GRAPHIC DESIGN STUDIO PRACTICE

Spring 2022

CFA AR 523

LEVEL	Studio · client-based
CREDITS	2
MEETS	Wednesdays, 2:30–5:15
DATES	Spring 2022
LOCATION	[confirm]
INSTRUCTOR	Assistant 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

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Overview

> To experience, to engage, to endeavor, rather than to watch and to wonder —that's where the real meat of life is to be found. Inspiration and growth only come from adversity and from challenge—from stepping away from what's comfortable and familiar and stepping out into the unknown. —Ben Saunders

Design is as much about process, critical thinking, and social responsibility as it is about aesthetics and form. Projects, clients' needs, and graphic design are all constantly and rapidly changing. Changes can happen across disciplines or from one medium to another; how we as designers adapt to those changes, employing traditional design techniques and using the newest technology, is about more than aesthetics and form. It is about practicing a process of research and discovery that can solve design problems no matter how content, technology, and styles change over time.

The goal of this course is to function as both a teaching and learning environment. The structure of the course allows for the coverage of a broad range of graphic design related skills in both instruction and practical application. The course is designed to

function as a working design studio where the students have the opportunity to work on real client based projects and engage directly with clients. Ultimately we will be stressing the value of learning through experiences.

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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 students. The groups will be used to structure class meetings or projects as needed 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. These groups are also subject to change depending on the client work in the studio.

Teaching + Learning Sessions

There will be specifically designed workshop or lecture based sessions and discussions surrounding the following topics.

- **The Space in Which We Work.** We will discuss what makes up a successful graphic design studio environment by researching and hearing from existing professional studios and digital tools for remote working and discussing how to make best use of our own transient and digital spaces.
- **The Charrette.** The idea of a charrette is when all of the designers in the studio work on design concepts and then come together for critique and dialogue. We will discuss this topic by conducting charrettes in our own studio for every project.
- **Communication Part 1: The Design Brief.** Project scope of work, deliverables, budget, schedule and plan will be discussed and implemented with real world projects.
- **Communication Part 2: Professionalism.** How do we communicate with peers and clients in the professional world? How do we present ourselves in public as designers?
- **Communication Part 3: The Art of Presentation.** Nearly as important as the work itself, is the way it is presented. We will discuss and practice speaking and presenting ideas.
- **Client Feedback.** How do we receive and respond to client feedback? What happens when a client is happy vs. unhappy. How do we process and translate client feedback and direction to continue with a design process?

Guest Speakers / Subject Matter Experts

Time and logistics permitting we will hear from different design practitioners to learn different perspectives on working as design professionals. Here is a tentative list:

- Tino Chow — gs.agency
- Noelle No — noonauthentic.com
- Sarah Rabinovich — sarahrabinovich.com
- Courtney Schwabe — contrairestudio.com
- Aditi Sharma — aditi.work
- Josh Silverman — mynameisjoshsilverman.com

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Projects

Professional Engagements

Studio · client-based

For Spring 2022 we plan to engage on multiple different real client based projects; here are a few currently in the works:

- **Boston University Business Innovation Center.** BIC mainly houses outside companies and acts like a “landlord” — renting space and providing access to BU resources such as labs, clean rooms etc. They’re looking to work with a group of design students on telling the story of BIC, developing signage, maybe also digital presence.
- **Boston University School of Theatre.** The School of Theatre has a pretty large need of graphic design resources for posters and promotional collateral for graduate student productions among other things. These productions seem to fall into a gap between what the SOT is able to provide and what the CFA marketing department is able to support. We have the potential of starting a new collaborative relationship between the Graphic Design program and the School of Theatre.
- **Beautiful Day.** Beautiful Day helps refugees adjust to life in America by offering paid, on-the-job training by producing and selling granola and partnering on other consumer products. Station recently developed a refreshed brand and initial packaging for the core products but we would be looking to extend the product packaging design based upon this design system.