HU 2645: INFORMATION AND GRAPHIC DESIGN (FALL 2007)
Tu & Th 8:05 – 9:20 A.M.
Walker 134 & 113 (CCLI)
(3 credit hours)

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Office hours: Mon 2-3 p.m. and Th 11– 12 p.m. or by appointment.

Course Scope and Goals:

This class is about:
- learning the principles of effective communication using visual cues, symbols, and design elements;
- developing critical analytical skill of interpreting visual artifacts;
- developing our own guidelines for effective visual communication using visual images, different design elements, and symbols while working on our own design projects.

The goals of this course are to:
- build a foundation for understanding visual communication and design principles;
- analyze critically visual images and design elements by contextualizing them in cultural and social settings;
- develop our own sense and guidelines for visual and digital design skills;
- become comfortable with common computer layout and design software: Illustrator, InDesign, and Photoshop.

Texts and Reading:


The following reading materials will be either posted on the instructor’s Web site or handed out in class.


Howard, Andrew. (2001). There is such a thing as society. Eye. 65.
In addition, you will be required to subscribe to www.lynda.com to learn Adobe software – Illustrator, Photoshop, and InDesign. You need to choose the following lesson packages:
- Adobe Illustrator CS3 One-On-One: The Essentials
- Adobe Illustrator CS3 One-On-One: Beyond the Basics
- Adobe Photoshop CS3 One-On-One: The Essentials
- Adobe Photoshop CS3 One-On-One: Beyond the Basics
- Adobe InDesign CS3 Essential Training

Class Policies:

Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to be prepared and actively participate in every class. The course is designed with a cumulative structure; therefore attendance is required. Two “unexcused” absences are allowed. Each additional absence must be explained with a proper documentation or I will lower your final grade by a half letter grade. For example, if your grade would have been an A, it becomes an AB. There is a strict NO MAKE-UP policy for assigned work, including quizzes. Excused absences (such as those resulting from an official MTU activity) must be documented in advance, and work including quizzes, must be completed prior to the anticipated absence. In the event of an unforeseen emergency or serious illness, it is your responsibility to contact me promptly, and to supply adequate documentation.

The Computer Lab: We will use the Center for Computer-Assisted Language Instruction (CCLI, Walker 113) during regular class meetings. You are also expected to work on your assignments in either CCLI or on your computer if you have the software. You might need to reserve equipment in the lab. Please ask for help from lab consultants. They are there to help you.

Writing: There will be several writing assignments where you write essays, reflective evaluations or conceptual descriptions for your projects. All writing should be typed in 12 pt Times New Roman fonts and double-spaced.

Late Work: Work submitted after the due date will be penalized by two points for each late day. You are responsible for keeping backups of your work on media such as DVDs, rewriteable CDs or flash disks.

Academic Conduct: Any form of dishonesty is unacceptable. This includes plagiarism, cheating, and the falsification of data. Plagiarism is the use of others' material, knowingly and unknowingly, that leave the perception it is the author's own. For more information talk to me or visit http://www.admin.mtu.edu/urel/stuhandbook/SPPol/Conduct/acadinteg.html.

Disability Policy: Michigan Technological University complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for
equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean for Students (2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (3310).

Assignments:

You will work on four major projects for this course. One major project for each design software package: Illustrator, Photoshop, and InDesign and a critical essay on a commercial advertisement.

Assignment 1: Logo Design Due Thursday, Sep 27

The purpose of this assignment is to give you practice in vector graphics using Adobe Illustrator. In this assignment, you choose one organization (for example, MTU, the Department of Humanities, the Royal Island, the Finnish Heritage Museum, the Copper county, or the Coffee Cabin), and one event (the Strawberry Festival, the Northern Light Movie Festival, northern lightning, hurricane relief etc.) and design new logos for them. Symbols and logos communicate a clear message about an organization, or an event incorporating visuals that make explicit the attributes and the characteristics of the organization, or event. Simple graphic forms like the husky that represent MTU sport teams and lettermarks are frequently used to create logos. You will design one simple symbol, and one type/lettermark logo using Adobe Illustrator. Play with different designs and save all versions of your design.

Before you begin designing your logos, you will write a 100-150 word conceptual statement explaining what you hope to communicate with your design.

After you finish designing your logos you will write a 300 word reflexive assessment explaining the choices you made, the design elements you incorporated, and the things that worked and did not work. A more detailed description of the conceptual statement, the logo project and the reflexive assessment will follow.

