

San Jose State University ~ Fall 2006

School of Art and Design

Projects

DSGD 186-1 ~ Digital Applications Methodology ~ Instructor: Pino Trogu

Room 201 ~ MW 12:30 – 3:20

Office Hours: Room 229 ~ MW 11:30 – 12:30

Contact Info: (415) 393-9555 pino@trogu.com

Course description (from website)

Advanced technical applications in the tools and methods used in digital text and image production for print and online delivery.

Class Themes

Digital-Analog

This class will address the issues of the “digital” in relation to both the production (designer) and the use (reader) of design objects. We will attempt to define what the digital is as compared to the analog. We’ll analyze designed entities that are distributed both in digital and analog formats. A newspaper (the physical, paper object) is made digitally but is in essence an analog object, like the book, while the same newspaper’s website is essentially a digital object.

Design Objects: threads and kinship

We will look at design objects in terms of precedent: where do objects come from, do they have “parents” and will they produce any “children”. We will look at such series of objects to understand why they are the way they are now. Objects for reading: books, magazines, posters. Objects for taking pictures: pin-hole camera, film, video, pixel based recording devices. Objects for writing (writing machines): typewriter, electric typewriter, computer keyboard.

We will explore these two themes throughout the duration of the class. We will produce our own real-life design objects. We’ll develop an awareness of the multiple relationships that exist behind the making of an object, relationships which are sometimes obvious and other times less so.

There will be 3 projects: two smaller ones and a larger one divided into two phases that will be graded separately. All specific deadlines will be announced at the beginning of each project.

Project 1

Design (punch) cards

The title is a reference to the early days of electronic computing when perforated cards were used to feed instructions to the machine, but think of them as enlargements of the classic 3 x 5 file card.

8.5 x 11 (double-sided)

You are to research an object or a specific topic related to the two themes of digital-analog and threads and kinship. Using both a short text provided by the instructor and additional text and images researched by you, you will produce one of a series of research cards that will function as quick reference cards. A list of words or topics will be drawn from your research. Each student will be assigned a word or a topic that will be the subject of her/his card, their entry in this mini-dictionary about “digital-analog”.

Cards might be bound at end of project into a booklet (each student gets a complete copy of all cards)

Cards might be digitized (PDF) for online delivery.

Approximately 4 weeks

Project 2

Second readings

The title refers to the role of the designer as interpreter, bringing her/his own cultural and aesthetic background to the “text” at hand. Objectivity or (informed) opinion?

8.5 x 11 (4 pages: front cover, middle spread, back cover - 11 x 17 when flat - double-sided)

You will be given the same text (a poem called “typography, my way”) to structure a 4-page sequence with type and images. From the comparison of the different approaches and solutions to the same problem, we will learn that there are design rules, conventions, as well as design constraints, and that they all have a role in the construction of the sequence. The text of the poem is the basis of this exercise, read the poem carefully and attempt to express/enhance/interpret the author’s meaning, while still preserving its integrity.

Projects might be digitized (PDF or HTML) for online delivery.

Approximately 4 weeks

Project 3 (in two parts)

The digital in everyday life (working title)

The designer as director - storytelling

This project is only in outline form at the time of the start of the class and will be more specifically defined as the class progresses, both in terms of topic and in terms of execution.

Part 1: Project report and proposal (research and first draft)

Part 2: Final product

Various formats to be determined.

There is a possibility to work in groups for part of this project (2-4 people in each group)

Project topics

How the digital has influenced print (vice-versa?) Simultaneity. Contamination: web, TV, music, cinema, comic books. Digital-friendly tools: iPhoto, iMovie, GarageBand, iWeb, etc. Types of communication: email, chat, wi-fi, bluetooth, cellphone, texting (SMS), skype (voice over IP), gps, handwriting, typing, snail mail. In this project the students are the subject: a case study of both digital production and digital use. This project will be personal yet communicative - as in third person singular.

Exact topics to be determined based on student research and suggestions. Possible topic: How do we relate to the digital and the objects that constitute the digital, our personal and public time as influenced by the digital. Short written essays to be presented to the class. Reading and writing, music, interpersonal communication, image production (both still and moving).

Possible final products:

1. a guide
2. a manual
3. a narrative (a story)
4. an information booklet
5. a portfolio
6. a catalog
7. a map

16 pages and up (various formats & page sizes)

Although the format of the research and the gathering of information will be similar for everybody: photos, film, interview, texts, etc., the final projects will have distinct characteristics. Everybody will benefit from a range of formats, although each will only focus on a specific format. Sound and movement might be added and integrated into the final project.

Approximately 8 weeks

Research and first draft: 4 weeks

Final design: 4 weeks

Suggested reading:

Pocket Pal: The Handy Little Book of Graphic Arts Production

by Michael H. Bruno, International Paper, 2004

Please refer to the greensheet for this course for grading policy and other relevant information.

Special thanks to Kristina Bell and Mauro Panzeri for specific suggestions and comments.

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Digital-Analog
Threads and kinship

Observation Card by (first & last name) _____ Date:

OBJECT:

Physical description:

Function (machine for...):

Genealogy (where does it come from...):

Development (where does it go from here...):

Degree of complexity (technological, etc.):

Access (interface):

Configuration (open/closed; inside/outside):

Expression/communication:

Free associations:

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Project 2

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8.5 x 11 (4 pages: front cover, middle spread, back cover - 11 x 17 when flat - double-sided) You will be given the same text (a poem called “typography, my way”) to structure a 4-page sequence with type and images. From the comparison of the different approaches and solutions to the same problem, we will learn that there are design rules, conventions, as well as design constraints, and that they all have a role in the construction of the sequence.

The text of the poem is the basis of this exercise, read the poem carefully and attempt to express / enhance / interpret the author’s meaning, while still preserving its integrity.

Typography, My Way

Distraction the essence of all things good.
I tie my arms upon you like a bow,
musing over inadequacies,
fitting parallels and the tips of ruling pens
into some shocked perspective.

It is vast at my wingtips.

The room so angular, so pointed and particular,
I spy myself in pairs of pupils — such a face.

Before they invented compasses,
how were the circles born?
On sea foam like fair Aphrodite,
or through the grasping of determined fingers,
curling in as leaves?

No matter

You hug me, all words gone,
and there is nothing left for letterforms to say.
the jointed slurs of speech bubble around us,
beautiful without line, unknown to ink or rule or pen

perfect in their clarity

Anonymous

Written in 1991 by a student of typography at the Virginia Commonwealth University,
Richmond, VA. Transcribed by the teacher, Pino Trogu & rediscovered in 2005, San Francisco.

First published as part of a limited edition boxed set of poetry entitled *Verse into TYPE, the APHA Poetry Portfolio*. American Printing History Association, 2006.

230 copies were handset and printed by Jack W. Stauffacher of The Greenwood Press and
included in the APHA portfolio. San Francisco, 2006.