INFO

17/FA-DES-604-01 Typography
Pratt Institute, School of Design
Graduate Communications & Packaging Design
MFA in Communications Design, Fall 2017
Thursday, 9am – 11:50am
Steuben Hall, Room 409
Instructor: Adam Lucas, alucas6@pratt.edu
Office hours: By appointment only
Coordinator: Santiago Piedrafita, spiedraf@pratt.edu

BULLETIN DESCRIPTION

An introduction to communication problem solving through the visual medium of language, the fundamentals of typographic design are explored in experimental and practical projects. Both historical and contemporary forms of alphabetic communication are addressed.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

This studio course serves as a deep immersion into advanced typographic practice. In parallel with the development of conceptual and technical abilities, students will also develop their perceptual ability: discernment of what looks good and what doesn't, and why. Three sustained projects will comprise the course, with each project consisting of a final full-class critique preceded by a series of work-in-progress critiques of varying sizes. By the end of the course, students will gain a facility and fluency in skilful and nuanced typography across media.

COURSE GOALS

— To understand the value of and develop the ability to create idea-driven, typographic-centric solutions to complex design problems
— To develop one's perceptual ability as a typographer: to learn how to distinguish between good and bad typesetting and overall, to discern what looks good and what doesn't, and why
— To build a technical skillset for effectively managing complex bodies of type and hierarchical emphasis
— To comprehend the meaning of micro- and macrotypography and the differences between them
— To gain confidence in the ability to present work, and speak articulately and persuasively about it

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

— To gain a better comprehension of core micro- and macrotypographic principles such as spacing, color, weight, style, size, legibility, and type choice
— To learn how to manipulate these principles as a series of moves that, as a whole, form a cohesive typographic system, often across media
— To demonstrate a curiosity in exploring ways of applying typography to new forms of media
— To learn how to setup and design with two basic types of grids: a column grid and a modular grid; and to learn how to use the grid as both a support structure for systematic execution and an opportunity to clearly articulate typographic ideas
— To improve your fluency in InDesign as a tool — to gain essential knowledge and skills in everything from style sheets and master pages to preference settings and shortcuts.

SCHEDULE

This is a tentative schedule and is subject to change. More granular scheduling will be included with project descriptions and class emails.

Week 1, Aug 31
— Introduce class
— Review syllabus
— Assign Project 1
— Precedents lecture

Week 2, Sep 7
— Project 1 half-class crit

Week 3, Sep 14
— InDesign tutorial
— In-class exercise

Week 4, Sep 21
— Project 1 full-class crit

Week 5, Sep 28
— Project 1 final crit

Week 6, Oct 5
— InDesign tutorial
— Assign Project 2

Week 7, Oct 12
— Project 2 individual crit / in-class worksessiont

Week 8, Oct 19
— Project 2 half-class crit

Week 9, Oct 26
— Project 2 final crit

Week 10, Nov 2
— Assign Project 3
— InDesign tutorial

Week 11, Nov 9
— Project 3 individual crit / in-class worksession

Week 12, Nov 16
— Project 3 half-class crit

Week 13, Nov 30
— Field trip to Lubalin Center at Cooper

Week 14, Dec 7
— Project 3 final crit

Week 15, Dec 14
— End-of-semester departmental reviews

PROJECTS

The class will consist of three projects and corresponding critiques, in addition to the occasional tutorials, lectures, and worksessions:

1   Poster / Digital projection
2   Booklet / Video
3   Publication with online distribution

For each of the first two projects you'll be able to choose between making either the print or digital option.

For Project 3, you will design and produce a publication that is meant to be distributed and circulated online.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

The following books, essays, and other texts are suggested sources of information that will help you learn typography better. This list, far from exhaustive, is meant to be referenced and revisited as you move forward in your studies. Some of these readings, particularly the essays and shorter texts, will be assigned and discussed through the semester, and distributed as digital copies.

Bringhurst, Robert — *The Elements of Typographic Style*
Elam, Kimberly — *Grid Systems*
Gerstner, Karl — *Designing Programmes*
Goggin, James — "The Matta-Clark Complex"
Highsmith, Cyrus — *Inside Paragraphs*
Hochuli, Jost — *Detail in Typography*
Hochuli, Jost and Kinross, Robin — *Designing Books*
Kane, John — *A Type Primer*
Kinross, Robin — *Modern Typography*
Lupton, Ellen — *Thinking with Type*
Mevis, Armand — "Every Book Starts with an Idea"
Perec, Georges — "The Page"
Ruder, Emil — *Typographie: A Manual of Design*
Tschichold, Jan — *The Principles of the New Typography*
Ward, Beatrice — "The Crystal Goblet"

"There are two sides to typography. First, it does a practical job of work; and second, it is concerned with artistic form. Both these aspects, the utilitarian and the formal, have ever been true children of their day and age; sometimes form has been accentuated, sometimes function, and in particularly blessed periods form and function have been felicitously balanced."

