

J349T Print Design / Spring 2004

SYLLABUS

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Last updated: 02.03.04

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Unique Number: 06260

Assistant Professor (Instructor)

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Class: CMA 4.308 / MWF / 9 - 10 am

Lab: CMA 4.308 / W / 2 - 4 pm

Web Site: <http://www.utexas.edu/coc/journalism/SOURCE/J349T/index.html>

(To get to any of my course Web sites, start at the School of Journalism Web site, and follow the links: PEOPLE > Faculty > Shawn M. McKinney. Then, on my Bio page, look under "Course Web Sites," in the column on the left side.)

Prerequisites

Upper division standing, J330 and J336, with a grade of at least C in each; a passing score on the College of Communication Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation Test; and a passing score on the School of Journalism Word Processing Test.

Objectives

This course extends and builds on basic visual design principles and practices introduced in J336 Visual Design, especially as they relate to journalism, print and publication design. We will place special emphasis on the role of the publication as both a medium of communication and a tool of cultural production. Students will use Macintosh computers, images, text and hand skills in order to further develop design, production and presentation abilities.

This course will present students with opportunities to consider such vital relationships as: form/content, text/image, methods/materials, cover/page, reporting/packaging and magazine/newspaper. As aspiring editors, students will also be asked to set aside personal biases in order to address the needs and interests of varied and multicultural communities. This course may employ lectures, lab assignments, handouts and readings, class reports and exercises, design and writing projects, and exams to achieve its goals.

Textbooks (Required)

The following textbooks, available for purchase at the UT Co-op Bookstore West (2244 Guadalupe, 512.476.7211), are required to participate in this course:

- Visual QuickStart Guide: InDesign 2 for Macintosh + Windows
Santee Cohen (Peachpit Press; 2002)
- Visual QuickStart Guide: Photoshop 7 for Windows + Macintosh
Elaine Weinmann (Peachpit Press; 2002)
- Newspaper Designer's Handbook with CD-ROM
Tim Harrower (McGraw-Hill; 5th edition; 2001)

Course Packet (Required)

A J336 Course Packet will be made available for purchase at Longhorn Copies (2520 Guadalupe, 512.476.4498). This will include handouts, readings and texts that supplement lectures or lab assignments. Such texts will be a major resource for exam materials.

Handouts (Required)

Additional handouts or readings (e.g., assignments, project briefs) may be distributed during lecture hours and/ or published on the course Web site.

Recommended Reading

The following books are recommended (but not required) to further supplement and inform the issues and concepts introduced in this course:

- Type in Use
Alex W. White (W.W. Norton & Co., 2nd edition; 1999)
- Envisioning Information
Edward Tufte (Graphics Press; 1990)
- The Form of News
Kevin G. Barnhurst and John Nerone (Guilford Press; 2002)
- Type Rules!
Ilene Strizver (North Light Books; 2001)
- Modern Magazine Design
William Owen (Rizzoli; 1991)
- Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture
Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright (Oxford Univ. Press; 2001)
- Publication Design Annual, No. 38
Society of Publication Designers (Rockport Publishers; 2003)
- Design Literacy (Continued)
Steven Heller (Allworth Press; 1999)
- The Magazine Publishing Industry
Charles P. Daly, Patrick Henry, Ellen Ryder (Pearson, Allyn & Bacon; 1996)

Magazines and journals that may also prove of interest include: Eye, Communication Arts, Émigré, Print, I.D., Step, HOW, Baseline, AIGA Journal and Adbusters.

Lab Sessions, Unique Numbers

During registration, each student is assigned a “unique number,” corresponding with a required lab session. Lab sessions enable students to familiarize themselves with computer applications used in this course. They also provide students with a means of acquiring basic design and computer skills necessary for visual design production.

Open (additional, optional) lab hours may also be available, for working on projects and assignments. A teaching assistant will be assigned to monitor open lab hours for this course, and will be available to answer questions or provide assistance, as needed.

Visit the UT-Austin Web site <<http://www.utexas.edu/>> for further information about unique numbers and lab session times and locations. Follow the links: Academics > Registrar > Course Schedules > (current semester) > Course Offerings: College of Communication > School of Journalism > Journalism-J-undergraduate courses. Be sure the heading at the top lists the current semester. Scroll down until you find this course.

