

TYPOGRAPHY 3

Maryland Institute College of Art
GD321: Complex Type Systems
Th 9am – 3pm, BR 308
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Office hours: 9 – 10am, 3 – 4pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION (*italic are my additions*)

This course will provide instruction in creating complex typographic systems for page and screen, including grid structures, comprehensive style sheets, and complex compositional structures. You will learn more advanced features of software for typography and build compelling projects working with multi-layered information. *In parallel with technical development, perceptual development will be of equal importance. You will learn to discern what looks good and what doesn't, and why.*
Prerequisite: GD221 (Typography 2).

OUTCOMES (*italic are my additions*)

Through the course, you will:

- Utilize and explore a variety of grid and compositional structures as they relate to content and medium, for both page and screen.
- *Learn how to setup and design with two basic types of grids: a column grid and a modular grid. Learn how to use the grid as both a support structure for systematic execution and an opportunity to clearly articulate typographic ideas.*
- Develop ability to create and refine multi-level hierarchical systems *through the manipulation of variables such as spacing, color, weight, style, size, legibility, and type choice.*
- Demonstrate proficiency working with large amounts of text in paragraphs, pages, and sequences. *Improve your fluency of InDesign: gain essential knowledge and skills in everything from style sheets and master pages to preference settings and shortcuts.*
- Assess and critique typographic and design solutions in relation to the context of the project.
- Generate content with typographic explorations.
- *Develop your vocabulary and critical faculty to clearly articulate your thoughts in discussion, writing, and work.*

ATTENDANCE

Attendance will be mandatory. You must arrive on time to the start of each class and after each break. Students who have the equivalent of more than three absences will no longer be eligible to earn credit for the course.

PARTICIPATION

This class will demand active participation and engagement. You must prepare for every class: please bring the necessary tools and materials that will allow you to fully participate; and the proper attitude and professionalism that will enable you and your fellow students to fully engage.

DOCUMENTATION

You must submit print-ready digital files and/or hi-res photos no later than one week after individual project due dates. You may revise a project at anytime, but any revised projects must be re-documented and re-submitted to be considered. Failure to submit final files will result in a reduction of 50% credit for the project.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment of your performance will be based on the following set of equally weighted criteria:

- Enthusiasm for your work and the work of others
- Desire for improvement and growth
- Willingness to experiment and take risks
- In-class participation
- Inventiveness of formal and conceptual thinking
- Quality of craft

Letter-grades will reflect how well you meet the criteria:

- A — exceed all of the criteria
- B — meet all of the criteria
- C — meet more than half of the criteria
- D — meet less than half of the criteria
- F — fail to meet any of the criteria

You will receive a midterm assessment of your work-to-date and a final grade. However, you should actively seek feedback and ask questions, in class and out, and should not hesitate to reach out for help, whether through email or in-person.

PROJECTS

Three projects will comprise the course. Each project will consist of a pair of pre-defined formats, a primary print format and a secondary digital format, as follows:

- 1 — Poster + e-mail
- 2 — Ephemera + GIFs
- 3 — Publication + video

While the pair of formats for each project will be pre-defined, how you interpret them will be up to you. You should explore and experiment, and work within the constraints of the project in order to find new ideas and unconventional solutions. You will receive a detailed brief at the start of each project.

“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, *Typographie*

MICA'S ACADEMIC POLICY STATEMENTS

Americans with Disabilities Act

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Learning Resource Center at 410-225-2416, in Bunting 458, to establish eligibility and coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)

It is the responsibility of faculty and students to follow health and safety guidelines relevant to their individual activities, processes, and to review MICA's Emergency Action Plan and attend EHS training. It is each faculty member's responsibility to coordinate with the EHS Office to ensure that all risks associated with their class activities are identified and to assure that their respective classroom procedures mirror the EHS and Academic Department Guidelines. Each of these policies and procedures must be followed by all students and faculty. Most importantly, faculty are to act in accordance with all safety compliance, state and federal, as employees of this college and are expected to act as examples of how to create art in a way to minimize risk, and reduce harm to themselves and the environment. Faculty must identify and require appropriate personal protective equipment for each art making process, for each student, in all of their classes, when applicable. Students are required to purchase personal protection equipment appropriate for their major. Those students who do not have the proper personal protection equipment will not be permitted to attend class until safe measures and personal protection are in place.