—Emil Ruder

PROCESS

— *Quality of Research*
Are the research methods used by the student effectively chosen and implemented to arrive at successful solutions, and do they cover all aspects of the problem, including historical background and functional concerns?

— *Concept and Conceptual Development*
Are concepts inventive and appropriate, show initiative on the part of the student, and do they satisfy the objectives of the stated problem? Is there a sufficient amount of conceptual work, such as sketches and drafts?

— *Attention to Detail*
Does the solution reflect an appropriate and effective choice of medium, use of tools, techniques and materials, and is it presented in a professional manner?

— *Syntactic Quality of Work*
Are all syntactic concerns — such as form, composition, and visual hierarchy — clearly and effectively articulated? Does the application of color support the message and satisfy aesthetic concerns? Is there an effective application of typography when appropriate? Does the student demonstrate the ability to represent shape and form in two, three, and four dimensions at an acceptable skill level?

— *Semantic Quality of Work*
Does the solution present an effective message — one that is appropriate for the intended audience?

— *Pragmatic Quality of Work*
Does the solution function appropriately, and as intended?

— *Motivation*
Does the student stay consistently motivated throughout the process?

— *Meeting the Objectives of the Assignment*
Does the student follow the project assignment in an appropriate manner, and does the solution meet the state objectives?

— *Participation in Critiques and Discussions*
Does the student actively participate in critiques and discussions on a regular basis?

— *Documentation*
Hi-res photo documentation for physical work or proper documentation of screen-based work is due no later than one week after the end of the semester.

PROFESSIONALISM

— *Verbal Articulation*
Is the student able to critically address the work orally, and respond to ideas discussed in class?

— *Written Articulation*
When required, does the student document work clearly, concisely, and accurately? Is the student articulate and does the student use correct grammar in writing assignments?

— *Overall Attitude*
Does the student present a positive demeanor and outlook on his work, and towards the work of the other students and instructor? Was the student reluctant to do the expected work?

— *Collaboration*
When called upon to work collaboratively with peers, does the student demonstrate collegiality and professional behavior? Does the student contribute equally?

— *Class Attendance / Punctuality*
Did the student adhere to the stated attendance policy?

— *Deadlines / Class Preparation*
Were the intermediate and final deadlines met? Did the student arrive to class with work prepared as assigned, on time, and without excuse?

Each instructor will assign the following percentages to each of these two categories when determining the final grade:

75% Process + Realization

25% Professionalism

INDIVIDUAL COURSE GRADES

A   *Excellent without exception*

A-   *Excellent*
The student displays an exceptional perspective in critique participation, response to criticism, professional conduct, an advanced understanding of course material, and is able to achieve remarkable results above and beyond suggested project parameters.
(Numerical Value: A = 4.0; A– = 3.7)

B+   *Above average*

B   *Average*

B–   *Acceptable*
The student displays a positive perspective in critique participation, response to criticism, professional conduct, a competent understanding of course material, and is able to achieve above average results while fulfilling suggested project parameters.
(Numerical Value: B+ = 3.3; B = 3.0; B– = 2.7)

C+   *Acceptable*

C   *Acceptable (C is the lowest passing grade for graduate students)*
In some instances the student displays a positive perspective in critique participation, response to criticism, professional conduct, an understanding of course material, and applies it to assigned problems satisfactorily, meeting basic expectations but not pushing beyond suggested project parameters.
(Numerical Value: C+ = 2.3; C = 2.0)

F   *Failing (any grade of C – or below is a failing grade)*
The student has failed to meet the minimum standards for the course. (Numerical Value: 0.0)

INC   *Incomplete*
A grade of incomplete may be given if due to extraordinary non-academic reasons the student finds it impossible to complete all assignments. If a student wishes to propose an incomplete for a course, they must request such an accommodation in writing no later than the last scheduled meeting for the course. Failure to meet this deadline will result in a failing grade for the course. If granted (requests subject to approval of both faculty of record for the course and department), all work must be completed within 8 weeks of the last class meeting or the INC will convert to a failing grade (F).