Students with an IF account may also use the Communications lab on the 3rd floor. This lab provides access to basic Macintosh hardware and software (e.g., Microsoft Word, Adobe Photoshop), but may not match the facilities available on the fourth floor.

Supplies (Required)

A group of basic supplies, specified by the instructor, is required to participate in this course. Visual design production typically necessitates a significant outlay of financial resources; however, the instructor makes sure the supplies remain essential, affordable and available. The total cost of supplies ranges from \$100 to \$200 U.S. dollars (closer to \$100 if purchased as a “supply kit” from the University Co-op BookstoreWest).

Click on “Supplies,” on the course Web site (under “Course Info”), for an itemized list and specific information related to J349T. (If a student has retained the majority of the Supply Kit from J336 Visual Design, they may not need to buy an entire Kit for J349T, but they will need to buy a specific number of black presentation boards.)

Grades: Method of Evaluation

Final grade (GPA) is based on 1,000 possible total points. Items are tabulated as follows:

1. Design projects = 600 points.
2. Writing project(s) = 200 points.
3. Lab attendance and assignments = 200 points.

This course uses the 10-point grading scale, as follows: A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; F = 59 or less. Thus, final point totals = final grades, as follows: A = 900-1000; B = 800-899; C=700-799; D = 600-699; F = 599 or less.

Grades: Confirmation

Students are responsible for confirming that grades are recorded correctly. Report recording errors to the instructor immediately. In accordance with current University policy, a

student must submit (to the instructor) written permission to post grades, if the student wishes to be able to view grades online, and if the University supports such a policy. Such permission may be formally requested near the beginning of each semester.

Grades: Questions

If a student has a question about a grade they are asked to follow this procedure:

1. Wait 24 hours after receiving the grade.
2. Submit a brief, typed memo or e-mail, with your question, to the instructor. Explain why you think the grade is incorrect. Explain what you think the grade should be, and why. Write with care, logic and precision.
3. Make an appointment to discuss the memo or e-mail with the instructor. After the meeting, the instructor will provide you with a brief, typed memo or e-mail explaining the final decision. The decision will be based on the strength of your written argument and basic rules of logic (regarding class goals and objectives).

Lecture Attendance

Attendance is strongly recommended. Important information is delivered during lectures, information that may have changed since it was initially delivered (e.g., project deadlines or requirements, exam materials), and that may serve as a primary resource for exams. Students are strongly advised to follow these basic guidelines:

1. **BE PUNCTUAL.** It is unprofessional and disruptive to be LATE. It can distract the instructor, as well as students who are trying to pay attention.
2. **BE RESPONSIBLE.** If you miss class, borrow someone's notes. Get a copy of handouts you missed (usually on our website). Do not bother the instructor.
3. **BE COURTEOUS.** Do not: put your feet up on a chair, conduct long or loud discussions with a neighbor, make disruptive noises, ask sarcastic questions, use a cell phone, check e-mail, read unassigned material, or do work for another class.
4. **BE RESPECTFUL.** If you have to come late to class, or leave early, clear this with the instructor ahead of time. Open and close doors, or move seats, quietly.
5. **BE PREPARED.** Always come to class prepared for discussion questions. Bring your handouts to every class. Check the online schedule to see what's next.

Lab Attendance, Assignments (20% of Final Grade)

Lab attendance is required. Each student begins the semester with a total of 100 points * for lab attendance / participation. Points earned in a lab each session consist of 5 points for attendance and 5 points for completing an assignment. Points are deducted each time a student misses lab, or fails to complete a lab assignment properly. If there is no assignment during lab, all 10 points for that session will be based on attendance.

Each of the first 3 times a student misses lab, 5 points will be deducted from the student's total lab attendance score. For each absence after that, 10 points are deducted from the total attendance score (whether or not the student completes the assignment). Students will also be penalized 5 points each time they fail to complete a lab assignment properly, as determined by the lab instructor (TA), or course instructor (Professor).

* Note: In calculating a student's final grade average for this course, the lab attendance / participation score is counted twice. Thus, lab attendance / participation = 20% of a student's final grade, even though a student may only earn a maximum of 100 points.

