

*Gabriel Drozdov*  
**Teaching Portfolio 2021**

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**PORTFOLIO**

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# Teaching Philosophy

Design is performative in that it creates an event for someone to partake in, whether through passive or active observation or interaction. On one hand, this event is a means to an end, leading the audience to a new understanding of some source material through mediation and representation. On the other hand, this event is meaningful in itself because it exists as a unique entity distinct from its source material. Think of a script as opposed to a theatrical performance of said script, or the script's raw text as opposed to the same text typeset in a particular font and bound into a book. In both cases, the act of representation inserts new meaning and subsequently creates a novel event.

Graphic design faculty are particularly enmeshed in this ideology. While other art practices embody fixed mediums, graphic design's mediums continuously evolve to match how humans engage with so-called "content." The advents of high-speed internet, cheap and prevalent creator-centric technologies (e.g. phone cameras and editing tools), and unprecedentedly popular social media networks have supplanted print-centric design mediums. As faculty, we necessarily look backwards to understand the core principles of type and form, but we work with new forms and for new audiences whose visual literacy is primarily digital, interactive, and ephemeral. Where it may have sufficed to study poster design in the past, it is now imperative to evaluate what the medium of the "poster" even is today.

It is for these reasons that I approach graphic design pedagogy through a performative lens. By reconsidering design as event, design practice thusly values impact and ethics on an equal level—design's impact becomes inseparable from its socio-political context, audience, or desired effects. The notion of design as event also elevates the designer's identity to that of an actor/director, which is pertinent in an educational environment because it highlights the professor's responsibility to serve as a catalyst, not as an absolute model, for a student's artistic maturation and identity. The value therein is for these emerging designers to have the facility to evaluate the ever-increasing scope of available tools and craft their own stories accordingly, responsibly, and adeptly.

Basing pedagogy on performativity also includes practical in-class advantages. Graphic design, even with its international roots and centuries of historical practices, is still a premature academic discipline. New designers may have little exposure to the art form, interpret it from a wide array of tan-

genial perspectives, or feel that "canonical" or "academic" studies exclude their identity. Addressing this, the performative notion that all design is impactful is also empowering—individuals can draw from any background in their practice, as each is equally "valid" in designing impactful events. The collegiate experience is therefore one of incubation, in which exposure to new influences (including faculty) helps the individual rethink and hone their craft.

It follows that coursework reflects the intrinsic value in diverse practices and influences. Students are encouraged to subvert guidelines where possible, particularly in ways that challenge how observers might view their work. If the assignment specifies a printed 24"x24" typographic composition, the designer has room to play with how that composition is displayed, whether it is affixed to the wall at an angle, placed on the floor instead, or blocked off such that it must be viewed from a distance. These challenges are the same that one would face in their professional practice—some set of restrictions defined by medium/context (such as the Instagram square) with the double-edged task of presenting the content clearly while elevating it beyond its apparent form through whatever means available. The study of historical design influences is similarly nuanced, in that different socio-political contexts arise different forms as needed. This is what design group Experimental Jetset describes as "design-as-ideology," wherein the materiality of the design object generates the object's meaning. In the same way, I encourage emerging designers to look at their work as tangibly, physically expressive such that the object's allusions to prior practices or so-called "canonical" movements may actually impart less meaning than the object's novelty to the average intended viewer.

Lastly, the mentor-mentee dynamic between faculty and students is bidirectional much like the actor-spectator dynamic. Performance theorist Erika Fischer-Lichte defines this as the "autopoietic feedback loop"—as one influences the other, so does the other influence the original. I first entered the design world through the logical qualities of computer science and the expressive qualities of theater and performance studies. Finding design as an effective tool for combining these disciplines into productive, holistic experiences, I continue to search for new influences to mutate and shape my practice. My interest in professorship is consequently twofold: to help foster a new generation of designers whose work may eclipse mine, and to use this energy to propel my own craft.