Overall Program Standing
All student's records are reviewed at the end of each semester to determine whether students who have failed to remain in good standing may continue in the program. To be in good standing, all graduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.0 (equivalent of a B). A graduate student whose GPA falls below a 3.0 at any time may be subject to dismissal. The specific conditions under which this policy will be invoked are as set forth by the dean of each school.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

At Pratt, students, faculty, and staff do creative and original work. This is one of our community values. For Pratt to be a space where everyone can freely create, our community must adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity.

Academic integrity at Pratt means using your own and original ideas in creating academic work. It also means that if you use the ideas or influence of others in your work, you must acknowledge them. At Pratt,

— We do our own work,

— We are creative, and

— We give credit where it is due.

Based on our value of academic integrity, Pratt has an Academic Integrity Standing Committee (AISC) that is charged with educating faculty, staff, and students about academic integrity practices. Whenever possible, we strive to resolve alleged infractions at the most local level possible, such as between student and professor, or within a department or school. When necessary, members of this committee will form an Academic Integrity Hearing Board. Such boards may hear cases regarding cheating, plagiarism, and other infractions described below; these infractions can be grounds for citation, sanction, or dismissal.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

When students submit any work for academic credit, they make an implicit claim that the work is wholly their own, completed without the assistance of any unauthorized person. These works include, but are not limited to exams, quizzes, presentations, papers, projects, studio work, and other assignments and assessments. In addition, no student shall prevent another student from making their work. Students may study, collaborate and work together on assignments at the discretion of the instructor.

Examples of infractions include but are not limited to:

1   Plagiarism, defined as using the exact language or a close paraphrase of someone else's ideas without citation.

2   Violations of fair use, including the unauthorized and uncited use of another's artworks, images, designs, etc.

3   The supplying or receiving of completed work including papers, projects, outlines, artworks, designs, prototypes, models, or research for submission by any person other than the author.

4   The unauthorized submission of the same or essentially the same piece of work for credit in two different classes.

5   The unauthorized supplying or receiving of information about the form or content of an examination.

6   The supplying or receiving of partial or complete answers, or suggestions for answers; or the supplying or receiving of assistance in interpretation of questions on any examination from any source not explicitly authorized. (This includes copying or reading of another student's work or consultation of notes or other sources during an examination.)

For academic support, students are encouraged to seek assistance from the Writing and Tutorial Center, Pratt Libraries, or consult with an academic advisor about other support resources. Refer to the Pratt website for information on Academic Integrity Code Adjudication Procedures.

GENERAL PRATT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Pratt Institute understands that students' engagement in their program of study is central to their success. While no attendance policy can assure that, regular class attendance is key to this engagement and signals the commitment Pratt students make to participate fully in their education.

Faculty are responsible for including a reasonable attendance policy on the syllabus for each course they teach, consistent with department-specific guidelines, if applicable, and with Institute policy regarding reasonable accommodation of students with documented disabilities. Students are responsible for knowing the attendance policy in each of their classes; for understanding whether a class absence has been excused or not; for obtaining material covered during an absence (note: instructors may request that a student obtain the material from peers); and for determining, in consultation with the instructor and ahead of time if possible, whether make-up work will be permitted.

Consistent attendance is essential for the completion of any course or program. Attending class does not earn students any specific portion of their grade, but is the pre-condition for passing the course, while missing class may seriously harm a student's grade. Grades may be lowered a letter grade for each unexcused absence, at the discretion of the instructor. Even as few as three unexcused absences in some courses (especially those that meet only once per week) may result in an automatic "F" for the course. (Note: Students shall not be penalized for class absences prior to adding a course at the beginning of a semester, though faculty may expect students to make up any missed assignments.)

Pratt Institute respects students' requirements to observe days of cultural significance, including religious holy days, and recognizes that some students might need to miss class to do so. In this, or other similar circumstance, students are responsible for consulting with faculty ahead of time about how and when they can make up work they will miss.

Faculty are encouraged to give consideration to students who have documentation from the Office of Health and Counseling. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities will continue to be provided, as appropriate.

Refer to the [Pratt website for information on Attendance](#).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The instructor will make every effort to accommodate students with both visible and invisible disabilities. While it is advisable that students with disabilities speak to the instructor at the start of the semester if they feel this condition might make it difficult to partake in aspects of the course, students should feel free to discuss issues pertaining to disabilities with the instructor at any time. Depending on the nature of the disability, and the extent to which it may require deviations from standard course policy, documentation of a specific condition may be required, in compliance with conditions established by the campus Learning Access Center, and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students who require special accommodations for disabilities must obtain clearance from the Office of Disability Services at the beginning of the semester. They should contact Elisabeth Sullivan, Director of the Learning Access Center, 718-636-3711.