Plagiarism

Each discipline within the arts has specific and appropriate means for students to cite or acknowledge sources and the ideas and material of others used in their own work. Students have the responsibility to become familiar with such processes and to carefully follow their use in developing original work.

— Policy

MICA will not tolerate plagiarism, which is defined as claiming authorship of, or using someone else's ideas or work without proper acknowledgement. Without proper attribution, a student may NOT replicate another's work, paraphrase another's ideas, or appropriate images in a manner that violates the specific rules against plagiarism in the student's department. In addition, students may not submit the same work for credit in more than one course without the explicit approval of all of the instructors of the courses involved.

— Consequences

When an instructor has evidence that a student has plagiarized work submitted for course credit, the instructor will confront the student and impose penalties that may include failing the course. In the case of a serious violation or repeated infractions from the same student, the instructor will report the infractions to the department chair or program director. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the department chair or program director may then report the student to the appropriate dean or provost, who may choose to impose further penalties, including expulsion.

— Appeal Process

Students who are penalized by an instructor or department for committing plagiarism have the right to appeal the charge and penalties that ensue. Within three weeks of institutional action, the student must submit a letter of appeal to the department chairperson or program director, or relevant dean or provost related to the course for which actions were taken. The academic officer will assign three members of the relevant department/division to serve on a review panel. The panel will meet with the student and the instructor of record and will review all relevant and available materials. The panel will determine whether or not to confirm the charge and penalties. The findings of the panel are final. The panel will notify the instructor, the chairperson, division, the student, and the Office of Academic Affairs of their findings and any recommendations for change in penalties.

Title IX Accommodation

Maryland Institute College of Art seeks to provide an environment based on mutual respect that is free of bias, discrimination and harassment. If you have encountered sexual harassment/misconduct/assault we encourage you to report this. Disclosures made to faculty must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator, Title IX Deputy Coordinator, or Title IX Specialist. Disclosures made by students in course assignments are not exempt from mandatory reporting. If you require academic accommodations due to an incident involving sexual harassment or discrimination, please contact Student Affairs at 410.225.2422 or Human Resources at 410.225.2363.

Students with Extended Illness or Cause for Legitimate Absence

In the case of extended illness or other legitimate absences that may keep the student from attending a class for more than three meetings, students must contact the Student Development Specialist in the Division of Student Affairs so that instructors can be notified. Graduate students must contact the instructor, program director, and the Office of Graduate Studies. Students in art education or professional studies programs must contact the Dean for the Center for Art Education or the Dean of the School for Professional and Continuing Studies, respectively. The appropriate administrator will facilitate a conversation with faculty to determine whether the student can achieve satisfactory academic progress.

SCHEDULE

The majority of class time will consist of critiques of your work. Tutorials, presentations, exercises, and work sessions will fill the rest of the time. The schedule is subject to change.

Week 1, Sep 3

- Introduce class
- Review syllabus
- Assign Project 1
- Presentation: Ralph Schraivogel

Week 2, Sep 10

- DUE: ten 1:4-scale (7×10"), black & white poster sketches and three email sketches
- Crit sketches in half-class groups
- InDesign tutorial: document setup and preferences

Week 3, Sep 17

- DUE: one 1:1-scale (28×40"), black & white tiled poster draft, one 1:4-scale (7×10") color poster draft, and email draft
- Crit drafts in half-class groups
- Presentation: type foundries

Week 4, Sep 24

- DUE: final poster and email
- Crit final posters and emails as a full class

Week 5, Oct 1

- Assign Project 2
- Class trip to MICA's Artist File
- InDesign tutorial: paragraph and character styles

Week 6, Oct 8

- Review Sven's Workshop progress
- Discuss exhibition ideas
- TBD

Week 7, Oct 15

- DUE: three sketches of ephemera and GIFs
- Crit sketches in half-class groups
- TBD

Week 8, Oct 22

- DUE: drafts of ephemera and GIFs
- Crit drafts in half-class groups
- TBD

Week 9, Oct 29

- DUE: final ephemera and GIFs
- Crit final ephemera and GIFs as a full class

Week 10, Nov 5

- Assign Project 3
- InDesign tutorial: justification settings
- In-class work session
- TBD

Week 11, Nov 12

- DUE: sketches of publication components and initial video ideas
- In-class exercise: typesetting bracketing
- Individual meetings
- TBD

