

It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.

– John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*

Introduction to Graphic Design

Overview & Objectives

This course is an intensive exploration of the fundamental principles of graphic design through a series of weekly studio assignments and critiques, supplemented by short readings, class discussions and lectures.

The class focuses on developing the ability to skillfully manipulate and combine core design elements such as type, shape and image, to transmit meaning and values. We will investigate the use of communicative tools such as composition, color, hierarchy, scale, rhythm, and visual metaphor.

To foster a better understanding and appreciation of craft and materials, in the first half of the class you will work by hand and explore simple analog processes like the Xerox machine. In the second half of the class we will transition to working on the computer and use Adobe Photoshop, InDesign and After Effects software (there will be a few tutorials to facilitate this transition however this class is not software-oriented and you will be partly responsible for teaching yourselves).

The additive, systematic nature of the assignments are designed to help you develop a working process that leads to a body of accomplished visual work, as well as a vocabulary for critically engaging that work, laying a solid foundation for further study.

Graphic Design as a Discipline

Graphic design is qualitative rather than quantitative. There are no ‘correct’ solutions to problems but there will be solutions that feel highly compelling, original, and appropriate to you (and hopefully your client). As a creative process, good design is not by nature efficient. Strong solutions are sometimes arrived at quickly but more often slowly and progressively. The development of a rigorous creative process will help add rationality and consistency to your work.

Graphic designers are primarily concerned with creating and managing visual forms (usually combining type and images) that communicate a particular message, to a particular audience, in a meaningful and powerful way. Graphic Design can alternately be used to identify, inspire, inform, persuade, or provoke, and designers work across a variety of media, often collaborating with a team of specialists to execute their visions.

The following are a range of specialties that are generally included within the field of graphic design:

- Branding: identity design for institutions, companies (non-media specific)
- Interactive Design: interface design for websites, software, kiosks
- Motion Graphics: film/tv title sequences, ads, television identities
- Print Design: design for books, posters, magazines, newspapers
- Environmental Design: wayfinding, signage, and exhibition design
- Information Design: tables, charts, diagrams (maps are a sub-specialty)
- Packaging Design: food and product packaging
- Typeface design is a sub-specialty
- Advertising is a separate discipline but designers also work within ad agencies

ART S131 01
Introduction to
Graphic Design

Wed/Fri 1.30–6.30
Green Hall, Room 210

Class wiki-page:
art.yale.edu/S131

Instructor:
Julian Bittiner
julian.bittiner@yale.edu
Tel. (203) 654-6974
(Office hours by appointment)

Course Outline

- Introductory assignment: Abstract Drawing
- Readings: Norman Potter, Bruno Munari, Charles Eames

1 – Design as Observation

- Assignment: 10 Collections, Personal Collection
- Readings: Paul Elliman

2 – Design as Form

- Assignment: Expressive Abstraction 1 & 2
- Readings: Armin Hoffman, Ellen Lupton, Mevis & van Deursen

- Yale Center for British Art field trip: Friday, July 16

3 – Design as Visual Language

- Assignments: Poster Remix, Announcement Card
- Readings: Beatrice Warde, Phil Baines, Jan Tschichold
- Lecture: Typographic Posters 1900-2008

- Provisional Midterm Grade: Thursday, July 22

4 – Design as Identity

- Assignment: Branding your Collection
- Readings: Douglas Holt, John O'Reilly
- Lecture: Identity Design Systems
- (Optional screening: Helvetica)

5 – Design in Motion

- Assignment: Animated Announcement

- Final Review: Friday, August 6

Attendance

Attendance and punctuality to all classes and field trips is expected. Three late arrivals (more than 10 min.) is equivalent to one un-excused absence. Each un-excused absence results in a full letter grade reduction of your final grade (e.g. A becomes B). More than three unexcused absences results in a failing grade. (In most cases a Dean's excuse is needed to nullify an absence).

If you miss a class you are responsible for catching up and getting any assignments or readings that were handed out. Please ask a classmate and/or check the class wiki-page before contacting me.

Evaluation

You will not receive a grade for each individual assignment but rather, assessed on your progress throughout the class and on the final body of work you produce, such that you demonstrate:

- an understanding of fundamental design concepts
- thoughtful and original responses to assignments
- effectiveness and depth of process
- active participation in critiques and discussions
- care in craft and presentation

Grades will be weighted 60% on final body of work, 40% on process and class participation.

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