

Note: This is a blended web and traditional classroom course. Students will have access to computers in the ILC and or other public sources, such as libraries if they do not have their own. The web component of the course will meet standards for disabilities as needed working closely with the university staff. (The web component will be using DL2. The University is supporting this application in 2005.)

Trad 104: Design, Visual Culture and Language

Summer 2005, Art 103

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Catalog Description:

This course is designed to enable all undergraduate students to critically analyze, describe and participate in visual culture. It examines issues, methodologies, and theories in visual language. It focuses on the role designers have in shaping culture, the implications of design and the interconnected relationship to disciplines across the humanities.

Course Description

This course is designed to enable all undergraduate students to critically analyze, describe and participate in visual culture. It examines issues, methodologies, and theories and visual language of applied visual communication with an emphasis on graphic design. It focuses on the role designers have in shaping culture, the implications of design and the interconnected relationship to disciplines across the humanities.

This course is an introductory survey to the issues of dissemination and interpretation, theories of organization and evaluation, processes and methodologies of creation, and compositional principles of applied visual communication including print design (posters, signage and symbols), while emphasizing on digital design (web and interface design).

The course seeks to further your understanding of the role designers and artists play in shaping culture, the implications of design and the interconnected relationship to disciplines in the humanities and other applied design disciplines (industrial design and architecture).

Objectives and Themes

This web-blended course is an introductory survey to the issues of dissemination and interpretation, theories of organization and evaluation, processes and methodologies of creation, and compositional principles of applied visual communication. This includes the study of print design, advertising, environmental and emphasizes interactive digital environments.

The course seeks to further your understanding of the role designers and artists play in shaping culture, the implications of design and the interconnected relationship to disciplines in the humanities and other applied design disciplines (such as industrial design and architecture).

The course modules survey the critical issues of (primarily) applied design: private and public, collective and individual. Each module addresses issues of responsibility, participation, and interpretation with broad historical references. Design is approached as a discipline. While the modules contain aspects unique to design, they also share aspects found in other disciplines throughout the humanities.

The format is the same for each module's information delivery, group interaction, and assignments. Project (physical) outcomes are open-ended. Process development, conceptual statements, outcome documentation, and self-analysis are important components.

As mentioned earlier, the course is broken into four modules further detailed below.

Module 1: Introduction: Concepts and Skills

The first module surveys concepts and builds skills. It explores ways in which an idea can be represented visually, from abstract to the literal, and creates a body of knowledge for use throughout the course. This includes analyzing text or images in rhetorical as well as visual form. Various problem-solving methods and principles of visual organization are also covered.

Module 2: Identity

The second module studies private and public identity issues, including the roles that gender, education, ethnicity, and age play in shaping identity; the implications of publicly disseminated identities; and how design contributes to the understanding of ourselves and others. This module's project is to privatize a public space. Students alter an existing public space for the purpose of revealing, highlighting, and commenting on conventions, roles, and public messages.

Module 3: Ritual

The third module explores the conventions, codes, and objects that shape and support civil, religious, and legal rituals. This module's project involves building and flying a kite, or baking and presenting a cake for a specific event. Both activities illustrate how design (building the kite, baking the cake) and ritual (flying the kite, cutting and eating the cake) are interconnected.

Module 4: Story

The last module examines storytelling, specifically narrative structures, sequencing, and message making. Students analyze structures and relationships between words and images, explore sequencing, use metaphors, and study and apply semiotic theory. This module's project involves creating a personally rooted and meaningful public or private placed message using a word and image combination, a sequence, and/or a short animation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

General Education Humanities Courses

- Determine the nature and extent of information needed.
- Access, evaluate and use information and information sources effectively and efficiently.
- Have an understanding of economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses of information ethically and legally.