Assignment 2: Critical Evaluation of Advertisements Due Tuesday, Oct 16

This assignment is designed to encourage you to critically analyze visual ads in the magazines you read. Americans encounter thousands of ads a day on television, magazines, bill boards, and the Internet. We will read Kathy Myers article “Toward a theory of consumption: Tu – a cosmetic case study”. This reading will help you develop your skills to critically examine images we routinely encounter and do not really bother to think about. Choose one of the ads in your favorite magazine and critically analyze it. You will write a 3-4 page analysis of the ad. So save and keep all images, and your writing because you will need them when you work on Assignment 4. More detailed instruction to follow.

Assignment 3: Designing Posters Addressing Societal Issues Due Thursday, Nov 8
The purpose of this assignment is to develop a viewpoint using visual communication. Read Andrew Howard's article "There is such a thing as society" and reflect on the author's point of view. After you read the article, I hope that you will be motivated to voice your opinion on current political and social issues. You will develop two posters using Adobe Photoshop on the same issue. To do this project you need to research the topic and identify problems and develop some clear message you want to communicate in your posters. You will write these ideas out in the form of a conceptual statement as you did in Assignment 1. We will look at some examples in the class, and we will talk about your ideas. Your classmates will give you feedback. After you finish designing your posters, you will write a 300 word reflective assessment explaining the choices you made, the research you did, the design elements you incorporated, and the things that worked and did not work. A more detailed description will follow.

Assignment 4: My Design Guidelines Due Thursday, Dec 6

The purpose of this assignment is to give you practice in layout design. In this project imagine that you were asked to write an article for a magazine for your peers who haven't taken this class. You will design a 3-4 page-long magazine article about the design principles we studied in class. Using Adobe InDesign layout software, you will explain your own design guidelines and explain how your guidelines incorporate or depart from the guidelines we discussed in class. Try to dramatize your guidelines in the layout of your magazine article. You are encouraged to use bits of your previous assignment in your article.

Grading Policy:

| Assignment 1 | 15 % |
| Assignment 2 | 15 % |
| Assignment 3 | 15 % |
| Assignment 4 | 15 % |
| Quizzes | 15 % |
| Portfolio | 25 % |
| **Total** | **100 %** |

Project Portfolio. The purpose here is to see how much you learned in this class. At the end of the semester you will create a portfolio that contains revised versions of your projects along with the versions you turned in for a grade. Your portfolio will have a CD where you burn all your draft projects, and their revised versions in InDesign, Illustrator, and Photoshop formats. You will also turn in print copies of all projects as well. I'm not looking for perfectly refined projects, but experimentation and effort. Your CD should include:
- Symbol and lettermark logos
- Photoshop Posters (all versions of you posters and their manipulation)
- InDesign magazine article layout
- One 300 word reflective statement explaining the revisions.
Class Schedule:

Week 1 September 4 & 6 Introduction
Tuesday: Introduction to the class and review of course syllabus
Thursday: Intro to CCL I lab
Reading: Tufte, pp. 27-53

Week 2 September 11 and 13 Visual thinking
Tuesday: Discussion of visual argumentation
Thursday: Illustrator overview
Reading: White, pp. 1-29

Week 3 September 18 & 20 Seeing comes before words
Tuesday: Discussion of White
Thursday: Types and shapes: logo project
Reading: Myer’s article

Week 4 September 25 & 27 Critical analysis of visual culture
Tuesday: Discussion of Myer
Thursday: Presentation of logos
Reading: Burgin’s article

Week 5 October 2 & 4 Photography
Tuesday: Discussion of Photography
Thursday: Intro to Photoshop
Reading: Howard’s article

Week 6 October 9 & 11 Continuation of photography discussions
Tuesday: Continuation of photography
Thursday: Layers
Reading: White, Chap 1 (pp.31-47)

Week 7 October 16 & 18 Design elements
Tuesday: Design elements
Thursday: Work on Photoshop posters
Reading: White, pp. 51-55
Week 8  October 23 & 25

Tuesday: Layout principles
Thursday: Poster discussions
Reading: White, 57-73

Week 9  October 30 and November 1

Tuesday: Gestalt
Thursday: Intro to Adobe InDesign Reading: White, 77-99

Week 10  November 6 & 8

Tuesday: Page architecture
Thursday: Presentations of posters
Reading: White, 103-119

*** Assignment 3 is due ***

Week 11  November 13 & 15

Tuesday: Type
Thursday: Page layouts
Reading: White, 129-135

*** Reading Quiz 2***

November 20 & 22: Thanksgiving recess

Week 12  November 27 & 29

Tuesday: Text
Thursday: InDesign practices

Week 13  December 4 & 6

Tuesday: Layout discussions
Thursday: Work on portfolio

*** Assignment 4 is due ***

Week 14  December 11 & 13

Tuesday: Course wrap-up
Thursday: Presentation of magazine articles

*** Portfolio is due***

Finals Week: Portfolio discussions