RELIGIOUS POLICIES

In line with Pratt's Attendance Policy, Pratt Institute respects students' requirements to observe days of cultural significance, including religious holy days, and recognizes that some students might need to miss class to do so. In this, or other similar circumstance, students are responsible for consulting with faculty ahead of time about how and when they can make up work they will miss.

DEPARTMENT-SPECIFIC ATTENDANCE POLICY

The continued registration of any student is contingent upon regular attendance, the quality of work produced and proper conduct exhibited. Irregular attendance, neglect of work, and failure to comply with Institute rules and official notices or conduct not consistent with general good order are regarded as sufficient reasons for dismissal.

If a student has any unexcused absences during the semester, upon the discretion of the instructor the student's final semester grade may be reduced by one letter grade. If a student has more than three unexcused absences during the semester, upon the discretion of the instructor the student may receive a failing grade (F) for the course. Similarly, repeated tardiness and/or early departure can be considered, cumulatively, as equivalent to absenteeism; determining ratio for such calculation upon the discretion of the instructor (number of instances = unexcused absence).

Students are allowed excused absences in certain circumstances: illness or observance of religious holidays. In cases of illness, official documentation proving the illness must be provided to the instructor (no later than within a week's time after a missed class section); in cases of religious holidays, the student must notify the instructor in writing (at the beginning of the semester; no later than the first week of classes) when those days will occur.

Any combination of unexcused and excused absences totalling four course sessions will automatically determine failure for the course.

Participation in Graduate MFA Communications Design and MS Package Design Program Reviews (Mid-Term and End of Semester) are mandatory. Absence or limited engagement (late arrival, partial contribution, early exit, etc.) could see automatic letter grade reductions and/or potential course failures across any and/or all semester courses. Extraordinary exemptions are to be considered for documented emergencies only, in prior consultation with Faculty of Record, Program Coordinator(s) and Department.

DESCRIPTION

For your first project, you will design a type-only poster or a site-specific digital projection for an artist exhibition. The artist exhibition can be real (i.e. it already happened, is happening, or is scheduled to happen) or hypothetical, but your poster or projection will be an announcement for the exhibition.

The poster or digital projection should capture and connect to the artist's work — its concepts, themes, and motifs, for instance — through typography. It should set the stage for the artist's ideas. Experiment and play to discover various ways of creating dynamic, graphic compositions with type. Manipulate variables such as spacing, color, weight, style, size, legibility, and type choice in order to establish hierarchy and create interesting typographic relationships.

PROCESS

You will be randomly assigned an artist from the following list:

Beuys, Joseph	Mori, Mariko
Chicago, Judy	Ono, Yoko
Dumas, Marlene	Pettibon, Raymond
Eliasson, Olafur	Rauch, Neo
Genzken, Isa	Sze, Sarah
Hamdan, Lawrence Abu	Tillmanns, Wolfgang
Hesse, Eva	Vollmer, Ruth
Klein, Yves	Walker, Kara
Lawrence, Jacob	Albers, Anni

You'll begin your project with research on your assigned artist. Your research should entail both virtual and physical research — digging deeply into online resources and visiting the stacks, archives, and special collections at our excellent Pratt Library.

REQUIREMENTS

— Just text, including: the title, the name of the artist, the location, and the dates of the exhibition
— Additional text is welcome but not necessary
— Poster: black-and-white or color, 24 × 36 inches, single-sided
— Digital projection: static (no motion), site location and installation is important to consider

DEADLINES

Week 2, Sep 7: Half-class crit
— Present at least six different 1:4-scale (6 × 9 in.) black-and-white designs for your poster/projection
— Include research/process if you think it would be helpful to your presentation

Week 4, Sep 21: Full-class crit
— Present a full-scale (24 × 36 in.) black-and-white poster/projection (tiled is fine) accompanied by a 1:4 scale (6 × 9 in.) color version

Week 5, Sep 28: Full-class crit
— Present your final full-scale color poster/projection

DESCRIPTION

For your second project, you will design and produce a "type specimen." A type specimen demonstrates the complete range and value of a typeface through its various applications: as headlines, body text, lists, captions, etc.

Your type specimen will feature both text and image content. You have a choice between three categories of content, although the category you choose must include at least one print source (i.e. a book) and one digital source (i.e. a website) as the places where you obtain content. The three categories are:

1   Your artist from Project 1
2   Your favorite food
3   Your favorite music

Once you choose your category, it's up to you to find sufficient and relevant sources that will provide you with the right type of content for your specimen. For instance, if you choose Option 1, I'd start by visiting the Pratt library to find books on your artist, and then explore what the web has to offer. Keep in mind, any images that you're including in your booklet need to be a sufficient resolution for printing (effective PPI ~300).