# Inclusivity Statement

Inclusive environments are a necessary component of effective education, and no education is worth the harms imposed by discriminatory environments.

At the start of each semester, I will lay guidelines promoting productive, safe dialogue between students and faculty, as well as leave avenues open for ongoing feedback to either me or a trusted member of the community. Furthermore, faculty and student experiences will inform how I lead future courses, and as such this Inclusivity Statement is an evolving document.

I take the following steps to promote inclusive spaces:

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>1 Disseminate course-specific guidelines to make abundantly clear the expectations for study, work, and grading.</b></p> <p>Readings will be limited to what realistically fits in everyone's schedules, and all readings will be re-read by me before each week's meeting.</p> <p>Check-ins will always be available before final submission of all assignments without any fear of preliminary grading.</p> <p>Grading rubrics will be detailed in full on a per-assignment basis.</p> | <p><b>2 Facilitate an introductory discussion on creating an inclusive academic environment.</b></p> <p>Students will collaboratively author a document detailing guiding thoughts for leading class meetings, discussions, and critiques. These guidelines will remain as a living document for the remainder of the semester.</p> <p>I will inform everyone of the avenues available for leaving anonymous feedback, which anyone can provide at any point without fear of academic consequences.</p> | <p><b>3 Walk through the ways in which the particular course depends on inclusivity and subsequently incorporates it into the curriculum.</b></p> <p>In most cases, this means looking beyond western-oriented design canons while simultaneously acknowledging the existence of said canons as problematic. In particular, the oppressive forces of white supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy will be acknowledged in today's design practice, and we will make attempts to challenge these influences throughout our study.</p> |
|--|---|---|

Identity plays a large role in finding one's voice as an emerging designer. It is my hope that my students and peers, however they may identify themselves, feel comfortable enough in my courses to be true to themselves and do their best work as they may define it. This goes for individuals of any age, socioeconomic status, or body type identifying as any gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, or otherwise. I would especially like to make space for marginalized individuals, particularly those identifying as part of the LGBTQIA+ or BIPOC communities, as well as acknowledge that despite my best intentions there are aspects ingrained in higher education and contemporary society that discriminate against said identities.

# Course Descriptions

## GRAPH 2022-1

### *Digital Form*

#### Light, Motion, Interaction

Instructor: Gabriel Drozdov (gdrozdov@risd.edu)

Department of Graphic Design

Spring 2022

W: 11:20AM-4:20PM

Design Center 206

3 Credits

Open to all undergraduate graphic design students.

Studio; Required Course

Maximum Enrollment: 25

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0

Digital displays introduce new possibilities for graphic design while fundamentally changing how spectators (now “users”) understand, interpret, and interact with traditional design principles. In this introductory studio course, students pair theory and practice to dissect how digital mediums transform the design object, including color, form, typography, and more. These explorations focus on three key aspects of digital design: using light to represent static images on screens; making those images move through motion design or animation; and, letting the user interact with and change the design object via websites and user interfaces.

Weekly meetings are split between lectures, discussions, workshops, demonstrations, and dedicated studio time, with each project cumulatively building up skills for use in the following project.

Available to all graphic design students; no experience necessary. Familiarity with Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop, Illustrator, After Effects, XD), Figma, Webflow, or HTML/CSS helpful but not required. Full access to Adobe Creative Cloud provided by the University. Optional paid plug-ins suggested to expedite workflow but not needed to complete assignments.

## GRAPH 2022-2

### *Writing and Speaking*

#### about Art and Design

Instructor: Gabriel Drozdov (gdrozdov@risd.edu)

Department of Graphic Design

Spring 2022

Th: 1:10PM-6:10PM

CIT/Mason Building 502

3 Credits

Open to all Sophomore-level and above graphic design students.

Seminar; Elective

Maximum Enrollment: 15

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0

Look at your surroundings. If you’re at home, you might see some packaged food, a book cover, or a box of tissues. If you’re outside, then you might see license plates, street signs, or home address numbers. Even just reading this description, you are engaging with interfaces, typefaces, icons, and more. Graphic design is clearly ubiquitous in contemporary life, but which of these designs are good? What does “good” even mean?