Week 12, Nov 19

- DUE: drafts of publication teasers and video sketches
- Crit of teasers and sketches in half-class groups
- TBD

Week 13, Dec 3

- DUE: rough drafts of publication and video
- Crit of drafts in half-class groups
- TBD

Week 14, Dec 10

- DUE: Final drafts of publication and video
- Crit of final drafts as a full class

Week 15, Dec 17

- DUE: Final publication and video
- Class party and exhibition of final projects

PROJECT 1 – POSTER + EMAIL

A graphic design project is a good opportunity to learn something new about the world. So is Letter of Recommendation, a regular column in the recently redesigned *New York Times Magazine*, which is described as “celebrations of objects and experiences that have been overlooked or under appreciated.”

For your first project, you will design a type-only poster and email, both meant to serve the same purpose as the Letter of Recommendation: to celebrate and spread the word of something that has been under appreciated. You will be randomly assigned a Letter of Recommendation, which you will read, and either use as the source of content for your poster and email or use as a source of inspiration: a point of departure for your own recommendation. Regardless of what you choose for the content, your poster should be:

- Single-sided
- 28×40 inches
- Type only
- Include the required text: title (the thing being recommended), subtitle (up to you), and three relevant facts about the thing being recommended
- Additional text is welcome but not necessary

And your email should be:

- The same text as the poster
- Type only
- Created in Gmail using the native text formatting tools

You should 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. Systematic application of these variables, especially in your early sketching, is encouraged.

Please refer to the class schedule for a project timeline and due dates.

PROJECT 2 — EPHEMERA + GIFS

A design problem rarely begins with a blank slate. Rather, it is often the case that the designer must reshape and refresh an existing design.

For your second project, you will start with an exploration of MICA's Artist File. Located on the lower level of the Decker Library, the Artist File "contains items of an ephemeral nature such as small catalogs, brochures, and announcements" from hundreds of artists including "the great masters of art history and major contemporary artists, especially those who have exhibited in the last five years." Your task will be to select a piece of ephemera from the file and redesign it. Before executing your redesign, you must present your selected ephemera to me for approval, to make sure your piece includes:

- An artist whose practice dates within the last 50 years
- Textual content that is complex: from small details (e.g. captions, footnotes, listings, etc.) to high level content (e.g. artist name, title of show, pull quotes, etc.)
- If the textual content is not complex enough, you may supplement it with your own content
- The quality of the pre-existing design does not matter: you should choose your ephemera based on your interest in the artist and the potential you see for a redesign
- The form of your redesigned ephemera is up to you although I suggest keeping it simple and easy to produce

During your redesign process, you will also design and produce a series of three GIFs that act as digital interpretations of your redesigned ephemera. Their visual identity should be cohesive with your ephemera and their content should be relevant to your selected artist and his or her work.

Please refer to the class schedule for a project timeline and due dates.

PROJECT 3 — PUBLICATION + VIDEO

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.

For your third project, you will begin by reading both Bill’s and Tschichold’s articles, as well as “On Modern Typography” by Paul Renner, a third voice in the debate. As you read, make careful notes about specific points in each of the articles. These notes should articulate your own thoughts and opinions about what is being said in the article: what you agree or disagree with, what you find interesting or relevant, and why. You will then typeset all three original texts, annotated with your own notes as marginalia or footnotes. As a final ingredient, you will add images and corresponding captions. The content of the images is up to you, but obviously the images should connect to the subject matter in some way: anything from examples of the authors’ works, to examples of contemporary graphic design that reflect the authors’ stances, to even your own photographs or illustrations that capture the authors’ ideas in some way — any imagery that supports the text is fair game. In summary, you will make a publication that consists of:

- “On Typography” by Max Bill
- “Belief and Reality” by Jan Tschichold
- “On Modern Typography” by Paul Renner
- Your own annotated notes, which can take the form as marginalia or footnotes
- Imagery of your choosing
- A cover, title page, table of contents, and colophon
- Format, binding, and other production details are up to you

You will also design and produce a short video “trailer” to help launch your book. This trailer should be typographic-centric although images are allowed. Other parameters of the video include:

- It should be short: no longer than 30 seconds
- It’s format and size are up to you
- It should be published (i.e. on the web, projected, etc.)

Please refer to the class schedule for a project timeline and due dates.