

GRA 617

Visual Communication Theory & Practice

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No man can reveal to you aught but that which already lies
half asleep in the dawning of our knowledge.

– Khalil Gibran

Lectures: Wednesday 1–4 and Thursday 9–12 ■ **Labs:** Thursday 1–5 and Friday: 10–5 (lunch break 12–1)

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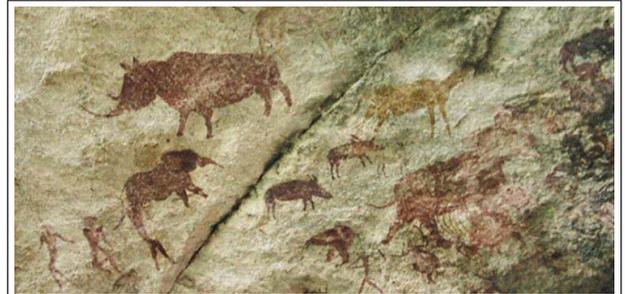
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Understanding what we see

Graphics 617 is an introduction to the profession of graphic design. This course will give you theoretical and hands-on experience to the methods, techniques and underlying principles of visual communication. The ability to visually solve problems is what defines graphic design, and its effectiveness is measured by a designer's ability to convey the message they seek to send through a variety of media including web sites, identities, posters, advertisements and magazines. In this class we will examine the theories and tools that can be used to achieve effective graphic design.



Ancient cave paintings done in the blood of animals killed for food.

Learning Objectives

To make you aware of the way you visually perceive the messages around you and tools that shape those messages.

To give you the vocabulary used to describe the visual presentation of effective communication. Even if you don't become a designer, you are likely to work with them. Knowing the language will help you to be much more effective.

To foster your ability to critically analyze visual messages. Any job as an effective communicator is enhanced by the ability to explicitly understand and critique the power of visual and verbal messages.

To provide hands-on expertise in the software used by design and communication professionals.

Course workload and sketching

Due to our time this will be an intensive course and the pace will be demanding. Many of you will be entering the world of visual problem solving for the first time; sketching, designing and using graphic design software may be foreign to you. Jumping into these unknowns may frighten you, however, do not let this feeling paralyze you. By immersing yourself in these new activities you will learn rather quickly that you will be able to produce work you will be proud of and that is effective in communicating your particular message.

Start on paper, not on the computer. Thumbnail sketching is the best way to work out the parameters of your design and to quickly explore different options. The computer will occupy enormous amounts of your time if you let it, so work out the basics of your design in advance.

We strongly encourage you to **back up all files as you work**, and to keep electronic copies of all lab assignments. A free Dropbox.com or Google Drive account is also recommended to backup your work.

We do not intend to waste your time; please don't waste ours. **Turn off mobile phones before entering class.** Also, please take care of personal business before class so you don't have to leave during class. Coming and going is very disruptive, but we do understand the need to leave for emergencies and unforeseen issues. Thank you in advance for adhering to these rules.

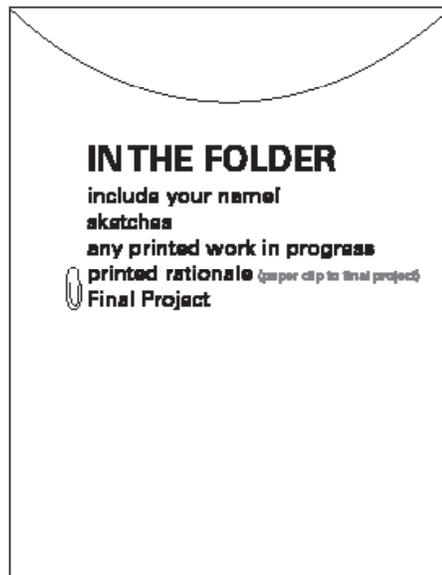
Save electronic versions of all projects and re-dos to the class server. We will mark up your printouts, but base some grading on the electronic files you submit.

You are expected to **attend all classes and labs** – labs are where you will learn the nuts and bolts of design software. Both parts are critical aspects of this course. If you have a genuine emergency give your professor a written explanation to avoid being penalized.

Before each major project, you will receive an assignment sheet detailing the expectations and requirements for that assignment. Please feel free to ask questions if you don't understand the project or its requirements.

Submit your projects in **9" x 12" envelopes or larger**. On the outside of the envelope, place your name, course section, and project description. **Please don't glue, stick or seal the envelope in any way. *Some professors may waive the printing of assignments, please consult your individual professor.**

On most projects, we will require you to turn in thumbnails or rough sketches so that we can see your process before going to the computer. **For all projects, you are required to put electronic files** in the class folder on the Newhouse server and on the class blog. Detailed instructions for this will be provided in lecture.