We will analyze hundreds of projects spanning all spectrums of visual communication to break down design problems, solutions, and the parameters that define success or failure in the context of different cultures, societies, and disciplines. Through these analyses, we will endeavor to effectively communicate what “good” or “bad” design is through writing and speaking to small and large audiences of varying backgrounds and identities. These explorations will play back into your own work by enhancing your design sensibilities, enriching your personal taste, and empowering you to articulate the design decisions you make and why they matter.

# Course Descriptions (continued)

## **GRAPH 2022-3**

### *Ethics of Advertising* Design for/as Change

*Instructor: Gabriel Drozdov (gdroz dov@risd.edu)*

*Department of Graphic Design*

*Spring 2022*

*M: 9:00AM-12:00AM*

*CIT/Mason Building 502*

*3 Credits*

*Open to all Junior-level and above undergraduate students.*

*Seminar; Elective*

*Maximum Enrollment: 15*

*Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0*

“From Those Wonderful Folks Who Gave You Pearl Harbor”  
— Proposed slogan for Panasonic by Jerry Della Femina

Designers have long used provocation, generalization, and pandering to sell products, brands, and experiences, but what are the ethical implications of these practices? With the diminishing use of printed advertisements such as posters, how have these practices evolved in the information age?

Starting with Susan Sontag’s essay “Posters: Advertisement, Art, Political Artifact, Commodity”, we will look critically at international movements in advertising to evaluate if/how design has affected, shaped, or reacted to social and cultural values, events, and movements. Topics range from Chinese posters created under Mao Zedong’s reign, to Russian constructivist poster designers like El Lissitzky, to western marketing giants like David Ogilvy, to targeted digital advertisements in today’s geographically fractured internet. Students will have opportunities to suggest discussion topics and help shape the course’s direction, with opportunities to lead class meetings as desired.

# Course Syllabus

GRAPH 2022-1

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### Description

Digital displays introduce new possibilities for graphic design while fundamentally changing how spectators (now “users”) understand, interpret, and interact with traditional design principles. In this introductory studio course, students pair theory and practice to dissect how digital mediums transform the design object, including color, form, typography, and more. These explorations focus on three key aspects of digital design: using light to represent static images on screens; making those images move through motion design or animation; and, letting the user interact with and change the design object via websites and user interfaces.

### Goals

- To learn the differences and similarities between digital and print design mediums and practices.
- To translate and adapt traditional graphic design principles for digital screens.
- To develop creative and technical instincts when working with emerging digital technologies.
- To understand the limitations of various technologies including generative art, websites, and user interfaces.
- To develop technological literacy for learning new tools and software as needed or desired.

### Learning Outcomes

*Percent of Final Grade*

1	<b>Comprehension</b> . . . . .	10%
	<i>Articulation and evaluation of digital design principles during critiques and discussions</i>	
2	<b>Skill development</b> . . . . .	10%
	<i>Accumulation of technical and creative facility and demonstration of growth through work and revisions</i>	
3	<b>Research</b> . . . . .	15%
	<i>Integration of personal and discovered experiences into coursework</i>	5% Prompt 1   5% Prompt 2   5% Prompt 3
4	<b>Implementation</b> . . . . .	50%
	<i>Exercise of learned skills in assigned projects</i>	15% Project 1   15% Project 2   20% Project 3
5	<b>Participation</b> . . . . .	15%
	<i>Attendance of weekly meetings and intellectually presence during critiques and discussions</i>	

# Course Syllabus (continued)

## Structure

This course is split into three phases:

- 1 **Emerging Learning | *Light***  
*Creating and editing static images for digital screens*
- 2 **Developing Learning | *Motion***  
*Incorporating elements of 2D animation and motion design*
- 3 **Advanced Learning | *Interaction***  
*Designing and developing interactive and responsive websites*

Each phase occupies approximately a third of the semester and cumulatively builds on earlier lessons. Weekly meeting time is split between lectures, discussions, workshops, and critiques. Toward the end of the semester, we will collaboratively decide on final lecture topics as per the group's interests.