PROCESS

Type specimens come in many forms — from the traditional booklet, folded pamphlet, poster, or other printed matter; to the non-traditional video, website, or other screen-based methods. For this project, you have the option of making either a booklet or video.

Overall, your specimen must showcase the full range of your typeface — all weights and styles. To help achieve this, here are some suggestions (not exahustive) on what to include per category:

Category 1 (artist)
— An article or review about your artist and their work
— An interview with your artist
— A list of exhibitions

Category 2 (food)
— A set of recipes
— An interview with a chef
— A list of ingredients

Category 3 (music)
— An article or review about your musician and their work
— Song lyrics
— A playlist

REQUIREMENTS

Typeface
— Designed within the last 10 years
— Has at least 4 weights with italics
— Full character set (non-trial font)

Booklet
— 5 × 7 inches
— 12–16 pages
— Text and image
— Must include at least a cover, table of contents, chapters/sections, colophon, and a bibliography
— Each variation of the typeface (essentially, each style) must somehow be labeled or called out (e.g. marginalia, inline, running footers, etc.)

Video
— No more than 1m30s in duration
— You must find creative solutions to show elements like longer form texts that are typically suited for video
— Each variation of the typeface (essentially, each style) must somehow be labeled or called out

DEADLINES

Week 6, Oct 5
— Announce your chosen typeface and category
— Bring in at least two books and two websites as your example sources

Week 7, Oct 12: Individual crits
— Present at least two design directions: for the booklet, 1 cover and 4 interior spreads to show different types content; for the video, 10-second teasers that show several different variations

Week 8, Oct 19: Half-class crits
— Present rough drafts of your booklet or video
— Include three chosen type specimen examples that you have pulled elements/sections from

Week 9, Oct 26: Final crit
— Present your final booklet or video

DESCRIPTION

In 1946, Max Bill wrote an article entitled "Über Typografie" ("On Typography") that served as a founding statement of Swiss modernist typography. Soon after this article was published, Jan Tschichold replied with "Glaube and Wirklichkeit," ("Belief and Reality") which sought to refute many of Bill's opinions, and reflected Tschichold's own turn from a modernist to a traditionalist typographer. Paul Renner then added a third, more neutral voice to the debate with "On Modern Typography."

In his later contribution, Renner chose to reflect less on Bill and Tschichold's points, and more on his own thoughts about the value of the debate itself — the usefulness of a difference in opinion on the topic of modern typography. In essence, Renner was recognizing the value of the *dialectic*: "a discourse between two or more people holding different points of view about a subject but wishing to establish the truth through reasoned arguments."*

For your third and final project, you will follow Renner's lead by designing, producing, and distributing a publication that features the original essays by Max Bill and Jan Tschichold while also, in a general sense, advocates for the value of dialectic.

* Source: Wikipedia

PROCESS

The goals of this project are three-fold:

1 Expertly typeset the Bill and Tschichold essays in a distributable form of your choice
2 Articulate the value of dialectic through the design of your form
3 Distribute your publication — essentially taking your designed form and "making it public"

In order to achieve the above, you will:

1 Read the three essays
2 Formulate design ideas for how to articulate the value of dialectic, such as through:
   — Creating or sourcing your own additional content (e.g. image, text, sound, and/or video; any type of media is fair game)
   — Developing a visual language that captures its formal characteristics, such as contrast or balance
   — Constructing graphic treatments and compositions that evoke its characteristics
   — Choosing an alternative form factor, production method, and/or mode of distribution (or a combination thereof) that reinforces its benefits (e.g. risographed broadsheets distributed in public spaces, a PDF that also lives as a podcast, a projection or screen in a highly visible area, etc.)

3 Design and produce for screen and/or print and distribute your publication online, and if applicable, in real life (IRL)

REQUIREMENTS

The only requirement, aside from the distribution of your publication, is that you do not make a book.

DEADLINES

Week 11, Nov 9: Individual crits
— Present your ideas for possible form factor(s) and distribution method(s): what could your publication be and how could it live in the world?
— Present your additional content
— Present two design directions, including the typeset essays

Week 7, Nov 16: Half class crits
— Present sufficient progress on your chosen direction that includes at least drafts of your final form(s), on screen and if applicable, in print

Week 8, Dec 7: Final crit
— Present your final project and proof of its distribution and circulation, online and, if applicable, IRL