

Graphic Design Pre-College

SYLLABUS SUMMER 2010

INSTRUCTOR:
Steve Kennedy

MEETING:
Monday–Friday
june 28–July 23 | 9:00–12:00
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COURSE:
PNNY 0111-C
CRN: 1103

Syllabus Graphic Design

“To design is to transform prose into poetry.”

— PAUL RAND, *Design Form and Chaos*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A graphic designer is a creative problem solver who is trained to conceive, plan, and execute a design that communicates a direct message in an imaginative and visually arresting manner to an intended audience, regardless of medium. To do so, the graphic designer develops a concept and a visual means to present an idea. Ideas are generated through the design process, in which graphic designers research, organize, and interpret the information, define the objectives, originate ideas, and create new visual forms.

This level course offers a series of creative assignments that promote strong conceptual thinking, reinforces an appreciation and understanding of the visual elements and principles of design, and continues the development of an individualized understanding of the design process. The primary objective of this course is to encourage the design student to develop and master the basic conceptual thinking, visual, and technical skills that distinguish graphic designers from desktop technicians.

COURSE CONTENT

The content of this course will consist of studio projects, class critiques, research, readings and writings on contemporary design issues, technical information, and an exploration of contemporary graphic design and its historical counterpart through slides, video and field trips. Through exposure and interaction with this material students will develop pro-professional attitudes and approaches to design problem solving while focusing on the basic vocabulary of visual form, typography, sequence, combining words with images, idea generation and production.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To encourage students to develop and master basic conceptual thinking skills.
- To acquire a basic vocabulary in visible language.
- To promote the use of an effective design process and aid in the development of each student's own personal design methodology.
- To develop sensitivity to the subtle relationship between content and form.
- To learn to identify and define design objectives and client goals.
- To explore a variety of image-making technologies and processes.
- To examine how type and image can be brought together to clearly convey a chosen concept or idea.
- To learn the rudiments of page structure and sequencing
- To encourage students to master basic technological and production skills.
- To establish a strong sense of craftsmanship and professional production values.

CLASS TEXT

- Ellen Lupton. *Thinking with Type*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004.

SUGGESTED DESIGN READINGS

The following books can serve as reference guides and sources of inspiration:

- Robert Bringhurst. *The Elements of Typographic Style*. Vancouver, BC: Hartley and Marks, 2001.
- Rob Carter, Ben Day, and Philip B. Meggs. *Typographic Design: Form and Communication, 3rd edition*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2002.
- Elizabeth Resnick. *Design for Communication: Conceptual Graphic Design Basics*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2003.
- Ellen Lupton. *D.I.Y. Design It Yourself*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007.
- Philip B. Meggs. *A History of Graphic Design, 3rd edition*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 1998.

- Paul Rand. *A Designers Art*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985.

CLASS STRUCTURE

This course outline accommodates a two hour and fifty minute class.

GRADING POLICY

The Course Policy dictates all assigned project work will be completed and submitted by a specified deadline. Missed deadlines will result in a significantly reduced grade and ultimately a FAIL grade for the assignment. Project work submitted within the deadline parameters may be revised, reworked and resubmitted for further evaluation and a potential review of grade. Perfect attendance is necessary to obtain the highest possible letter grade. One missed class lowers an overall grade by one third (ie. A+ to A). Two absences drop a full letter grade (ie. B to C). Three absences are grounds for dismissal or failure. Tardiness beyond one half hour will be counted as an absence. Three tardies beyond fifteen minutes will be treated as an absence. Final grades are based on attendance, assignments (50%), participation (25%), and your final project (25%).

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Summer semester has 19 class sessions and you are expected to attend them all. College policy allows for one absence. Two or three absences from this class can result in no-credit or dismissal. It is strongly recommended that you reserve your absence for unexpected illnesses. Any unusual situations or family crisis that affects your work or class attendance should be discussed first with your instructor as it is happening for any excused absences to take effect. I view my classes as communities of caring and committed design students, growing together, with each person a full participant in the others learning.

LATENESS

Please be on time and allow ample time to get to class; anticipate delays especially if you drive long distances or take public transportation.

HOMEWORK

Undergraduate students are expected, on average, to be spending between twenty-five and thirty-five hours per week on out-of-class preparation. Summer Intensive Session students should spend at least three to six hours per week.

DESIGN JOURNAL

Over the course of the semester, collect samples of typography. You may sketch, photograph, cut items from magazines, find scraps of paper on the street, or cut out bits of packaging. Create a two-inch-square sample of each specimen that you find. (Making a viewfinder will help you frame your samples nicely as well as cut them out without measuring.) Arrange your specimens in a simple grid (2 columns, 4 rows, all cells touching.) Complete 8 entries by end of semester.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

Each assignment in this course will present a challenging encounter with creative problem solving. To successfully complete each of these to a successful result you will need to learn how to negotiate the subtle relationships between content and form—content being what you want to say, and form how you choose to say it. The two are brought together to a successful conclusion through the design process, the term for the steps taken before arriving at a finished design solution.

The design process can be broken down into five distinct and equally important steps:

1. **Once** given the assignment, you need to define your objectives. Carefully consider the following questions: What is the desired result, or goal of the project? What is the message? Who is it for? What format can best express the message?
2. **It is impossible** to solve a problem you don't understand! Learn about the subject at hand. Look for parallels in other fields, subjects, time periods, and

industries. The more information you collect from multiple sources, the more associations you can make between them.