## Assignments

There is one major studio project per course phase:

- P1 Digital Posters**  
*Create a static poster for distribution via email newsletters, social media posts, and banner ads*
- P2 Keyframes and Sequences**  
*Add elements of animation and motion design to your poster from Project 1 or to a poster based on a new topic*
- P3 Microsites**  
*Design and develop an interactive and responsive website using your work from Projects 1 and 2 or starting with a new topic*

In addition to studio projects, there is one small research prompt per course phase:

- R1 Digital Designers and Designs**  
**R2 Animators and Animations**  
**R3 Websites, Generative Art, and Computational Media**

No more than one assignment will be due each week, although projects may be assigned several weeks out from their deadline. For studio projects, revisions are accepted until the end of the semester.

## Materials and Software

There are no required supplies or costs associated with this course. Assignments are developed and presented digitally, and all course materials are provided as PDFs or placed on reserve in the library. Optional premium softwares and plug-ins are recommended, but not needed to complete any assignments.

Required softwares are either free or provided by the university, with tutorials listed in Resources.

- Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop, Illustrator, After Effects)
- Bodymovin for After Effects ([aescripts.com/bodymovin](https://aescripts.com/bodymovin))
- Figma, Sketch, or Adobe XD
- Plaintext editor (Examples: Atom, Sublime, Visual Studio Code)
- Webflow

## Attendance and Participation

Attendance is required for all weekly meetings. The attendance policy is as follows:

- 2 unexcused absences → *letter grade drop*
- 3 partial absences → *1 unexcused absence*
- 3 unexcused absences → *failure of course*

Evaluation for in-class participation will differ per student depending on the individual's comfort with speaking in a university environment. Students are expected to come prepared to each meeting, and research prompts are opportunities for individuals to engage with topics of their own interests.

## Contact and Feedback

I am always reachable by email ([gdrozdov@risd.edu](mailto:gdrozdov@risd.edu)) to answer any questions or concerns regarding the course. If you'd like to meet 1-on-1, we can schedule either a Zoom or in-person meeting, or you can drop in during my weekly office hours.

If you encounter an uncomfortable issue or situation that affects you either inside or outside of the course, please don't hesitate to contact me or the relevant university support individuals.

# Course Syllabus (continued)

## Grading Scale

### A Exceptional performance and participation

*Considerable effort in discussions and assignments, major influence in creating a productive and supportive work environment*

### B Satisfactory performance and participation

*Punctual, attentive during weekly meetings, discernible effort in completing assignments, expresses support toward peers*

### C Sufficient performance and participation

*Often late to classes, selectively attentive during weekly meetings, minimal effort in completing assignments, ambivalence toward peers*

### D Insufficient performance and participation, course must be repeated

*Several unexcused absences, lack of attention during weekly meetings, lack of effort in completing assignments, lack of courtesy toward peers*

### F Failure of course, must be repeated

*Excessive unexcused absences, disruptive misbehavior during weekly meetings, failing to submit assignments without notice, disrespect of peers, creation of harmful environment*

If anyone is at risk of a low or failing grade, I will notify them ahead of time and provide opportunities for revisions or reconciliatory assignments.

