

I come into this class from a place of respect and trust, and I hope that you all do too.

We are a microcosm — of the department, the school, the university, and while small, we are still an incredibly diverse community. Our cohort includes students from all over the world with all sorts of backgrounds and experiences.

Our class is inclusive and accessible — We come from different places, backgrounds, and walks of life. We embrace the unique identities of each member of this community and commit to learning, growing, and understanding each other through historical contexts of race, gender, religion, sexuality, and other expressions of self.

I understand that your trust is earned. I am committed to helping you grow and learn and change or solidify your perspective and knowledge in design, and I am committed to learning from you. I will ensure that our class is a safe space to teach and learn, as I see all of us working in both capacities.

We will explore diverse content. I am working to ensure that this course represents a vast range of perspectives, ideas, topics, people, and cultures through what I will provide and what I hope you all will bring to the conversation. I will also strive to elevate your voices in this class through the project work and the conversation.

We will be flexible, patient, and understanding. I made a syllabus and a schedule of projects. I will shift and adjust the work and the due dates to adapt to our class. There is understandable uncertainty coming into this semester. Let's commit to the experience and see where it takes us.

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.

Class Structure

Classes will be a mixture of mini-lectures, discussions, individual and small group and full class meetings, critiques, and presentations. This semester we will alternate weekly between full-group remote conversations and small group meetings both remote and in-person. We will be splitting the class into workgroups to more easily activate small group sessions. Every small group work session will be open to anyone in the class who

would like to participate regardless of your group assignment. That means you may join your assigned group in person and one or both of the others remotely if you choose. In order to make the most effective use of time, when we meet as a full group, it will likely be only on Zoom. Days when I hold in-person sessions, will have alternate Zoom sessions. Synchronous studio sessions tend to pose more challenges than benefits.

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Projects

PROJECT	DUE
01 — I Love / I Hate	2/15
02 — Acknowledgments (poster)	3/15 · hang on 3/17 (brief: review 3/24 · hang 3/29)
03 — Catalog of Influences	Semester long
04 — Makers Lab 01–04 (group)	2/10 · 2/24 · 3/24 · 4/7
Digital Project TBA	4/19

Project 02 — Acknowledgments

Individual · A1 printed poster (594 × 841 mm) · February 15 – March 29

It is essential for us, as designers, to strive to better understand our own identities and how to relate them to the contexts we find ourselves within. We must consider where we come from and what came before us, what shaped our paths as humans, and where we are now on those paths.

As designers, our work is related to people and places, systems, things and ideas. It is about understanding history and looking towards the future through communication and visual language.

All of our paths have crossed here, in Boston. Together we will spend time developing a deeper understanding of the place and land upon which this city and this university are built. We will consider what it means to acknowledge and honor the original occupants of this place, learn to recognize the varied forms of oppression, and understand how design has played a significant role in systems that have oppressed Indigenous peoples. This work is the foundation of what is known as a land acknowledgment. For this project we take a slightly different approach: you will create a *personal* acknowledgment through visual and verbal language, presented as a printed poster.

Part 1 — Research + Discovery (2/15–2/22). Individual research into your past and roots and how you find yourself here and now; collective research into the history of this place, the original stewards of the land this city is built on, and the history of land acknowledgments. Share and discuss the research in your groups.

Part 2 — Relation and Understanding (2/22–3/1). Relate your individual research to the collective research and build a narrative connecting your identity to acknowledging and understanding this place. Begin sketching and correlating notes and ideas. Conversation with Jean-Luc Pierite (Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana), President of the Board of Directors of the North American Indian Center of Boston.

Part 3 — Design (2/24–3/17). Write your own text expressing your perspective. Develop 2–3 concepts for the poster, connecting content directly to formal choices such as typography and color. Refine to one version through team and studio review. Jean-Luc Pierite returns for a concept review of drafts at scale (tiled prints). Finalize for printing 3/17–3/22.

Part 4 — Produce + Present (3/22–3/29). Final review Thursday, March 24. Posters hang in the first-floor lobby hallway across from the Howard Thurman Center on Tuesday, March 29, ahead of *Indigenous Perspectives on Sustainability and the Arts*, Thursday, March 31, 2022, 5:30–7:00 pm.