3. **Brainstorming** is an idea-generating process based on free association that uses a written record of verbalized ideas. Start by making word lists of everything that relates to your subject. These lists can help you explore the trail of thoughts influenced by your research. Another effective brainstorming method is verbal diagramming or “thought mapping.” Place a key word in the middle of a piece of paper and branch out in all directions as you write down other ideas that are related to the initial word. This approach lets you picture the structure of your thinking.

When you feel you have enough material to work from, begin visualizing your ideas by making thumbnail sketches. A thumbnail is a small rough sketch of a preliminary design idea. Try to generate as many of these sketches as possible.

From the thumbnails you create, select at least three to develop into layout form. A layout is a full-size sketch of the design idea detailing its placement of type, images, and color. They are made to test whether the idea will work once it is drawn at full size. Layouts can be done with markers and a drawing pad, or on the computer.

4. **Critiques** are the best way to articulate your ideas to others and get immediate feedback. During the critique, the class analyzes the individual solutions and suggests ways to increase the visual and conceptual impact of each existing idea. Present multiple solutions during the layout stage because the strongest ideas will always surface. Take notes in your Design Journal when your work is being critiqued and do not edit the responses, whether you agree with them or not.

5. **In your Design Journal**, review your critique notes and reflect upon what was said. Ask yourself how you could combine, transform, or expand the layout that shows the most promise. Once you have determined a course of action, develop the idea into a comprehensive. A comprehensive, or comp, is the term used for the very detailed, polished representation of a finished design shown to the client for approval. For class projects, the comp is the last stage of the design process.

Inexperienced design students often want to rush through the above steps—often jumping directly onto the computer. They do so at the expense of their creative possibilities. Care and attention to detail throughout each step of the design process is essential. If any steps are neglected, the final result will be lacking. Good design is developed through investigation, experimentation, creativity, hard work and a genuine curiosity on the part of the design student. It takes time, thought and reflection. With practice, the design process will

become second nature—an essential part of how you approach problem solving.

GOOD DESIGN

Regardless of its aesthetic or style is distinguished by the quality of imagination from which it springs and the care with which it is executed. While I would be mistaken to dictate style, I would also be negligent to allow any of you to indulge the following bad habits. Following this list doesn't guarantee a successful design, just one free from *obvious* error. There will be no exceptions.

1. Do not center justify body text
2. Do not indent the first paragraph after a head
3. Mark subsequent paragraphs either by indenting or adding a paragraph space
4. Please do not use any of the following typefaces: Andale, Apple Chancery, Arial, Big Caslon, Bookman, Brush Script, Capitals, Chalkboard, Charcoal, Chicago, Comic Sans, Courier, Edwardian Script, Gadget, Geneva, Geeza Pro, Georgia, Gloucester, Helvetica, Herculanium, Impact, Lucida, Monaco, Papyrus, Skia, Techno, Textile, Trebuchet, Veranda, Zapf Chancery
5. Use prime marks for measurements, and use quotes or an apostrophe where appropriate
6. Use hyphens (-), en dashes (–) & em dashes (—) when appropriate
7. Always use ligatures fi and fl when setting text matter
8. One word space after sentences. Two word spaces is a throwback to the days of typewriters (monospaced alphabets)
9. Watch for widows and orphans
10. Never condense or expand type electronically
11. Never use electronic small caps
12. Small cap and cap heads should be judiciously letterspaced
13. Always spell check every document and make sure that your document makes sense
14. Read your documents aloud to yourself

MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

Materials will vary depending on the approach taken in the execution of differing projects. Students are encouraged to remember that this list is the start of a basic set of materials that will be called for in most subsequent

design classes. In addition to the materials below some additional items may be needed.

- ★ A sense of idealistic perfection
- ★ Design Journal (for a life-long assignment, starting with the first class)
- ★ Ellen Lupton. *Thinking with Type*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004
- ★ Digital Camera
- ★ Portable hard drive or high memory flash drive
- ★ Package of several CD-R's & sleeves
- ★ Tracing Pad 9" × 12"
- ★ Student-grade watercolor or other paper that accepts paint—9" × 12"
- ★ Pencils (I like 9B, 2B, and 4H)
- ★ Black Sharpie markers—from fine to thick
- ★ Watercolor paints or india ink and brushes
- ★ Eraser
- ★ Gluestick and Scissors
- ★ Steel ruler/Metal straight edge
- ★ Exacto Knife and a bevy of blades
- ★ Bone folder or scorer
- ★ Pushpins, clear
- ★ Schaedler Precision Rule Set—12" Double Set of "A & B" Rules
- ★ Speedball Lino Set No. 1 Linoleum Cutter
- ★ \$40 Metro Card for class trips
- ★ Student should have additional monies for Museum entry fees and miscellaneous

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

STEVE KENNEDY designer and artist is an adjunct professor in Communication Design at Parsons The New School for Design. He teaches Graphic Design, Typography, Photo-Editorial, and Letterpress. Steve is founder and owner of Interrobang Design Studio, and a founding trustee of the Graphic Communications Scholarship Fund. Winner 2002 Graphic Arts Fellowship Award, 2005 Parsons Faculty Development Grant. Exhibitions: Scafuro/Acosta Gallery Spring 2008.