## Resources

### Readings

- *Cultural Criticism and Transformation* by bell hooks [mediaed.org/transcripts/Bell-Hooks-Transcript.pdf](https://mediaed.org/transcripts/Bell-Hooks-Transcript.pdf)
- *Extra Bold* by Ellen Lupton, Farah Kafei, Jennifer Tobias, Josha Halstead, Kaleena Sales, Leslie Xia, Valentina Vergara [papress.com/pages/extra-bold](https://papress.com/pages/extra-bold)
- *The Design of Everyday Things* by Don Norman
- *Thinking with Type* by Ellen Lupton
- *Play Matters* by Miguel Sicart
- *Form + Code* by Casey Reas, Chandler McWilliams, LUST [formandcode.com](https://formandcode.com)

### Publications/Blogs

- *BIPOC Design History* [bipocdesignhistory.com](https://bipocdesignhistory.com)
- *Typewolf* [typewolf.com](https://typewolf.com)
- *Brand New* [underconsideration.com/brandnew](https://underconsideration.com/brandnew)
- *It's Nice That* [itsnicethat.com](https://itsnicethat.com)

- *AIGA Eye on Design* [eyeondesign.aiga.org](https://eyeondesign.aiga.org)
- *99% Invisible* [99percentinvisible.org](https://99percentinvisible.org)
- *New York Times Graphics* [twitter.com/nytgraphics](https://twitter.com/nytgraphics)

### Designers/Studios

- Hoodzpah [hoodzpahdesign.com](https://hoodzpahdesign.com)
- Studio HMVD [studiohmvd.com](https://studiohmvd.com)
- COLLINS [wearecollins.com](https://wearecollins.com)
- DIA [dia.tv](https://dia.tv)
- Synchronized [synchronized.studio](https://synchronized.studio)
- Bees and Bombs [twitter.com/beesandbombs](https://twitter.com/beesandbombs)
- Emily Oberman [instagram.com/emilyoberman](https://instagram.com/emilyoberman)
- Giorgia Lupi [giorgialupi.com](https://giorgialupi.com)
- Hudson-Powell [hudson-powell.com](https://hudson-powell.com)
- Pablo Stanley [pablostanley.com](https://pablostanley.com)
- Dinamo Typefaces [abcdinamo.com](https://abcdinamo.com)

### Tutorials

- Photoshop tutorials [helpx.adobe.com/photoshop/tutorials.html](https://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop/tutorials.html)
- Illustrator tutorials [helpx.adobe.com/illustrator/tutorials.html](https://helpx.adobe.com/illustrator/tutorials.html)
- Figma/UI tutorials | *Sketch Together* [youtube.com/c/SketchTogetherTV](https://youtube.com/c/SketchTogetherTV)
- After Effects tutorials | *Motion Design School* [youtube.com/channel/UC-L0yvYPpGQZD3PHDLKiUpg](https://youtube.com/channel/UC-L0yvYPpGQZD3PHDLKiUpg)
- UI/UX guidelines:
  - Human Interface guidelines [developer.apple.com/design/human-interface-guidelines](https://developer.apple.com/design/human-interface-guidelines)
  - Material Design guidelines [material.io/design](https://material.io/design)
  - Material You guidelines [m3.material.io](https://m3.material.io)
- Webflow University [university.webflow.com](https://university.webflow.com)

### Tools/Plug-ins

- LIBRE FONTS BY WOMXN [design-research.be/by-womxn](https://design-research.be/by-womxn)
- Colors [colors.co](https://colors.co)
- After Effects plug-ins:
  - Flow [aescrpts.com/flow](https://aescrpts.com/flow)
  - Overlord [battleaxe.co/overlord](https://battleaxe.co/overlord)
  - Timelord [battleaxe.co/timelord](https://battleaxe.co/timelord)
  - Anubis [battleaxe.co/anubis](https://battleaxe.co/anubis)
  - Motion Tools [motiondesign.school/products/motion-tools](https://motiondesign.school/products/motion-tools)
- Free illustrations and photos:
  - Blush [blush.design](https://blush.design)
  - Unsplash [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com)
  - Pexels [pexels.com](https://pexels.com)
- Design inspiration:
  - Pinterest [pinterest.com](https://pinterest.com)
  - Behance [behance.net](https://behance.net)
  - Dribbble [dribbble.com](https://dribbble.com)



# Weekly Plan

## PART 1

### *Emerging Learning* Light

#### Outcomes

- Identification of types of digital design and best tools for working with each type.
- Understanding of how designs vary based on screen sizes, resolutions, and contexts.
- Integration of digital design concepts into graphic work.

