

RRT 183: VISUAL DESIGN SYLLABUS

SEMESTER: Fall 99, Eiben 203, MWF 1:00-2:50 P.M.
INSTRUCTOR: Walter Takeda, Eiben 205
OFFICE HOURS: Afternoons, **appointment at 735-4716 (message after 4 rings)**

Art 103 is a basic visual design studio course that may fulfill the general education requirement and is a pre-major course for all BFA candidates. As a studio course, it meets for 6 hours a week.

SYLLABUS RESPONSIBILITY: The student is responsible for reading, comprehending, and abiding by the terms and directions of this syllabus and cannot claim ignorance of its contents as an excuse.

ATTENDANCE is mandatory! Students are expected to be on time and stay the full period. Instructions come at the beginning of class. Anything over two unexcused absences (e.g. a tardy, leaving early, or a 3rd unexcused absence will result in a full letter grade drop for the ENTIRE COURSE. Anything over 4 absences will result in two letter grade drops for the entire course. Any three combinations of tardies or early leaving will constitute a full absence. All excused absences must fulfill two requirements: 1. the student will call the instructor before the absence (message after 3 rings), and 2. upon return, ~~submit~~ evidence (doctor's slip, service station invoice) **MUST** be produced.

DUE DATES and TIMES are strictly adhered to. A project is due at the beginning of class on the due date of the class schedule. If this is not met and no valid excuse is provided, one letter grade is deducted from the project. Each subsequent day of lateness will result in another letter grade drop. No makeup or extra credit projects exist for this class.

PRESENTATIONS by the student and CRITIQUE by the class will be conducted when projects are due; this will be the case for projects on the Principles of Design, not the Elements section. A poor presentation will detract from the grade of the project; this is NOT to be taken lightly, so prepare some thoughts of explanation, methodology, etc. As important is the experience of presenting material to an audience.

SIGNIFICANT WORK IN THE CLASS is vital. Bring your materials and ideas to do MEANINGFUL work during the classtime. Nothing is more disconcerting than to see a student wasting time or idly toying with impoverished ideas, usually because materials were forgotten. No significant help or suggestion can be rendered under these conditions. This is an extremely bad habit than begins a downward spiral over the semester.

GRADING is a subjective matter and all the more so in the artistic area. A mere compliance with the requirements of the project warrants a grade of C. There is nothing wrong with a C - it denotes adequate work if correctly fulfilling the requirements. Any higher grade requires more creativity with

parameters, a higher degree of execution, greater aesthetic quality, excellent presentation, etc.

MATERIALS will be explained on the first day, and purchased and brought the second day of class. Do not get in the habit of borrowing from your fellow students.

1. 11x14" white drawing pad with wire spiral at top
2. Acrylic paints: black and white (not iridescent colors)
3. Brush: soft synthetic bristle, 1 inch wide chisel or flat type
4. Container for water
5. Cutting tools: scissors, Xacto blade knife
6. Rubber cement
7. Pencils, fine-tip pens; later possibility: technical pen
8. Optional: Color-aid paper packets will save you collecting magazine colors; watercolor pencils (Supracolor brand); pastel colors, etc.

CRAFTSMANSHIP AND NEATNESS count. Avoid submitting sloppy, poorly executed work. Respect the studio and its facilities; do not cut on the tables or put foreign matter down the sink. Please clean your work area before leaving.

GRADING CRITERIA:

2.5% projects: A=100-90, B= 89-80, C= 79-70, D= 69-60, F= 59 or below

Higher percentage projects are multiples of the above scale.

THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE MAY BE ADJUSTED BY THE INSTRUCTOR. The student, if absent, is STILL RESPONSIBLE for any verbal changes of assignments and due dates stated in class; if absent check with your classmates.

