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# DES 122 : GRAPHIC INFORMATION DESIGN FUNDAMENTALS

## DESCRIPTION / COURSE OBJECTIVES*

Exploration of Graphic/Information Design principles, practices, skills, and work-flows. The outcomes of the course include but are not limited to:

1. The ability to solve communication problems by developing **essential skill-sets**: problem identification, research and documentation strategies, analysis and iteration techniques, prototyping, testing, and constructive critique of outcomes.

2. The ability to create and develop visual forms in response to communication problems, including an understanding of **principles** of visual organization/composition, information hierarchy, symbolic representation, typography, aesthetics, and the construction of meaningful imagery.

3. An understanding of essential industry **tools and technologies**, including their roles in the creation, reproduction, and distribution of visual messages. Tools and technologies include, but are not limited to, drawing, offset printing, photography, on-demand object printing, time-based and interactive media, and emerging methods of reproduction.

4. To learn to **define, describe, and respond** to audiences and contexts, which communication solutions must address, including recognition of the physical, cognitive, cultural, and social human factors that shape all design decisions.

5. An understanding of **basic work-flow practices**, including the ability to organize design projects in order to work productively and communicate with clients and vendors using **design vocabulary**.

This course seeks to familiarize students with the Graphic Design field in general and assign hands-on experience with the creation and design of communications projects. While learning professional-level software applications, students will develop their aesthetic values, conceptual, critical skills as media creators and producers. This process will prepare students for further studies by providing a basic understanding of the design process as applied to graphic design. Throughout the course, the instructor will lecture/workshops on key concepts and techniques to support on-going project work.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance at all class meetings is essential to the learning process. *Missing more than one class per project or two classes per module duration will result in a 5-point reduction to your grade*. Three late arrivals will equal one absence. You are expected to arrive to class ready to work at the beginning of the scheduled class time. There is no distinction between "excused" or "unexcused" absences—missed course work, content and class participation are an issue in any absence and can negatively impact the rest of the class. If you must leave class early or arrive late for any reason, notify me in advance. You are responsible for collecting any instructions or assignment details you miss due to absence.

In the case of extenuating circumstances, such as an ongoing illness or the death of a loved one, the professor should be consulted as soon as possible. Documentation from the Student Affairs office may be required. If you have an extraordinary reason for leaving class early or arriving late, including inter-collegiate athletic contest or a religious observance, please let me know ahead of time. You are responsible to make up the missed work on your own. Contact me to discuss your work and progress, and any other concerns related to this course.

If you miss any classwork, workshops, lectures, or critiques, it is your responsibility to inform yourself and deliver the work promptly. Contact a classmate and review the module resources in Blackboard. All work submitted after its due date is late and will be graded accordingly. **All work, practice, and demonstrations, as well as conversations and topics discussed in class are important to success in this and future classes.**

**Attendance for the last class meeting scheduled during Finals Week is MANDATORY.**

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It is the policy of the CCSU to provide reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, for students with documented disabilities on an individualized basis. If you are a student with a documented disability, the University's Disability Resource Center can work with you to determine appropriate accommodations. Before you receive accommodations in this class,

## THE PLAY INSTINCT

In *Paul Rand: A Designer's Art*, Rand discusses the play instinct in design. He writes, "... a problem with defined limits, with an implied or stated discipline (system of rules) that in turn is conducive to the instinct of play, will most likely yield an interested student and, very often, a meaningful and novel solution" (Rand 1985: 189).





## ASSIGNMENT 1

### ALPHANUMERIC

In this an **outside-of-class** assignment, you are required to make each letter and numeral of the Latin alphabet using a variety of materials and methods. An experimental and diverse set of letters and numbers are the objective as you are not allowed to use any material twice. Excellent craftsmanship is required—experimental is not synonymous with sloppy.

Only four letterforms can be created on the computer, though the computer may be used for letterform reference, compositing, and editing of any letterform. The letterforms must retain the typographic integrity, proportion, and detail of the typefaces referenced. Keep track of your references! You will need them for your book.

Start at a local dollar store/party supply store and purchase under $10 worth of "stuff" you like. Check the garage, basement and other locations where stuff is exiled to. Bring your purchases and finds to class and trade with your classmates to diversify your source materials. Create a letterform out of each material and formstorm others. Observe and contemplate the potential of a material of your trading partner and try to use it in a unique manner. Consider applying other limitations and parameters to your production process such as specific time frames for production. For example, use a method that will take a week or a method where time is restricted to under five minutes. Share your progress, ideas for other constraints, and images on the class blog.

Be observant, critical, and stay constantly engaged in this project throughout the semester. Posting to the blog with your progress is mandatory. The iterative nature of this assignment will yield ideas and letter objects that will serve as inspiration for future design projects.

Two class periods will be used to kickoff Alphanumeric. Two classes will be used to share and critique source materials and progress, one class will be used to 'digitize' all your letterforms (bring your camera too), and one class will be used to create a book of your alphanumeric characters and their references. See Blackboard for blog and dates.

For insight and inspiration, watch Marian Bantjes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkS-u32xfGc. Read Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, Martin Venezky's creative process and powers of observation in *It is Beautiful—Then Gone*, and *Paul Rand: A Designer's Art* on Blackboard in Mod 1 area.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

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