- 1 Introductions  
Review syllabus and calendar  
Draft *Discussion/Critique Code of Conduct*  
Workshop: *Analysis of Zoom*  
Lecture: *What is digital design?*  
Introduce Project 1: *Digital posters*  
Assign Research Prompt 1: *Digital designers and designs*
- 2 Review and discuss Research Prompt 1  
Lecture: *The digital image*  
Workshop: *Photoshop fundamentals*
- 3 Review and critique Project 1A—static posters  
Lecture: *Vector graphics and digital typography*  
Workshop: *Illustrator fundamentals*
- 4 Review and critique Project 1B—adapted posters for specific contexts  
Lecture: *Devices and platforms*  
Workshop: *Figma fundamentals*  
Assign Research Prompt 2: *Animators and animations*

## PART 2

### *Developing Learning* Motion

#### Outcomes

- Adaption of static designs for use with motion design.
- Employment of motion design to add meaning and enhance the static image.
- Conception of and create motion designs from the ground up.

- 5 Review and discuss Research Prompt 2  
Workshop: *Sequencing images in Photoshop*  
Lecture: *Animation with photography and illustration*  
Introduce Project 2: *Keyframes and sequences*
- 6 Review and critique Project 2A—storyboards  
Lecture: *Thinking with and planning for motion*  
Workshop: *Keyframing in After Effects*
- 7 Mid-semester check-in  
Lecture: *Kinetic typography*  
Workshop: *Motion design workflow*
- 8 Review and critique Project 2B—motion posters  
Lecture: *Identities and systems*  
Workshop: *Motion design for the web*

# Weekly Plan

## PART 3

### *Advanced Learning* Interaction

#### Outcomes

- Arrangement of static and motion digital forms in a responsive website layout.
- Consideration of elements of legibility and accessibility in conjunction with creativity and function.
- Exploration of interactive opportunities beyond websites.

- 9 Lecture: *A brief history and overview of the internet and computational media*  
Introduce Project 3: *Microsites*  
Workshop: *HTML, CSS, and Webflow*  
Assign Research Prompt 3: *Websites, Generative Art, and Computational Media*
- 10 Review and discuss Research Prompt 3  
Lecture: *Design frameworks*  
Workshop: *Deep dive into Webflow*
- 11 Review and critique Project 3A—website mockups  
Lecture: *Legibility and accessibility*  
Workshop: *Responsive designs*  
Vote on topic for final lecture
- 12 Check-in on Project 3B—responsive landing pages  
Lecture: *Student choice topic*  
Workshop: *Bug testing, troubleshooting, and generally fixing what's broken*
- 13 Final review and critique of Project 3B  
Discussion: *Course postmortem*

# Class Project



Design by Eddie Opara (Pentagram) for *The New Republic*  
[pentagram.com/work/the-new-republic/story](https://pentagram.com/work/the-new-republic/story)

## Project 1 Digital Posters

Assigned Week 1, Part A due Week 3, Part B due Week 4

The print poster was a key player in the emergence of contemporary graphic design. As we increasingly work with digital formats, how do the graphic design principles behind posters change? How do these changes affect the ways in which we use color? What about typography? Photography? Grid-based layouts? What even is a digital poster? Where do we see them? How do we see them?

### Concepts:

Color	Scale	Frame
Contrast	Resolution	Dimensions
Brightness	Aesthetic	Perspective
Composition	Clarity	Masking/Cropping
Rotation	Arrangement	Layering
Repetition	Language	Depth

# Class Project (continued)

## Overview

### Part A

Start by browsing the RISD Museum's list of upcoming events ([risdmuseum.org/exhibitions-events/events](http://risdmuseum.org/exhibitions-events/events)). Alternatively, browse the upcoming events for an art or design museum.

Select one upcoming event that features some quantity of guests (lecturers, speakers, etc.).