Get art direction from your professor or instructional assistant while working on each project. This is a critical aspect of improving your work significantly before you hand it in. Be careful about taking design advice from anyone else. **Trust your instincts**, and don't let too much outside input rob you of your focus. **All projects require written rationales**; failure to turn in a rationale will result in a significant grade deduction.

Re-dos

You will be able to earn redo points by redoing and handing a project in again. Re-dos may help you earn up to one letter grade, but are graded more strictly than originals, and significant grade increases aren't easy. Only grades lower than a B+ may be redone. **Maximum redo grade awarded is a B+.**

Re-dos must be submitted along with the original project, the original grade sheet, the new design and a new rationale in an envelope. Your redo rationale must include typographic style sheets, an explanation of what you changed and the reasons for your changes. Re-dos will be due one week after the projects are returned in class.

Grading

Major design projects will build on the skills you acquire throughout the semester. These projects should be in final, polished form, free of design flaws and errors in punctuation and grammar. The four projects will add up to 80% of your semester grade). You will also post your final projects on the blog.

GRADING SCALE

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D	69-65
F	64-

TEXTS

Required

Thinking with Type
Ellen Lupton

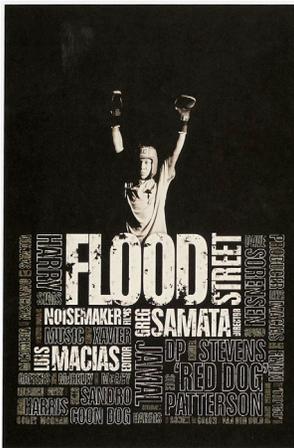
Recommended

Graphic Design Basics,
6th edition

Amy E. Arnston

QuickStart Guides

Adobe PS/IL/IND CC



OPEN LAB

Mon - Thur : 9 am - 9 pm

Fri: 9 am - 5 pm

Sat & Sun: 1 pm - 9 pm.

Closed July 4.

BLOG ADDRESS

gra617.expressions.syr.edu

Percentage of your grade

Project 1, Résumé	15%	Blogging	5%
Project 2, Poster	15%	Participation & Lab	5%
Project 3, Interface	25%	Design Star	5%
Project 4, Tablet Design	30%	Blogging and Participation	15%
Total for all Projects	85%		

Projects are graded with professional standards in mind. Specific criteria will be provided with assignment sheets, but general guidelines are:

- A:** Excellent work and free of errors
- B:** Clear concept, but some problems in execution
- C:** Unclear concept, problems in clarity and execution
- D:** Unclear concept, major problems in clarity and execution
- F:** Concept wrong, fatally flawed execution

You will be required to turn in rationales, as well as thumbnail sketches for rough drafts, for most projects. This is to help us better understand your process of conceptualization. You'll receive information about rationales with your first project. As each project is due, you'll show your projects in lab at the end of the week.

Each project folder and individual files, when turned in on the class server, adhere to this standard naming convention: **last-first-project** or in the case of a redo **last-first-project-redo**. Example: harper-ken-Résumé-redo

Deadlines

In the world of communications, deadlines are absolutes. Asking us to accept a late project may not seem like a big deal, but asking your managing editor to hold the presses will cost tens of thousands of dollars, and finishing projects late for a client can cost you that client in the real world. **Get used to deadlines now** and plan accordingly.

Things can go wrong in the computer lab. Files can be corrupted, computers crash, disks stop working, servers crash, etc. **Save** your work. **Save** early. **Save** often. **Save** extra copies on a backup flash drive.

The labs open and closed at designated times. Losing your work, corrupted files, and server crashes are not acceptable reasons to seek project extensions, to hand in projects late or to come to class tardy.

Discussing design will help you refine your own thoughts and opinions, and getting thoughtful input from others will hone your eye and skills. For this reason, class discussions, critiques and presentation are critical. **You are expected to participate**, and are encouraged to ask questions to clarify concepts and principles discussed in class. Attendance and participation are taken into consideration in grading.

Class blog

The paths you will walk in your journey to solve visual problems are roads that graphic designers face on a daily basis. In an effort to involve yourself in the world and to begin to develop a deeper understanding of the material covered in class and your textbook, you will all be engaging in discussions through use of a class blog. Each of you will be given your blog log-in information the first week of class. With the exception of the résumé project, each week you will post entries into this blog including a .jpg and description of the project completed that week. We will use WordPress, at an address that will be provided to you, as the host for the site. You will be led through the log-in and posting procedures as well as a lesson on blogging during the first week of class. The instructional assistants will be grading your posts based on your adherence to deadlines and the quality of the content you post.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY EXPECTATIONS IN THIS CLASS

Projects and rationales will be the fruits of your own labor, not others'.

Completing computer work for another student is unacceptable.

When sourcing or using professional or other work that is not your own you will fully source that information and if visual, provide a copy or link to that document.