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
Au 30: Intro	Sept: work on <u>Space</u>	2: <u>Space</u> due/work on <u>Shape</u>
Se 6: Labor <u>Day</u> - no class	8: <u>Shape</u> due/work on Line	10: Line due/work on Value
13: <u>Value</u> due/work <u>Texture</u>	15: <u>Texture</u> due/work Color	17: Color due/work Focal P. A
20: work on Focal A	22: work on Focal Point A	24: Focal A due/work Focal B
27: work on Focal B	29: work on Focal Point B	Oct1: FocalB due/work Transi.
004: work on Transition	6: work on Transition	8: Transit. due/work on Unit
11: Discoverer's <u>Day</u> - no class	13: work on Unit	15: work on Unit
18: Unit <u>due/work</u> Contr. A	20: work on Contrast A	21: work on Contrast A
25: Contr.A <u>due/work</u> Contr B	27: work on Contrast B	29: work on Contrast B
Nov1 : Contr B due/S mmetr.	3: work on <u>Symmetrical</u> Bal.	5: work on <u>Symmetrical</u> Bal.
8: work on <u>Symmetrical</u> Bal.	10: S mm due/work As mm.	12: work on As mm. Balance
15: work on As mmetricl Bal.	17: work on <u>Asymmetrical</u> B.	19: As mm due/work <u>Logo</u>
22: work on Loo	24: work on Loo	26: <u>Thanksgiving</u> - no class
29: work on Loo	Dec1 : Loo due/work Final	3: work on Final
Dec6 : work on Final	8: work on Final	10: work, submit Final

ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

This course is based on the elements and principles of design, which underlie mostly all design. The elements of design are the physical components of the visual field, not unlike a "vocabulary". In the case of the visual arts, many consider the physical aspects of the visual field as being SPACE, SHAPE, LINE, VALUE, TEXTURE and COLOR.

SPACE: Space is the "container" in which forms exist. Usually in design, the limits or dimensions of space are given. Space can be either two or three dimensional. In a given space, all points on that space are not homogeneous or of equal importance; certain positions in that space are more important than others, such as the center, the horizontal or vertical axis, or either diagonal axis. The space near edges and corners are also more charged.

Our project will deal specifically on how we can impart the illusion of the third dimension (depth) on a two-dimensional surface. An awareness of the effects of these methods can be of significant future importance. For example, you may for some reason wish to avoid any semblance of depth to a wall, and yet may be unconsciously allowing it to occur instead of scrupulously and consciously avoiding such effects.

IMPORTANT NOTE: As in all projects, please read all instructions thoroughly before asking questions. Try to comprehend the instructions on your own first, before consulting with others. This will pay dividends in the long run. Train now for real life on this first **project** especially the dimensions, **la out**, etc.

SPACE PROJECT (1 point - ea pt x 2.5 for %) - **THE ILLUSION OF THE THIRD DIMENSION** (1 page)

You must design a page with 8 rectangles and enough room to write short explanations beneath each rectangle, and a top heading. The design of this page is part of the project. You must then consider margins between the configuration's border and explanation, and between explanation and next configuration. The explanations must be pithy. The rectangles will illustrate the following:

1. Size: smaller objects appear more distant
2. Vertical position: higher objects appear farther
3. diminishing intervals: smaller intervals appear more distant
4. Colors: warm colors advance, cools recede
5. Diagonals: allude to depth more than horizontals and verticals
6. Objects merging with the background appear farther
7. Transparency allude to depth
8. Overlapping: the most powerful indicator of depth

In most cases, two configurations per rectangle are necessary to make the point. Also, do not use another indicator to **HELP** illustrate a point; for example, do not use a large and small circle, with a warmer color for the larger circle.

As in all projects, the grade is based on visual excitement without losing the clarity of the point being made. Do not make the work so complex as to lose this point.

Printing your headings and explanations are critical; architectural block printing is much preferred. Practice! No Jimi Hendrix album cover **flower-lettering** garbage, please!

SHAPE: A two-dimensional shape is an area distinguishable from the background with its own outline, color, texture, and/or value. Sometimes, the shape-space distinction is called figure-ground or positive (form) versus negative (space). A shape can be naturalistic, distorted, ideal, abstract or non-objective. A shape can also have other attributes as rectilinear or curvilinear in nature, hard-edged or loosely defined, and varied in elements of design - color, texture, value, etc.