Explore · Listen · Watch: Office of Uncertainty Research, *1by1* · Lesley University Community Design Studio, *Beyond the Flag* (podcast) · North American Indian Center of Boston · Commission on Indian Affairs of the State of Massachusetts · Sadie Red Wing, *F* the Stereotype: Revitalizing Indigenous Perspective in Design* · Dr. Philip Deloria on neocolonial identity politics and *Playing Indian*.

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Assessment

Evaluation Criteria

Engagement. A class as a community depends on the engagement of the class members. Part of a designer's job is communicating effectively, on a design team, in a studio environment, or with clients. We ask that you attempt to be an active class member, particularly during critiques, as all feedback is valuable and essential. Discussion is a significant part of the design process. We want to ensure everyone has the opportunity to have their voices heard.

My goal is to be flexible and accommodating, but you are required to attend class meetings. If you cannot participate in a class for some reason, please get in touch with your faculty or TA — in advance if possible — to ensure you stay connected with the community discussion.

Time in the studio environment is crucial. Class discussion and critique are things not easily made up and happen regularly, and we will regularly try to offer you multiple perspectives to help guide your work.

Group Work. Designers rarely work independently. Completed work is almost always the result of a team or collaborative effort of some sort, whether it be with other designers, clients, developers, writers, etc. There will be times when you will need to work as part of a collaborative group in this class.

Project Execution. All of the projects in this course require your full attention and effort. Projects need to be submitted on time and completed according to the project brief. We will have a review at the completion of each project, though you will not receive an individual grade for each project. You will have an opportunity to improve upon each project following that project's final critique.

Project Process. You should document the process of each of your projects throughout the semester. Save all sketches, writings, mockups, 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 develop into design professionals, you must practice how you conduct and carry yourself in interactions with clients, employers, peers, etc. Pay attention to emails you send, things you say in class. Practice humility, honesty, transparency and respect.

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Calendar

WEEK	WEEK OF	MILESTONES
01	1/17	First day of classes 01/20
02	1/24	First full studio week
03	1/31	
04	2/7	**Makers Lab 01 due 2/10**
05	2/14	**I Love / I Hate due 2/15**
06	2/21	**Makers Lab 02 due 2/24**
07	2/28	
—	3/5 – 3/13	Spring break
08	3/14	**Acknowledgements Poster due 3/15** · hang 3/17
09	3/21	**Makers Lab 03 due 3/24**
10	3/28	
11	4/4	**Makers Lab 04 due 4/7**
12	4/11	
13	4/18	**Digital Project due 4/19**

WEEK	WEEK OF	MILESTONES
14	4/25	Last week of classes
15	5/2	Final reviews

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Materials & Tools

Basic design kit for you to function in the class. This is my basic list. If you are a nerd about what tech and supplies people use, check out usesthis.com.

The Essentials

- Laptop
- Flash drive
- Camera
- Sketchbook
- X-Acto knife + extra blades
- Bone folder
- A flatfile drawer (may need to share drawers)
- A sense of humor

Recommended

- Music
- Coffee, tea, water or other sustenance is welcome here
- A projector adapter
- A tripod
- Gaffer tape
- Bookbinding materials

Reading

- Required: *Decolonizing Reader (resources)*, collaborative open edition.
- Suggested: Monteiro, Mike. *Ruined by Design: How Designers Destroyed the World, and What We Can Do to Fix It.*

Software + Services

It goes without saying that you will need to have access to Adobe Creative Cloud if you don't already. I don't expect this to be an issue, but wanted to be sure. That said, I think

it is obnoxious that our industry is so reliant on prohibitively expensive design software from one giant corporation so I encourage you to explore alternatives to the Adobe software. Experiment with something new. Here are some good tools: Keynote, Pixelmator, Sketch, Procreate, Cinema4d, Figma, Miro.

We will be using a project management tool used by professionals in the design industry called Basecamp, to consolidate class communications. You all will have access to our Basecamp site after the first class; this will act as a central portal for class discussion outside of class as well as a digital library of class resources, such as this syllabus, project briefs, certain readings as well as our class calendar.

You MUST have a backup solution in place after the first week. I recommend Backblaze.