Design a digital poster for this event. Your poster needs to include the following information:

- Name of the event
- Photo(s) and name(s) of each guest
- 1-2 paragraph event description
- Registration information
- RISD Museum (or relevant museum) logo

Your design should incorporate research into the event's themes, guests' backgrounds or work, and museum's branding. Feel free to (and please do!) incorporate your own design sensibilities, tastes, interests, etc.

Your exported poster should be sized at exactly 1080x1920 pixels in .JPG format.

### Part B

Take your design from Part A and adapt it for use in the following contexts:

- Horizontal and vertical banner ads
- Email newsletter (e.g. Mailchimp)
- Instagram post
- Twitter post
- Facebook post
- Advertisement or thumbnail on RISD Museum's website (or the relevant museum's website)

Research the exact dimensions and formats needed for each of these images. For each graphic, consider what elements from the original poster are still needed. Present your work in mockups showing the appropriate context.

## Goals

- To discover how a digital image's impact, interpretation, and meaning are linked to its medium and context.
- To build up familiarity with editing digital files.
- To learn to make deliberate decisions to achieve a desired effect.
- To work with preexisting content and start exploring the wealth of digital images and resources available for your general use.

## Learning Outcomes

*Percent of Final Grade*

1	<i>Breadth</i> Completion of project fully as assigned	40%
2	<i>Depth</i> Demonstration of sophisticated concepts in work	20%
3	<i>Intention</i> Creation of new meaning through image modifications	20%

## Basic Competency

- Compiles necessary information in poster design.
- Successfully adapts design into various contexts.
- Retains essential qualities of the original design when reformatting for new contexts.

## Advanced Competency

- Researches project topic deeply and thoughtfully incorporates relevant images, visual aesthetics, and other applicable details.
- Showcases growth from beginning of project to presentation of final designs.
- Creates designs that utilize the digital medium to its fullest.

# Critique Guide

## Why Do We Critique?

Critiques are an entry point into discovering the fundamental details of your work—the “why”s and “how”s of your design practice—and making adjustments based on those discoveries. Furthermore, critiques are a window into the work of your peers. These glimpses into others’ work will both inform your own practice as well as build a stronger community. Without critiques, we may as well be designing in a vacuum—in reality, the success of your work will be in the eyes of observers.

That is not to say critiques are easy. It is nerve-wrecking to show what you have made, especially in an academic environment where you are expected to be at a less experienced level of proficiency. The learning environment is bolstered by this shared inexperience, as all members of the course will cumulatively develop their own design sensibilities instead of being prescribed an erroneous, problematic design canon or dogma.

## How Do We Critique?

### Preparing for Critiques

Apart from final presentations, the most important factor in critiques is having enough material prepared to have a productive discussion. It is understood that your workload outside of the class is substantial, so it may often be difficult to spend the desired amount of time each week perfecting your work. In this case, ask yourself, “Do I have enough to show help me move forward with this project?” If not, then try to find a way to reach that level before our weekly meeting. Otherwise, you will not receive helpful comments, and you will likely be distracted from providing feedback to your peers.

### Discussing Work

During critiques, we are not necessarily interested in the good and bad. Rather, we aim to dissect what is working and what is not achieving the desired intention, as well as discussing the intention itself. Our comments should necessarily be geared toward helping the recipient move forward. If a comment does not aid in this process, it is likely to detract from the quality of the critique.

Here are some elements you may want to think about and discuss during a critique:

- What was the designer’s intention with their work?
- Does the design work in service of that intention?
- What elements of the design are acting toward that intention? Against?
- Is there ample attention to detail and craft in the work?
- Is the work actively and effectively engaging with the project prompt?
- How might the work be received by different audiences or in different environments/settings?
- Are there any ethical concerns or problematic decisions in the work?

## Responding to Critiques

During a critique, be sure to ask questions if comments are unclear as to get the most out of the discussion. Additionally, do not feel the need to defend your work—while it is never easy to receive feedback or criticism, these comments are honest reactions to your work as is. Make changes as desired to give your work the right impact!