SHAPE PROJECT (1 point): **DESIGNING SHAPES "FITTED" TO ITS CONTAINER** (1 page)

The purpose of this project is to design forms in the context of a given space. Much of this aesthetic value is Western, as opposed to Indian or Chinese/Japanese views of less limiting spatial dimensions.

Below a title, design four rows of space "containers" with about 112" between rows; within these spaces you are to place shapes. Do not overlap these shapes. The entire exercise is to design shapes that reflect, coalesce with, or complement the "container".

Row -1 will have 3 horizontal rectangles 2"x3" with 1/2" margins and intervals. The shapes will be curvilinear. The first rectangle will have 2 shapes, the second 3 shapes, and the third 4 shapes. This pattern holds true for the next row.

Row 2 will have the same dimensions as above and contain straight-edged shapes.

Row 3 will have 4 squares 2"x2". The first two squares will have 2, then 3 curvilinear shapes. The next two squares will have 2, then 3 straight-edged shapes.

Row 4 will have 3 circles with a 3" diameter. Put 2, 3, and 4 shapes in sequence.

Keep in mind the special grading criteria of harmony and awareness of the prescribed spaces, variation of negative areas, and shapes that are not overly complex, but simple, flat, but well finessed.

LINE: A line is sometimes said to be a dot that moves. Despite its dimensional limitations, it is capable of much information as well as expression, varying from thick to thin, straight or curved, broken or continuous. It most efficaciously implies form by defining its periphery. In addition, cross-hatched lines can denote texture and value. Lines have other abstract overtones. Horizontal lines imply repose, rest or inactivity. Vertical lines imply balance and diagonal lines may imply movement and depth; too many conflicting lines may imply chaos.

LINE PROJECT (1 pt): Draw and glue the following three images on one page:

- A single, mechanically unvarying line meticulously describing several objects.
- A more calligraphic (thick/thin variation) style of the same objects. Also, you may wish to go over a line with another (though not exactly). You may wish to keep the pencil moving on the paper, thus creating lines that are not actual but connect form to form. You may want to draw with your other hand.
- An extremely free, expressive rendition of the above methods.

There is a reason for the progression from disciplined to free. It is difficult to move at an expressive speed while simultaneously trying to create the form. Chinese culture trains the calligrapher to execute a character's form and stroke order to the point where it becomes automatic; he/she then "clothes" that form with style and expression, which would be sorely impeded if the form was not automatic. To a lesser degree we are attempting the same process. The PROCESS is important! You may be doing dozens of drawings. You are NOT just drawing 3 drawings, asking my approval for each.

VALUE is the lightness or darkness of an object or area. It is a property of color as well. Technically, white is the aggregate of all spectrum colors, and black is the absence of color. High value (light) objects are generally perceived as larger than low value (dark) objects.

VALUE PROJECT (1 pt): Stack a column of 9 value swatches plus black and white. The swatches should be 1x2" horizontal rectangles vertically stacked. The acrylic painting should have no streaks or textures, and be thoroughly opaque. There should be no large value jumps between swatches. You are obviously going to paint a 191 more than 11 swatches; save the leftovers for a future project.

TEXTURE is the surface quality of an area; all surfaces have some sort of texture, whether smooth or rough. Textures add variety, richness, and excitement both to shapes and negative areas. Texture is closely allied to our sense of touch. Pattern, or repetitive design, is a kind of texture as well if the units are small; natural textures are generally not so mechanically repetitive. In our project, textures with a physical buildup of material is to be avoided (i.e. gluing rice grains on paper).

TEXTURE PROJECT (1 pt): Arrange 28 swatches (2x2') of widely different textures on 2 pages. Write a brief note how each texture was achieved either below each square or on a transparent overlay. Keep in mind that on this small format, the patterns MUST be small, or it will become a composition.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Again, attitude is everything. If you are simply interested in fulfilling the 28 swatches, you may as well be unconsciously fulfilling any menial task. The pleasure and excitement you build creating different textures will help you later produce more sophisticated projects on the principles of design. Going through too many of your classes with the former attitude probably means the **design field is not for you.**

COLOR is a property of light. A prism divides light into the familiar spectrum or rainbow colors, those which are visible to the human eye. Objects reflect only certain narrow bands of the electromagnetic spectrum (that which we see), and absorb the other colors.

