Graphic Design (DSGN 266)

Graphic Design
DSGN 266-401
Meeting Times: Mondays, 10:15 – 1:15 PM EST
In person on Mondays in ADDM 020, online for start of semester

Professor
Nika Simovich Fisher
nikasf@upenn.edu

Remote Workspace/Zoom
https://zoom.us/j/7047994536?pwd=RThBZ0oyWHd5M2RZcmFNQUVwUFJHUT09

Class Site
gds21.labud.nyc

Course Description

Graphic design is completely about relationships between communication and form. In this studio course we will address a set of three interrelated questions: What media does graphic design include? How can graphic design be used to create systems— material forms and visual hierarchies? How can we use graphic design to highlight interest in communication – visually and through our other senses?

Over the course of fifteen weeks, we'll use different media (image generators, audio, writing, animation, and finally, a more traditional e-publication) to experiment with communication and form. We'll think about what components unify the process of each, and how they differ. Developing a point of view and expressing it through style will be discussed and analyzed, as will the role of design as a contributor and byproduct of culture.

This studio course will introduce the students with new domains, issues, and questions that face the contemporary designers. Students will engage with and develop design methods through intellectual exploration, research, analysis, ideation, and prototyping. Projects and assignments will lead the students how to communicate ideas visually, use appropriate tools and methods, formulate points of view and messages, and embrace fast transforming culture.

Readings

Readings will be posted on our agenda on a weekly basis. For each reading, you're required to post a response question to our evolving reading document.

Learning Outcomes & Objectives

The course educates students to become designers engaged in thoughtful, media agnostic and sustainable practices. Students will be prepared to:

- evaluate and critique the effectiveness of different communication models
- have a clear understanding of the process of design research, conceptualization and execution
- develop appropriate perspective through critical thinking and research
- create using various means and contemporary tools

Projects

Project 1 – Junk Mail

People often describe design as "good" or "bad" based on preconditioned biases. Throughout the semester, we'll explore formal qualities of composition and the relationship between our intentions and what the physical qualities of our designs are. Control is a common theme in both the art direction of our projects as well as how we talk about our decisions. Many online tools are considered low quality ways of working for a variety of reasons ranging from the aesthetics, the connotations as well as the limited functionality. Let's embrace this lack of control and see if we can communicate our ideas through these found and free production tools.

- Find an email that you would immediately delete without looking at. (Don't use anything with sensitive information in it. I'm imagining this will be a single page document.)
- Visually document the email in an honest and direct way (screenshot)
- Create a text document for steps 3 through 4 (Dropbox paper, google doc, or text edit document). Describe the purpose and physical description of the object in as much unbiased detail as possible.
- Transcribe all the written information of the mail into one document. If it has images, create an archive of all the images inside of it and save them out as

individual assets that you can utilize. Make notes on the hierarchy of the information (what is most important? why?)

◼ Write a condensed description of your mail in 280 characters or less. (What is at it's core?). Start with a few key words and then edit it down to a sentence or two.

Sketches
Create a poster using one of each of the described methods. Your posters should feel visually unique from one another, but should include a common thread that makes them all feel part of the same series. Some examples of ways of doing this are: Save all entries into a folder that you will submit on Canvas.

Instagram Story
Using Instagram stories and instagram's native editing features, create 1 poster that highlights the spirit of the email. Consider utilizing collage, text, drawings. While you're not allowed to design your post in a third party tool (like Photoshop), you can edit photos and save them to your camera roll to then use in the instagram editor. Feel free to edit the content down to the most important aspects of the mail.

Desktop Screenshot
Using your desktop, assemble a composition that presents the spirit of your email. Use all of the original content in both screenshots. In the first one, try to be as true to the original form as possible. In the second, feel free to edit/replace the assets and see how much of a divergent direction you can create while still housing the same information. Tools to consider: setting a desktop background, using application windows as part of the content (for example, a text edit document, or loading up parts of the photos in preview), using folders to create a collage.

3D Mock Up Set
Choose one rendering from MakeSweet.com and create a set of 5 assets that communicates the idea of your junk mail. For example – if you pick "Flying Flag," you'll have 5 images of the flying flag saved out with different text or images on the rendering. It should be the same rendering in all 5 images.

Cool Text Maker and Google Docs or Dropbox Paper
Use Cool Text Maker or Picasion to create a few headlines of the copy in your email. Using Dropbox paper or Google Docs assemble the poster. Use both the text art you created and the default options in Dropbox Paper or Google Docs.

Readings
The Medium is the Message, Chapter 1 – Marshall McCluhan (1964)

Due
01/24

Project 2 – Soundscape

Depending on the COVID-19 situation, either visit a museum or review a museum's online collection. Select one piece of art that stands out to you and research its history and author. Create an audio composition that highlights the artwork. Your audio track could either take an accessibility perspective and describe what the artwork looks like as though it were alt text online, or it could be more narrative focused and describe the experience of viewing the artwork from your perspective.

You'll also design one 11 × 17 print out to go along with the audio recording. One side of the print out will include a photo of the artwork, and the other will include a transcript of your audio recording.

Readings
TBD

Due
02/21

Project 3 – Looping Projection

Select an artwork from Rhizome's net art anthology (https://anthology.rhizome.org/) that you like. Imagine that you're tasked with creating a projection of the artwork for a party. Create three different looping animations that highlight different aspects of the artwork. The last few seconds of the animations should include the title of the work and the artist, and can help systematize the explorations.

Due
03/21

Project 4 – TBD

Due
04/25

Students Will Be Assessed On Three Primary Items:

Research and process: Students are expected to develop their projects through research and experimentation. Students should develop an independent habit of organizing themes and visual references and develop a personal library. Rather than landing on one idea right away, students are encouraged to experiment through form, typography, and content.

Presentation: Each project will end in a final critique and have presentation check ins throughout. Students should always be prepared to discuss their ideas and have an organized and visual presentation ready to go at the start of class.

Critique: Attendance to critiques is mandatory, and students are expected to actively contribute during their own and their peers' presentations.

Materials and Supplies

- Laptop/Computer
- Phone
- Adobe CC
- Internet connection

Schedule

Week	Activities
1	**01/12** Intros & Syllabus Code of conduct creation Student presentations
2	**01/24** Discuss reading P1: Junk Mail due Topic: What is a design concept?

3	**01/31** Topic: Writing for the ear Audio based design Introduce P2: Soundscape
4	**02/07** P2: Soundscape Check In Adobe Audio demo
5	**02/14** P2: Soundscape Check In Adobe InDesign demo Topic: Visual Poetry
6	**02/21** P2: Soundscape due
7	**02/28** Introduce P3: Looping Projection Topic: Digital Imagery Intro to Adobe AfterEffects
8	**03/14** Animation continued Topic: Motion graphics
9	**03/21** P3: Due
10	**03/28** P4 – Introduce final project Topic: Archives
11	**04/04** Project Check in
12	**04/11** Project Check in
13	**04/18** Project Check in

| 14 | **04/25**
P4 Due |