General Education Humanities Courses (Traditions and Cultures)

- Identify Design references to important periods, ideas, people and artifacts of the past.
- Analyze how perceptions, values, beliefs and customs influence individual and societal behavior; apply these analyses.
- Appreciate the art (including design and applied arts), history, politics, and philosophies of cultures other than their own, including non-western cultures.
- Identity and define one's own worldview, compare and contrast their worldview and other worldviews through written, spoken and visual communication presentations and defend their views through discussions and critiques.

Design: Culture and Language

- Develop and apply these abilities: Communication, Analysis and Problem Solving, Valuing, Social Interaction, Global Perspective, Responsible Citizenship, and Aesthetic Engagement.
- Identify one's relationship to culture and society, and the built environment.
- Analyze, articulate and apply theories of organization and interpretation (Gestalt, Semiotic, and Information Theory); methodologies of conceptualization (Visual Diagramming, and Problem-Solving); visual composition principles (Hierarchy and Metaphors).
- Develop and apply collaboration skills (Interaction, Management, and Self-Assessment).
- Research, develop basic writing forms in discussions, critiques and research.
- The course is based on a series of sequential journal entries, visual projects, online critiques and discussions, and a major research paper; resulting in original works that are visual, verbal, and tactile.

Projects, Discussions, Critiques, and Writing

The course is based on a series of sequential journal entries, visual projects, online critiques and discussions, and a major research paper; resulting in original works that are visual, verbal, and tactile.

Journal Entries

1. Identity: Found Public Messages Collection and Analysis (4)
2. Ritual: Community Observation and Analysis (4)
3. Place: Public and Private Place Observation and Analysis (4)
4. Interaction: Feedback Observation and Analysis (4)

Writing

- 2000 Word Research Paper on a Contemporary Design/Social Issue (1)
- (Question Listing/Keywords, Bibliography, Thesis Statement, Abstract, Outline, First/Final Draft)
- Self-Assessments and Project Presentation Outlines (4)

Visual Projects

1. Identity: Design of a Personal Identity Symbol (1)
2. Ritual: Design of a Celebratory Ritual/Ritual Object; Collaborative Project (1)
3. Place: Design of a Private/Public Space; Collaborative Project (1)
4. Interaction: Design of a Personal/Community Interaction Map (1)

Discussions and Critiques

- Readings, Journal Entries and Video Screening Discussions (12);
- Project Critiques (4)

COURSE FORMAT AND STRUCTURE

The course is a blend of scheduled and self-paced activities. You will be required to view lectures at a given time and complete assignments by set dates. But you will also be given the flexibility to define and shape projects, choose discussion times and select research topics.

Instruction takes the form of online lectures, real-time group critiques, and asynchronous chatroom discussions as outlined in the course schedule. If you have a documented disability or difficulty accessing the class website and need accommodations, please inform your professor or teaching assistant immediately.

Each week a new set of lectures, video screenings, reading and journal entry assignments, and discussion topics come online to the course homepage.

Lectures

Lectures a combination of traditional classroom and web based viewings. All are mandatory and recommended on Mondays (a schedule will be distributed if live or webbased to be announced at the beginning of the course).

Video Screenings

Video screenings are mandatory and held at times and places indicated on the course syllabus or videos will be available at the library.

Readings

Readings (.pdf) can be download from the course site. Post written reading responses to your personal web space indicated on the course syllabus.

Journal Entries

Entries should be posted to your personal web space each Friday by 9am.

Projects

Project objectives, learning outcomes and processes are described in writing and made available (.pdf) according to the course syllabus. Each of the 4 projects is due on the last Monday of the respective module.

Discussions and Critiques

Live critiques are mandatory and held at times indicated on the course syllabus.

Computer and Monitor

A Macintosh (ie: iMac or iBook) or Windows (ie: Gateway, IBM or Dell) compatible desktop or laptop computer with 256 (megabytes) of RAM (random access memory) and 1 GB (gigabyte) of free hard drive space is needed is required. Monitor must able to display 1024 x 768 resolution and 'millions of colors'.