HUE refers to the name of the color, its intrinsic character; a synonym.

INTENSITY refers to the color's brightness. Chroma or saturation are often used as synonyms of intensity. Intensity can be lowered or degraded by mixing with white or black (thus raising or lowering the value); colors mixed with black are called shades and those mixed with white are tints. Colors can also be degraded by mixing with other colors.

VALUE refers to the lightness or darkness of a color. The value scale of the natural spectrum (from light to dark) is yellow, orange, red/green, blue and violet. However, in black and white photography, red reads black, a bonus for designers, who mask an area in see-through red for camera ready work. A natural yellow is of a high or light value; it cannot be lowered to be very dark without losing its intrinsic hue. However, colors on the lower end of the spectrum can be degraded with which to register higher on the value scale without losing its intrinsic hue, i.e. baby blue.

COMPLEMENTARY COLORS are those placed directly across each other on the color wheel. For the spectrum colors they are **red-green**, violet-yellow, and blue-orange. These pairs are **harmonious with each other** in what is termed **SIMULTANEOUS CONTRAST**. Complementary colors have the effect of intensifying each other. Hence an orange next to a blue appears more brilliantly than an orange in isolation. Noncomplementary colors clash to varying degrees, especially red and blue.

ANALOGOUS COLORS are those that are adjacent on the color wheel. A subtly harmonious design can be achieved with analogous colors.

A **MONOCHROMATIC** design is one in which only one color is involved, being taken up and down the value scale.

TEMPERATURE is a term often applied to colors. Reds and oranges are called hot or warm, and are perceived as advancing. Blues, greens and violets are cool and recede.

COLOR PROJECT (1 pt): Cut out colors from magazines or use Color-Aid paper. The size of the swatches and their layout is now up to you; presentation is part of the grade. On 1 page illustrate and write explanations of the following.

1. Two juxtaposed warm analogous colors centered; same colors separate on sides.
2. Two adjacent cool analogous colors centered; same colors separate on sides.
3. Two adjacent complementary colors centered; same separated to sides (juxtaposed colors are intensified).
4. One cool color on warm field, on the same row with the next:
Reverse the same colors in #4 (statement on advancing/receding)
5. A row in which you place a color against white, grey & black backgrounds.
6. A design of grey and a color (**50%** ea), in same row with its complementary.

PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Elements of design are organized, composed, designed, or manipulated according to certain principles. If the elements of design are like vocabulary, the principles of design are like grammar. Although there is considerable difference of opinion as to definition and number of principles, we shall be involved with the following: **FOCAL POINT**, **TRANSITION**, **UNITY**, **BALANCE**, and **CONTRAST**.

FOCAL POINT: A focal point is an area of emphasis that contrasts with areas of subordination. A design lacking a focal point risks boredom or chaos, with all parts of a given dimension of equal weight or interest. This even randomness is not unlike a repetitive yardage pattern.

FOCAL POINT PROJECT Write a heading each project. Take care not to make the focal point **BLATANTLY** obvious. Also, do not use a plain, white background.

A. **SIZE VARIATION** (3 pts) with major/minor focal points; horizontal rectangle size 6x9" or larger. In this project there will be two focal points, principle and secondary. More information and examples will be given in class.

B. **SPATIAL ISOLATION** (3 pts) Horizontal 6x9" or larger. A focus on an object can be obtained by isolating it from a group of similar objects. These other forms, objects or elements must be closely clustered or partially overlapped, yet not coalesce to form a competing focal point.

TRANSITION ameliorates sharply contrasting elements. It is not always listed as a design principle, and is sometimes considered an aspect of the principle of unity.

TRANSITION PROJECT (3 pts): Stack two horizontal rectangles 5x9". On the top rectangle on the left side, place at least 3 straight-line forms, and on the right side at least 3 curvilinear forms. It is recommended that space be left between forms, and much space between the two groups. They should contrast with the background (not white). Repeat the exact shapes and positions on the second rectangle. Introduce other elements to the second rectangle so that a transition is achieved. Do not obliterate or significantly subordinate the original shapes.