Lecture attendance guidelines also apply during lab sessions, with these additional points:

1. DO NOT surf the Web or use e-mail during a required lab session.
2. DO NOT leave personal (or other) belongings in the lab.
3. DO NOT bring any food or drink into the lab.
4. Keep computers and work surfaces dry, clean and orderly.
5. Clean up your own mess (including print-outs) after working in the lab.
6. Use personal headphones if you plan to listen to music.

Click on "Rules," on the course Web site (under "Course Info"), for further guidelines.

Design Projects (60% of Final Grade)

Taken together, design projects = 40% of a student's final grade. They are due at the beginning of a lecture, unless otherwise notified by instructor. Projects are graded by the instructor and / or teaching assistants. A project list and examples of student work may be available for viewing on the course Web site.

Design Projects: Guidelines: ORIGINALITY

Student work must be original work. Although students are encouraged to discuss their work with others, students may only submit their own, original work for evaluation.

Design Projects: Guidelines: EXHIBITION

Student work may be exhibited. Projects and assignments submitted for evaluation in this course are subject to being exhibited, published or reproduced, on the course Web site or elsewhere, in print or digital form, for educational purposes only.

Design Projects: Guidelines: EVALUATION

FOLLOW THE RULES. Study project briefs carefully. Design projects (and other works of art), are inherently subjective. They resist attempts to evaluate them on a purely quantitative basis. Thus, neither hard work nor a record of high achievement in previous courses of study will guarantee any student a high grade on any project in this course.

In order to be fair, the instructor emphasizes quantitative aspects, such as attention to detail (e.g., following instructions and specifications) and pride of craft (e.g., precise trimming and mounting), often at the expense of qualitative aspects (e.g., creativity and exertion). Thus, a student's ability to FOLLOW THE RULES is weighed more heavily than anything else, when grading student work in this course.

Design Projects: Guidelines: IMAGES

The use of found images is permitted. This is an educational environment; therefore, students are permitted to use found images as part of design projects they create in this

course, unless otherwise notified by the instructor. However, the use of original, student-generated images is still encouraged and preferred. And remember that finding the “right” image takes time. Start building a personal file of useful or relevant images today.

Design Projects: Letters of Explanation

A one page “Letter of Explanation,” printed on student-designed letterhead (J336, Project 1), must accompany each major project. The purpose of the letter is to explain design ideas, decisions and methodologies, raise questions, comment on a project, or suggest a means of improving the project (or the course).

All written assignments must be typed, and printed from a computer. They must be neatly printed on good quality, clean, white paper. They should be succinct, error-free and carefully edited. Accuracy is required. 5-10 points may be deducted for spelling, grammar or punctuation errors. Students should proofread all written materials before submission.

In addition, points may be deducted from a letter of explanation for such errors as: failure to sign a letter, failure to follow format specifications (correct instructor contact information, correct type font, size or style, adequate line spacing, adequate margins, date of submission, etc.) or failure to discuss the subject matter of the project.

Writing Assignments (20% of Final Grade)

One or more writing assignments (i.e., “Response Papers”) will be assigned. The content must be a student’s original work. Topics, focus and length will be determined by the instructor, and will generally relate to a reading assignment or recent topic of discussion.

All written assignments must be typed and printed from a computer. They must be neatly printed on good quality, clean, white paper. They should be succinct, error-free and carefully edited. Accuracy is required. 5-10 points may be deducted for spelling, grammar or punctuation errors. Students should proofread all written materials before submission.

Creativity

Creativity is an inherent component of visual design. However, students need not feel discouraged or intimidated by a perceived lack of personal creative ability. Any student sincerely interested in visual design, who consistently pays close attention to details and adheres to all project rules and specifications, will position themselves to earn the grade they desire in this course, whether or not they consider themselves “creative.”

Late Projects and Assignments: Not Accepted

Late assignments (including: projects, essays and exams) will not be accepted. Late assignments will receive a grade of zero (0). Assignments are due at the beginning of lecture (or lab), unless otherwise notified by the instructor. The ability to meet deadlines and attend to details are among the most important aspects of visual design practice.

Make-ups, Redos and Extra Credit: Not Available

Opportunities to submit extra credit assignments or to make-up or redo assignments, projects or exams are generally not made available. To earn a satisfactory grade, a student

must strive to do good work, as determined by the instructor, based on published, accessible criteria, on every assignment, project and exam, the first time around.

