INFORMATION DESIGN • SPRING 2011

Instructor: Jonathan Bass
Office: Loree 010
Office Hours: Wed 2.00 – 3.00 PM and by appointment
Schedule: http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~jbass/courses/415_spr11.htm

Required Texts


You can purchase these texts from the Rutgers bookstore or your preferred online vendor. Other readings, both comics and critical work, will be available online via Sakai or the Web.

Required Equipment and Software

Digital camera.

Course Requirements

Below is an overview of major assignments (“work requirements”) for the semester. It is a rough forecast based on previous semesters and is subject to substitution. Also, I’ve left out a few small assignments, and included more projects than we’ll probably get to. Much of the work will be done in class, or begun in class and completed as homework, or begun as homework and revised in class. Some of it will be purely homework.

Projects
Between four to six design projects. Each project will respond to a scenario or brief, a particular context, client, and audience. Early projects will be collaborative. Later
projects will be solo. Projects will require research and planning, drafting and testing, and will result in one or more final documents.

**Writing Assignments**
Expect to produce several short analyses of assigned reading, your own work, another student’s work, etc.

**Presentations**
Each student will make at least one short presentation to the class on one of the assigned readings for a given week. Some presentations will be solo, some paired, depending on the selected reading. All presentations will need to be accompanied by visual material that goes beyond material from the reading.

**Participation**
We do a LOT of work in class. Class participation entails active involvement in discussion and collaborative activities.

**Exercises**
Between projects and writing are a number of preparatory exercises focusing on particular skills and design concepts and problems.

**Grading**
Grading is based on your work and participation in the class. Longer projects receive letter grades and written or in-person feedback (the latter usually in the form of a critique, review, or discussion in class). Shorter projects receive full credit (✔), half credit (✔️), or no credit (✔️), based on the degree to which they satisfy the specified requirements.

Larger projects and any writing related to those projects together account for about 40 – 50% of the final grade; shorter projects, writing, and exercises for about 30 – 40% of the grade; participation for about 15% of the grade.
Policies

Attendance. Attendance at all classes is expected. Missing more than two classes strongly reduces the participation grade. Students missing more than three classes fail the course – without exception. Regular latenesses will count as half-absences, effective retroactively.

Late work. Homework is due at the start of class unless otherwise noted. Late work receive an “L” grade that factors negatively into the final grade calculation for the semester. Furthermore, students falling behind by more than two assignments strongly risk failing the course.

Formatting and submitting graphic work. Generally, you’ll submit your projects and other work in at least two forms: (1) in a printed, photocopied, or handmade paper form; and (2) online as a high-quality PDF via Scribd (http://www.scribd.com/) and a Sakai dropbox. Work will not count as submitted until both the physical and digital formats are turned in.

Formatting and submitting written work. Written work must be printed and follow the formatting requirements specified in the assignment description. Handwritten work will not be accepted. Most written work will need to be submitted both in a printed version and to your Sakai dropbox.

Submitting work by email. Unless specifically requested to submit work via email, NEVER do this.

Texting, etc. During class students are not allowed to communicate electronically (i.e., via email, IM, text message, social network interface, forum, list-serv, etc.) with any persons outside of the class. Exceptions will be made for communication related to in-class work, such as communicating with (woefully) absent collaborators.

Sample work. I will often want to share examples of students’ work in class. Names will seldom be deleted. If you object to my using your work, often in a less than anonymous way, let me know very clearly – in person or by detailed email. Speaking of which ...

Email. The instructor responds to email Monday to Friday. The instructor’s email is for asking questions about the course work or thoughts related to the course topic(s) – visual
communication, comics, narrative, etc. Please do not use email to share your reasons for missing class or work or to ask for the instructor’s permission to do so. If you need to discuss attendance or the lateness or absence of written work, do so in the time before or after class or during office hours.

Your Email. Important announcements as well as feedback on your work will occasionally be sent to your Rutgers email address via Sakai. So you’ll need to check this email regularly during the semester.

Online Schedule. Students are responsible for regularly checking the online schedule for important changes. The schedule is updated weekly. Homework is posted at least one week before the work is due.

Plagiarism. Students must review and abide by the University’s code on plagiarism. Plagiarism covers uncredited use of another’s work, including written material, images, and page designs. Given that this is a design course: design work should always be of the students own creation. Images not of the student’s own creation must be credited in the design script (or where possible in the project document itself). All textual and visual sources for a project must be listed with sufficient bibliographical information in the design script.

For some projects, students will be supplied with a base text for them to modify, edit, design, etc. For other projects, students may be asked to select base texts of their own. In all other cases, the writing in a document should be either (1) documented quotation and paraphrase, where this makes sense, or (2) the student’s own writing. Cutting and pasting text (e.g., from a Wikipedia article), unless permission is given by the instructor, will count either as plagiarism (where credit is not given) or as incomplete work (where credit is given).

Departmental Review. All grades are subject to departmental review.

Policy Review. If any of the above policies seem unclear, ask the instructor for immediate clarification.