UNITY: A work must have a sense of unity, harmony, or agreement so that all the elements look as if they belong together. A design normally needs variety of elements to be interesting, but the unity principle must keep this variety in check. An element within a structure that is incongruous with the whole draws immense **negative attention to itself . . .** a Ming chair in a Victorian parlor.

Another way of defining a unified design is that the whole must predominate over its parts; the viewer sees the overall totality or visual logic before individual components.

Unity can be achieved by **PROXIMITY OR GROUPING**. Here, by placing elements close together, they read as a group before reading as individual objects. According to Gestalt psychology, there is an innate tendency of the mind to structure visual stimuli by grouping, thereby making more visual human sense of nature's chaos. In **REPETITION**, elements are repeated in a design, thus establishing a relationship between those elements. A visual field in which all elements differ approaches chaos. **CONTINUATION** is a more sophisticated means of attaining unity, whereby certain forms obviously or subtly continue direction from other forms. Baroque paintings of Rubens obviously express this interfigural continuity. Mastery of this can lead the viewer's eye to directions the artist/designer wishes, e.g. to the focal point.

UNITY PROJECT (3 pts): From magazines, cut 8 objects of real, photographed items in color. Temporarily fix them to at least a 5x8" rectangle in a disunited, even manner. Photocopy this. Remove the cutout objects and rearrange them with unity in mind. **Keep** in mind that the viewer **should first be inclined to** see the overall design before the individual objects.

CONTRAST or variety provides interest, without which designs would be **uneventfully** dull. All the elements can be used in contrasting manner, different textures, complementary colors, line versus shape, etc. The requirement is also to bring in all other previous principles into play.

A. **HIGH CONTRAST PROJECT** (3 pts): Select a few elements that will contrast considerably, to include the element of value.

B. **LOW CONTRAST PROJECT** (3 pts): Limit the contrasting range of your elements, to include value.

As the last project on the principles of design, incorporate other principles as well.

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BALANCE: Human beings have an innate sense of physical balance. Thus the Leaning Tower of Pisa is arrestingly disturbing; we avoid overhanging rocks and avoid walking under ladders. Artists and designers tend to order the elements of their work into a balanced state of equilibrium, or in a composition. In the West, composition means that all the forms and forces are so disposed within given dimensions, that they are resolved within that area. The design area is self-referent, self-contained, balanced.

A. SYMMETRICAL BALANCE PROJECT (4 pts): Balance is most easily achieved through symmetry, in which the left side is identical to the right. Symmetry imparts a psychological overtone that is formal, static, stately, dignified, calm, noble, hieratic, ordered, hierarchical, conservative, and enduring. Most architecture is symmetrical for these reasons. The values listed above apply to banks, government buildings, churches, and even homes. However, the major pitfall of symmetry is boredom. This can be offset by slightly asymmetrical **subordinate parts**. **III these subordinate parts** that do not compete with the overall symmetrical form(s), use unequal weights, variety of design elements (textures, shapes, values, etc.) or movement.

On an 8.5x11 sheet, compose a design according to the above notes. Design a fairly complex symmetrical form, possibly of several parts. This should not be overwhelmed by the asymmetrical subordinate parts that add variety and interest.

B. ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE PROJECT (4 pts): This is not unlike a seesaw with a larger, weightier person closer to the center. Also illustrative of the problem is the trick question, "What weighs more, a pound of feathers or a pound of lead?" This is a more difficult assignment, for the end product or design must still be balanced without the predominant weight exactly in the middle. Asymmetrical compositions are more energetic or dynamic, but can lapse into chaos and imbalance. Create an asymmetrical composition on an 8.5x11" sheet. As above, do not use a plain white background.

LOGO: Decide from the following: family crest or mon, Japanese/Chinese characters, future profession, avocation or hobby, something personal associated with you, your initials, a short name of 3 letters, etc. Additionally, you may design a logo for a relative or friend's business. This is something that will be of future value, so do well!

BASIC SHAPE (4 pts) Handouts with specific instructions concerning this important project will be given in class. Budget quality time for this heavyweight project!

FINAL PROJECT (4 pts) To be specified later in semester.