Criticism

Like writing, effective design involves editing and reworking. Consequently, as often as possible, this course will employ discussions and design critiques focused on student work-in-progress or finished work. The intention is to identify strengths and weaknesses, provide positive feedback and make suggestions for improvement. All criticism is intended to be constructive; the aim is to develop and improve visual design skills.

Papers and Exams: Property of the Instructor

The submission of a paper (i.e., writing assignment) or exam does not constitute public disclosure of ideas. All graded papers and exams may be held by the instructor. Exams, in particular, are ordinarily not returned to students, and can only be inspected upon request.

Computer Literacy

Students will receive basic assistance in order to learn basic computer skills needed to complete this course. However, each student is responsible for learning how to use a Macintosh computer and assigned software programs. Resources are available elsewhere on campus to assist students in achieving the level of computing proficiency they desire.

Instructor Availability

The instructor is available to meet, briefly, during posted office hours, or by appointment. Contact the instructor first, by e-mail, in order to schedule an appointment. Students are welcome to discuss any issue, via e-mail, as long as they do so in a respectful manner.

Accommodations and Disabilities

Early in the semester, students with disabilities who need special accommodations should notify the instructor by presenting a letter prepared by the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office. To ensure that the most appropriate accommodations can be provided, students should contact the SSD Office at 471-6259, or 471-4641 TTY, or visit Services for Students with Disabilities, at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/>.

Scholastic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment (or creative project) for two courses without the prior permission of faculty members.

By accepting this syllabus and participating in the course, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of work and career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties,

including the possibility of failure in the course and / or dismissal from The University. For more info, visit Student Judicial Services at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>.

Content Disclaimer

The instructor reserves the right to include written, visual and/ or audio content, as course material, that some students may find offensive. Such materials will only be utilized for educational purposes, or in the interests of presenting a true and accurate picture of the visual design environment. For instance, the human form, slang or swear words, song lyrics, lines of prose or poetry, or images of a controversial nature (e.g., abortion, war, drug use) will be considered, in the context of this course, “fair use,” both as a means of visual communication and as part of the visual environment we all inhabit.

Thoughts on Grades

Challenging a professor to articulate and defend their grading process is not advisable, assuming a student’s primary goals are to learn, and to earn an acceptable final grade. Such exchanges take up valuable class time that could be spent on more interesting and useful topics. They also rob other students of class time and attention.

Precise and consistent alignment, mounting and printing results are among the fundamental principles by which the profession of visual design is defined. The instructor reserves the right to deduct significant points on any assignment or project for alignment, mounting or printing errors, however slight they may appear to a student. Such errors are no less significant to a design instructor than poorly cropped or out-of-focus photographs are to a photography instructor. As this is a Journalism class, the instructor may also deduct significant points for spelling, grammar or punctuation errors.

The grading and evaluation process in this course generally places more emphasis on “following rules” than on “being creative.” The skill and ability exhibited by most students enrolled in the School of Journalism who study visual design is such that they have not yet acquired sufficient understanding, practice or experience to enable them to focus primarily on “being creative” or “breaking rules.” Students must first prove, again and again, that they understand and respect the rules of any discipline or profession they aspire to join, before attempting to break them.

A student who plans to graduate from the School of Journalism with a working knowledge of visual design principles and practices cannot expect to be hired or retained as an employee whose job primarily involves “being creative” or “breaking rules.” At this point in their career, a student’s fundamental value to a prospective employer will depend on the ability to follow rules and instructions, precisely and consistently. If they are fortunate enough to be employed to practice visual design, they will quickly discover that precision and competence are paramount in a professional environment. If such values are not embraced by an employer, an employee may reasonably conclude they are working in an unacceptable environment with insufficient standards.

Final grades will be posted ASAP, 1-2 weeks after the last day of class. They are the result of precise calculation and careful consideration. They are not subject to debate, discussion or negotiation. Portfolios will also be made available for pick-up at that time.

Educational Philosophy

Educational psychologist Carl Rogers noted: “You cannot teach anyone anything, you can only facilitate their learning.” The purpose of this course is to assist students who want or need to learn about visual and print design. What a student gets out of this course depends, in large part, on what they put into it. Visual design principles and practices are learned by making and discussing things. Lectures, projects, and other course materials provide students with learning opportunities; it is up to each student to make them count.

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