NEWHOUSE RULES RELATED TO ACADEMIC HONESTY

1. Any piece of work bearing a student's name is assumed by the School to guarantee that the thoughts, expressions, editorial and photographic material not credited to another are literally the student's own. If such credit is not given for another's work, the student shall be guilty of plagiarism.

2. It is not permissible for any student to submit the same material, with substantially the same style, structure, or wording, to instructors in two or more courses.

Academic honesty

At Syracuse University, academic integrity is expected of every community member in all endeavors. Academic integrity includes a commitment to the values of honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, and respect. These values are essential to the overall success of an academic society. In addition, each member of the university community has a right to expect adherence to academic integrity from all other community members.

An individual's academic dishonesty threatens and undermines the central mission of the university. It is unfair to other community members who do not cheat, because it devalues efforts to learn, to teach, and to conduct research. Academic dishonesty interferes with moral and intellectual development, and poisons the atmosphere of open and trusting intellectual discourse.

<http://provost.syr.edu/provost/Units/academicprograms/academicintegrity/index.aspx#policies>

Statement Regarding Disability-Related Accommodations

Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to the instructor and review those accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For further information, see the ODS web site, Office of Disability Services at: <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu> or contact the office directly at: Phone: (315) 443-4498; Telecommunications Device for the Deaf: (315) 443- 1371; E-Mail: odssched@syr.edu

I may revise the syllabus as necessary, or as we progress through the semester. You'll be notified in class of any changes to deadlines or topics. If you need more information about any class topic, please see me.

<http://provost.syr.edu/provost/Units/academicprograms/DISABILITYSERVICES/index.aspx>

Statement regarding use of student work

To help you get a sense of each project we usually show examples of previous student work that we found to be successful. Please let this serve as a notice that work produced in the class may be selected for strictly educational purposes in future sections of this class. If you do not want your work to be shown for any reason please contact us and we will be sure not to include your work in this manner.

Rhymes With Orange



Class schedule

DATE	LECTURE/LAB	DEADLINES
Wed. 7/2	1. Introduction: What is graphic design 2. Principles of Identity, Branding Yourself	Résumé/Wordmark assigned
Thurs. 7/3	3. Organizing information and creating hierarchy 4. Introduction to Typography LAB: Introduction Labs and printing. Workspace Management. Introduction to Suitcase font collection. Introduction to InDesign (setting up document, text areas, image frames, guides, character and paragraph palettes). Blog setup, Expressive Type In-Class, hyperlinks.	Reading: Syllabus, Lupton "Letter" Typography scavenger hunt Expressive Type
Wed. 7/9	5. Visual perception: Laws of Gestalt and how we see 6. Type handling, expressive typography	Reading: Lupton "Text"
Thurs. 7/10	7. Kelly Brown from the Newhouse CDC - On Résumé Content 8. Working with grids, the structure of design 9. Brainstorming: conceptualization and visualization LAB: Continuation of InDesign (tabs, transparency, drop shadows, editing type, hyperlinks). Introduction to Photoshop (opening and editing images, saving for use in other programs). Picture research using online stock photo houses.	Reading: Lupton "Grid" Résumé/Wordmark sketches due Poster/Ad project assigned
Fri. 7/11	LAB: Continue working on Résumé/Wordmark project Critique Résumé/Wordmark project	Résumé project due
Wed. 7/16	10. Semiotics and layers of meaning in design 11. Working with type and image	
Thurs. 7/17	12. Understanding color and how it applies to design 13. Photography theories and use + Visual ethics LAB: Continuation of InDesign (Text wraps and placing illustrator and image files). Introduction to animation techniques in InDesign.	Poster/Ad sketches due User Interface project assigned
Fri. 7/18	LAB: Continue working on Poster/Ad project Critique Poster/Ad project	Poster/Ad project due
Wed. 7/23	14. Introduction to interface I 15. Interface design II	
Thurs. 7/24	LAB: Using Photoshop to design web pages (layers, layer comps, guides, slicing, optimizing). Brief Introduction to Illustrator. Work on interface documents.	Interface wireframes due Tablet design assigned
Fri. 7/25	LAB: Continue working on Interface project Critique Interface project	Interface project due
Wed. 7/30	16. Tablet design I 17. Tablet design II	
Thurs. 7/31	Graphic Design Star Competition LAB: Adobe DPS; Tablet structure and setup, Liquid layouts, Alternative layouts. Slideshows, audio and video. Scrolling frames. Work on Tablet Project.	Tablet design sketches due
Fri. 8/1	LAB: Work on Tablet Project	
Wed. 8/6	18. Alternative story forms and informational graphics LAB: Work on Tablet Project	
Thurs. 8/7	LAB: Using the folio builder panel, Creating a folio. Using the content viewer. Viewing your folio on a tablet. Critique Tablet project.	
Fri. 8/8	LAB: Continue working on Magazine project, In-class showcase	Tablet design project due