The class website is accessible at any computer with the minimum requirements described above. On-campus access to the course is available in one of the many UA computer labs. These include the Integrated Learning Center 'Information Commons' and the Center for Computing and Information Technology (CCIT). Additionally, you may access the website at a private location or public space, such as a city library.

Internet Connection and Web Browser

On-campus (UA) access, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), cable modem or wireless broadband would be ideal. A web connection and browser is required, such as Internet Explorer 6. The website will appear the same regardless of browser or platform (PC or Mac). Website interface will be compliant with the guidelines for students with disabilities.

The course website is password protected for copyright reasons. You will receive a username and password via email on the first day of class.

You are expected to interact with the website on a regular basis. To have an understanding of the course content and complete assignments in an outstanding manner you need to view all of the lectures and participate in all of the discussions and critiques.

You will be taught how to post your work for review and grading. It will be reviewed online immediately after the respective due date and time. It is your responsibility to confirm your work has been posted, excuses (ie: technical problems) or extensions can not be given. Each activity will be graded according to the point system as described below.

Work not presented at the respective critique or posted by the set time will be considered late and receive 0 points. You will receive a midterm and final grade via email. Grades may be discussed only outside of classtime and via email.

Honors Contracts are available for this course, please see <http://www.honors.arizona.edu/> for an honors contract form and make an appointment to discuss possible Honors experiences.

Grading Policy

This course uses the regular grades: A, B, C, D, and E. Final grade will be G.P.A. (4-0 point system). A =Excellent. B =Good. C =Satisfactory. D =Poor. E =Failure.

I = the grade of I will be awarded only, when all but a minor portion of the course work has been satisfactorily completed. Students should make arrangements with the instructor to receive an incomplete grade before the end of the semester.

Grading Criteria

4 Visual Projects 45 points
Weekly Personal Journals 16 points
On-line Discussion 19 points
Research Paper 20 points

Final Grade

Sum of the above and calculated to the below scale:

A 90-100 points

Excellent development, engagement and demonstrated Understanding of course content and learning outcomes

B 80-89 Points

Good development, engagement and demonstrated Understanding of course content and learning outcomes

C 70-79 Points

Adequate development and demonstrated understanding of course content and learning outcomes, but not fully developed

D 60-69 points

Little development, engagement or demonstrated understanding of course content and learning outcomes

E 00-59 Points

No development, engagement or demonstrated understanding of course content and learning outcomes

Incomplete

Awarded only under extenuating circumstances and when the majority of the course work has been satisfactorily completed. Professor must be petitioned in writing prior to end of semester

Midterm Evaluation: At week 8, a grade reflecting 40% of the grade will be issued.

Attendance Policy

University students are expected to attend classes on a regular basis. To be able to have an understanding of the course content and complete the assignments in an outstanding manner one needs to participate in all of the lectures, discussions and demonstrations of the class. More than 3 unexcused absences will result in the lowering of final grade one full letter.

Classroom Behavior

Student Code of Conduct: The aim of education is the intellectual, personal, social, and ethical development of the individual. The educational process is ideally conducted in an environment that encourages reasoned discourse, intellectual honesty, openness to constructive change and respect for the rights of individuals. Self-discipline and a respect for the rights of others in the university community are necessary for the fulfillment of such goals.

Code of Academic Integrity: Integrity is expected of every student in all academic work. The guiding principle of academic integrity is that a student's submitted work must be the student's own. This principle is furthered by the student Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures established by ABOR Policies 5-308/5-403, all provisions of which apply to University of Arizona students.

Both the Code of Conduct and Code of Academic Integrity can be found at <http://www.arizona.edu/~dos/SPC/policies.htm>

Required Text:

Seeing is Believing, An Introduction to Visual Communication, Arthur Asa Berger
Introduction to Two Dimensional Form and Function, John Bowers
Miscellaneous Articles will be available as PDF's on class website.

Sample Schedule

1.1

- Introduction to Course
- Reading Assignment: United States Government, 105th Congress, First Session, The Constitution of the United States of American and The Declaration of Independence, (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1984), 21-29.
- Rick Poynor, "First Things Manifesto 2000" in Adbusters, 27 (Autumn 1999): 52.
- Technical overviews of course requirements and resources.