## Types of Critiques

- *Group Critiques*: discuss each student’s work as a group
- *Solo Critiques*: the professor meets individually with students while the rest of the group works on the project
- *Paired Critiques*: students will work in small groups to discuss each other’s work
- *Assigned Group Critiques*: the same as group critiques, but individuals will be assigned to lead the critique of another student’s work
- *Guest Critiques*: a visiting professor or other individual is invited to participate in the critique

## Scheduling Critiques

We will always start the semester with group critiques, as they provide insight into everyone’s work at the start. As the semester progresses, we will move into the other critique formats based on the group’s needs and work style. Guest critiques are reserved for the end of the course to get an outsider’s perspective on the coursework.

# Mid-term Feedback

## GRAPH 2022-1 | *Digital Form*: Light, Motion, Interaction

### Goals

- To learn the differences and similarities between digital and print design mediums and practices.
- To translate and adapt traditional graphic design principles for digital screens.
- To develop creative and technical instincts when working with emerging digital technologies.
- To understand the limitations of various technologies including generative art, websites, and user interfaces.
- To develop technological literacy for learning new tools and software as needed or desired.

Please answer the following questions by circling **Yes**, **No**, or **No Strong Feeling**.  
Feel free to provide detailed answers to the right when desired.

1 Does this course meet your expectations for content?

Yes            No Strong Feeling            No

2 Does this course meet your expectations for structure?

Yes            No Strong Feeling            No

3 Do you found this course interesting or engaging?

Yes            No Strong Feeling            No

4 Is the quantity of work reasonable?

Yes            No Strong Feeling            No

5 Are the projects clear and helpful?

Yes            No Strong Feeling            No

6 Are the weekly meetings productive?

Yes            No Strong Feeling            No

7 Is the classroom a safe or encouraging environment?

Yes            No Strong Feeling            No

# Mid-term Feedback (continued)

Please answer the following questions with a written response.

If you do not have an answer to a question or feel uncomfortable answering a question, please feel free to skip it.

8 What information, lessons, or projects have you found especially helpful?

9 Is there anything we have not discussed that you would like me to cover?

10 What upcoming topic are you most excited for?

11 Have you found any aspect of the course or projects particularly challenging?

12 Please use this space to provide any additional feedback.

Signature (optional)

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# Course Assessment Rubric

## **Comprehension** (10%)

- 0 Does not engage with and actively ignores course material during critiques or discussions
- 1 Makes little attempt to engage with course material
- 2 Demonstrates ability to discuss course material and apply learned concepts during critiques
- 3 Enthusiastically engages with course material and contributes meaningful comments to discussions and critiques

## **Skill Development** (10%)

- 0 Shows complete lack of effort in projects over the course of the semester
- 1 Does not address feedback in revisions or show any growth in work
- 2 Integrates feedback into revisions and grows with each subsequent project
- 3 Excels from feedback and shows significant technical and creative growth over the full semester

## **Research** (15%)

5% Prompt 1 | 5% Prompt 2 | 5% Prompt 3

- 0 Does not complete any research as assigned
- 1 Insufficiently completes research with minimal effort
- 2 Offers sufficient research and brings outside influences into weekly meetings
- 3 Effectively uses research and external influences to nuance discussions and coursework

## **Implementation** (50%)

15% Project 1 | 15% Project 2 | 20% Project 3

- 0 Fails to complete projects as assigned
- 1 Produces incomplete projects or ignores project prompts in work
- 2 Completes projects thoughtfully and in full
- 3 Finds creative solutions, directly addresses feedback in design work, and shows attention to craft

## **Participation** (15%)

- 0 Does not regularly attend weekly meetings
- 1 Repeatedly late to weekly meetings and does not actively engage with, pay attention during, or contribute to discussions
- 2 Punctually attends weekly meetings and stays present throughout
- 3 Plays an important role during weekly meetings and offers exceptional support to peers