GRAPHIC DESIGN STUDIO PRACTICE

Spring 2024

CFA AR 523

LEVEL	Studio · client-based
CREDITS	2
MEETS	Wednesdays, 2:30–5:15
DATES	Spring 2024
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 · fantastical.app/nick-kSSb/office-hours

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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.

Teaching + Learning Sessions

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

1. **Professionalism.** How do we communicate with peers and clients in the professional world? How do we present ourselves in public as designers?
2. **Proposals and Briefs.** Project scope of work, deliverables, budget, schedule and plan will be discussed and implemented with real world projects.
3. **Art of the Client Presentation.** Nearly as important as the work itself, is the way it is presented. We will discuss and practice speaking and presenting ideas.
4. **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?

Topical Conversations

- **Space + Tools of the Trade.** 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, with the possibility of field trips (schedule and time permitting).
- **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.

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:

- **Prem Krishnamurthy** — Tuesday, March 5. In 2015, Krishnamurthy was awarded Cooper Hewitt's National Design Award for Communication Design. From 2012 to 2022, he ran and curated P! Gallery in New York City and Berlin. You won't want to miss what he has been up to since!
- **Kelley Wade, Pinkergreen** (date TBD) — studio tour and conversation.
- **Noelle No** — noonauthentic.com
- **Tino Chow, Giant Shoulders** — gs.agency

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Projects

Professional Engagements

Studio · client-based · BU Business Innovation Center member companies

For Spring 2024 we plan to engage on multiple different real client based projects; here are the clients we will likely work with.

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. We have been working with them as a client for a couple years and will continue to do so this semester, but through a series of member companies at the BIC:

- **PriMetaz** — building MRI surface coils that increase the speed of an MRI exam, improving patient throughput and enabling faster diagnostic imaging.
- **Coalesenz** — timely coagulation management at the point-of-care.
- **QuNETT** — QuNETT's mission is to accelerate the construction of the quantum internet.

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Materials & Tools

Things You Need

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 + something to write with
- Sharpies
- Dry erase markers
- Post-its, cards or other paper in assorted colors

Required Reading

- The Graphic Artists Guild. *Graphic Artists Guild Handbook: Pricing & Ethical Guidelines*, 16th edition.
- Monteiro, Mike. *Design Is a Job.* A Book Apart.