1.2

- Screening: 'Why Man Creates', Saul Bass
- Discussion Reading

2.1

- Introduction to Module 1: Identity (Roles, Appropriateness and Ownership)
- Reading: Ed McDonald, "Her Majesty", Plazm 13, (1996): 12-13.
- John Bowers, "Identity". Introduction to Two-Dimensional Design: Understanding Form and Function

Project 1 Representation

2.2

- Screening: Design Disciplines: Video 'Merchants of Cool', PBS
- Project 1: Identity
- Discussion Reading

3.1

- Lecture Design Disciplines and Contemporary Practices
- Reading Assignment: J Abbott Miller, "The Bodies' Politics", Statements, Volume 10, Number 2, (Winter/Spring 1995): 14-19.

3.2

- Lecture Design Roles
- Discussion Reading

4.1

- Lecture Design Processes and Methodologies
- Reading Assignment: Solutions DVIP, Inc., "Male Privilege and Sexism," in Choices (Portland: Solutions DVIP, 2000), 53-54.

4.2

Critique Project 1: Identity

Discussion Reading

5.1

- Place (Space, Boundaries, Function, History and Sustainability)
- Reading: Joshua Meyerwitz, No Sense of Place, Pride of Place

5.2

- Screening: 'Frank Gehry' AIA
- **Project 2: Place Introduction**
- Discussion Reading.

6.1

- Lecture Visual Language
- Reading: Naomi Klein, "New Branded World", "A Tale of Three Logos: The Swoosh, the Shell and the Arches" in No Logo: Money, Marketing and the Growing Anti-Corporate Movement, (New York: Picador, 1999), 3-26, 365-396.

6.2

- Research Paper Assigned, Research Methods Reviewed, On-line Exercises and Demonstration
- Discussion Reading.

7.1

- Video Lecture Time
- Reading: Phil Patton, "The Tyranny of the Swoosh" in AIGA Journal of Graphic Design, Volume 14, Number 2, (Spring 1996), 10-13.

7.2

Critique Project 2: Place

Midterm Evaluation

8.1

- Introduction Interaction (Navigation, Metaphors and Responsibility)
- "Editorial", in Colors (October/November, 2000): 14, 16, 18, 27, 29, 63, 71, 83, 84-90.

8.2

- **Assignment: Interaction Project**
- Reading Discussion

9.1

- Lecture Navigation and Classification
- How has technology changed interaction and understanding?
- What are the major roles, components and theories of interpersonal and communal communication?
- What role do metaphors play in aiding interaction?
- How does design contribute to meaningful interaction?

9.2

- Video: 'The Powers of Ten', Eames
- Reading Discussion

10.1

- Lecture Play, Games and Interaction
- In-class demonstrations

10.2

- **Critique Project 3: Interaction**
- Reading Discussion

11.1

- Introduction Ritual Module
- Lecture on Icons, Logos and Stereotypes
- Video" Bill Viola', Henry Sayre
- Reading: John Bowers, "Roles". Introduction to Two-Dimensional Design: Understanding Form and Function (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1999), 7.

11.2

- **Project 4: Ritual**
- Discuss Reading

12.1

- Lecture: Design Ritual
- Video: Ritual in transfigured Time, Maya Deren

12.2

- Discuss Reading

13.1

- Video: Trinha T Minha
- Reassemblage: from the firelight to the screen
- Reading: Claude Levi Strauss

13.2

- **Critique Project 4: Ritual**
- Reading Discussion

14.1

Summary of Modules

14.2

- Screening: Saul Bass
- Reading assignment: Renzo di Renzo, ed. "Once upon a time", "The People vs. The People", "Boring", "Yellow Pages"

15.1

- Reading: Richard Saul Wurman, Information Anxiety
- 'Manufactured Consent', Chomsky

15.2

Discussions, Final Closing