

22-239 Design Fundamentals
Spring Semester 2008
M/W 10:20 - 12:30 p.m.
Room: AC S220

Professor: Rick Masters
Office: AC 522
Hrs: T/R 10:30-2:00 pm; M/W by appt.
email: masters@uwosh.edu

Course Objectives

The fundamental principles of graphic design are introduced and practiced in a series of visual communication projects. The geometric construction method will be taught and utilized as a means of refining form. "Non-linear" thinking is emphasized in this class and each student will be encouraged to begin developing his or her own unique creative problem-solving methods. Critical in learning to become a good designer is the student realizing how the importance of first sketching out his or her designs on paper before producing them. In this respect, this class will distinguish between drawing as a tool to communicate ideas for a visual communications problem and drawing as a means of personal expression as practiced in the fine arts.

Prerequisites

art core courses: 22-109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114

Co-requisite: 22-242 Computers for the Visual Arts (for art majors with an emphasis in Graphic Communications only)

Organization

60%	Studio/Lab	10%	Discussion
20%	Lecture/demos	10%	Individual Study

Course Outline

1. Logo Design
 - Design process: concept to finished art
 - Geometric construction, variations of mark
 - Introduction to visual identity and the lettermark
 - Visual principles of Gestalt
2. Modular Design
 - Visual organization, structure, positive/negative space
 - Development of technical and motor skills
 - Focus on precision, detail, observation skills
3. Typeface Design
 - Bauhaus theories, typography
 - Letterform structural relationships, letterspacing
 - Alphabet construction and its application
 - New design derived from old design concept
4. Book Cover Design
 - Pragmatic application of the modular design
 - Introduction to layout concepts
5. if time allows, to be announced

Classroom Policy

Attendance is required and will be recorded each class period. More than two unexcused absences for any reason will result in the lowering of the final grade one increment. For example, three unexcused absences will lower a grade of “A” to “AB,” four unexcused absences will lower a “B” to a “C.” Absences due to medical reasons and/or immediate family emergencies will be excused, but only if the student provides written documentation from the Dean of Students explaining the absence.

Project deadlines will be strictly enforced. Projects must be submitted on the announced date without its grade being affected. (The only exception is an excused absence.) If a student does not meet the deadline for a project, one grace period will be permitted in the following manner: a late project must be immediately turned in at the beginning of the next scheduled class following the deadline date. The highest grade any late project can earn is a “C” and the project may not be resubmitted for a higher grade.

Students, at their option, may resubmit any previously graded project that was not turned in late for possibly a higher grade. There is no guarantee that a resubmitted project will receive a higher grade. The instructor encourages the student to first seek assistance before reworking a project.

Final grades are based on project grades, a 3-ring binder (see next section), attendance, critiques, and the student’s overall interest/attitude in class.

Each student will submit a black, 1-2” 3-ring binder for final review and grading. This “portfolio” (not to be confused with a process book) will contain all finished projects along with selected portions of each project’s development. The binder will be submitted at the end of the semester and its due date will be announced in advance.

Therefore, ALL preliminary work for all projects should be saved, including sketches. These studies and explorations provide an accurate history of the development and procedure of each project. If necessary, projects should be reworked to further strengthen them.

Responsibility for assistance and advice from the instructor must be shared by the individual student. Often, you know best when you need help, and should seek it out when appropriate.

Please use the email address at the top of the syllabus to contact me at masters@uwosh.edu. Please keep in mind that I respond to email messages much sooner than office phone messages. During in-class work periods is an excellent time to seek advice or schedule a meeting.

Lab Fee

By being registered for this class, a lab fee of \$15.00 will automatically be charged to your student account.

Materials List

1. Plastic 24" T-square (provided by instructor)
2. Two plastic triangles (30/60/90 and 45/90/45, approx. 10-12")
3. Two art pencils (H, 2H)
4. One non-repro blue pencil
5. Drafting tape, 3/4" or 1" wide
6. 1 or 2 disposable tech pens (Artist Pen™ or Pigma Micron™ are fine)
7. #11 X-acto® knife, with extra blades
8. Eraser (the white "Mars Plastic" made by Staedtler® works best)
9. Corked-back metal ruler (18" is preferable)
10. Good quality drafting compass
11. Two small watercolor brushes, #1 and #2
12. Small tube of black gouache
13. Small bottle of white-out
14. Illustration board, hot press (smooth) (provided by instructor)
15. Gray Canson® paper
16. 1" or 1.5" black, 3-ring binder (hard cover)
17. approx. 25-50 sheet protectors (8.5x11")
18. one 9x12" pad of tracing paper
19. Utility knife (carpet knife will also work)
20. Circle template (optional)

Other miscellaneous items should be acquired as deemed necessary by each individual student.

Course Philosophy

If we think of the liberal arts as areas of study intended to provide students with general knowledge and intellectual skills rather than occupational or professional skills, then our approach to the field of graphic communications here in the Department of Art only serves to further these objectives in the following manner.

Although the field of graphic communications encompasses the reproduction industries of printing, publishing, and advertising, the underlying objective of this course will focus on design and how the student can become a good designer. Why? If we think of the activity of design as the process of creating images and page layouts from concept to print, then we want to emphasize the front end, or conceptual phase of this process because this activity most relates to the fine arts and, in a broader sense, the liberal arts.

For example, one of the wonderful aspects of this field is that a designer may be called upon to create something for print (or the web) that involves virtually any subject matter, topic, or issue imaginable. Since a good designer needs to know a little bit about everything, it would be unwise not to stress the critical value of the broad, general knowledge you are currently obtaining that is at the very core of your liberal arts education. Remember, anyone with a computer and printer can endlessly print out anything meant to be read until the cows come home, so you must differentiate yourself from the masses by developing a sound knowledge base, along with strengthening your visual literacy and your critical thinking skills.