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## DESIGN 4 Visual Organization & Information Design

- » Spring 2008 | Monday 6:00 PM - 8:40 PM
- » Instructor: Andrew Robinson
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- » Office hours: By appointment only
- » CRN: Design 4 - 3156 - PUDM 2003 - C
- » Building: Arnhold Hall 55 W13th
- » Room: 425

## Syllabus

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### Course Description

This course is a continuation of Design 3: Visual Organization and Information Design, with an emphasis on the latter. Students will explore information design by examining and creating visual communication in the form of page layouts, diagrams, charts, pictographs, maps and instructional material. The class involves a studio and will draw upon previous design and technology skills. Prerequisites: Design 1, 2, 3, and Design & Technology

The focus of this course is visual organization and information design.

This class will explore:

- » Practical applications of Gestalt principles of visual organization
- » Form, meaning and culture through objective and subjective representation
- » Visual explanations including maps and charts
- » Sequence and narrative through typographic and pictorial instructions
- » Systematic graphic and information design

### Assessable Tasks

- » The coursework will include in-class and out-of-class projects that demonstrate on-going development in visual analysis, design, and presentation skills.
- » Out-of-class projects will range in duration from 1 to 5 weeks, with work to review due each week.
- » Readings and discussions.
- » Final project presentation at the end of the semester.
- » Group critiques.

### Learning Outcomes and Objectives:

- » Develop a conceptual understanding of visual organization.
- » Develop an ability to apply this conceptual understanding to the development of practical skills.
- » Develop a repertoire of strategy for the visualization of a variety of kinds of information.
- » Understand the implications that visual organization skills hold for the practice of design management.
- » Prepare students to apply their knowledge of visual organization to their upper-level classes

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Material included is intended to provide an outline of the course and rules that the instructor will adhere to in evaluating the student's progress. However, this syllabus is not intended to be a legal contract. Questions regarding the syllabus are welcome at any time and may be directed to the instructor.

Syllabus online - [www.acrstudio.com/teaching/](http://www.acrstudio.com/teaching/)

## Course Theme

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### Project: Campaign Propaganda

Graphic design is a powerful means of communicating civic messages and stimulating thinking about the issues that define our world. Conscious visual organization and information design makes complex information easier to understand and to use. In this class we will examine a variety of design tactics and apply them to the study and development of campaign propaganda.

Each student will choose an issue at the beginning of the semester to focus their project work on. Students will sequentially develop, design and refine a semester long project resulting in the systematic design of deliverable for an "issue" centered collection of campaign propaganda. Students' efforts will culminate in the production of a design system which may include logos, symbols, color and type palettes, posters, flyers, voting guides, brochures, etc...

It may seem strange to suggest that the study of propaganda has relevance to contemporary (life and) politics. After all, when most people think about propaganda, they think of the enormous campaigns that were waged by Hitler and Stalin in the 1930s. Since nothing comparable is being disseminated in our society today, many believe that propaganda is no longer an issue.

But propaganda can be as blatant as a swastika or as subtle as a joke. Its persuasive techniques are regularly applied by politicians, advertisers, journalists, radio personalities, and others who are interested in influencing human behavior. Propagandistic messages can be used to accomplish positive social ends, as in campaigns to reduce drunk driving, but they are also used to win elections and to sell malt liquor.

As Anthony Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson point out, *"every day we are bombarded with one persuasive communication after another. These appeals persuade not through the give-and-take of argument and debate, but through the manipulation of symbols and of our most basic human emotions. For better or worse, ours is an age of propaganda."* (Pratkanis and Aronson, 1991)<sup>1</sup>

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**1** <http://www.propagandacritic.com/articles/intro.why.html>

## Final Project Notes

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As we move forward into the semester we will be building on each class and project in an effort to explore the practical applications of visual organization and information design as it relates to communication in public campaigns and propaganda.

### Preliminary Research

Each student will choose an issue to create a campaign for. It should fall into one or more of the following categories:

- » Social
- » Political
- » Economic
- » Religious
- » Cultural

Begin researching the issue by compiling relevant facts and statistics, anecdotal stories, history, etc. Throughout the semester assignments will be focused on developing designs related to each student's campaign issue. Imagine your campaign's "brand" and communicate that through maps, factual and/or propagandistic information, narratives, logos, print marketing, campaign schwag, and data through information graphics, etc.

### Final Presentation

You will develop a presentation for the final project at the end of the semester which illustrates a systematic design for an issue driven campaign. The specifics for this presentation will be outlined mid-semester.

General notes for the submission of your final presentation. Your final project presentation should be developed using Adobe InDesign, Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop. Make sure your full name is on your presentation deliverable both hard copy and source files CD.

Submit all final electronic files which includes:

- » A complete set of hard copy, color printed material mounted for presentation
- » All files compiled onto a CD (in a case) or Thumbdrive
- » A complete set of pdf files.
- » A complete set of source files (Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign) as well as any supporting photography, graphics, Photoshop, illustrator files, etc.
- » Make sure to include your full name written on the top of the storage device.
- » All quoted text, research, data, etc. should be sourced using footnotes, end notes, source credits and/or a bibliography if appropriate.

## Issues List

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Choose an issue to use as a theme for your propaganda campaign.

If you're not sure where to begin here is a list of just a few hot-button issues in current events.

- » Abortion
- » Afganistan
- » AIDS
- » Al Qaeda
- » Alcohol
- » Animal cruelty
- » Anti-Semitism
- » Automobile fatalities
- » Big business
- » Big government
- » Black power
- » Burma (Union of Myanmar)
- » Campaign finance
- » Child care
- » Child labor
- » Child soldiers
- » Civil rights
- » Corporate power
- » Crime
- » Darfur
- » Death penalty
- » Disabilities rights
- » Domestic violence
- » Drugs
- » Eating disorders
- » Economy
- » Education
- » Election Reform
- » Environment
- » Equal rights
- » Evolution
- » Factory farming
- » Female genital mutilation
- » Gay rights
- » Globalization
- » Gun Violence
- » Human Rights
- » Hunger
- » India
- » Intelligent design
- » Illiteracy
- » Iran
- » Iraq
- » Israel
- » Kenya
- » Land mines
- » Lebanon
- » Liberal elite
- » Marijuana
- » McDonalds
- » Minimum wage
- » Narcotics
- » Nike
- » Pakistan
- » Palestine
- » Peace
- » Poverty
- » Prayer in the schools
- » Privacy
- » Racism
- » Recycling
- » Religious right
- » Right to life
- » Same-sex marriage
- » Saudi Arabia
- » Separation of church and state
- » Sex Trafficking
- » Sharia law
- » Slavery
- » Surveillance
- » Tax reform
- » Taxation
- » Terrorism
- » Theocracy
- » Tobacco
- » Torture sanctions by governments
- » Unfair trade agreements
- » Unions
- » Vegetarianism
- » Voter Apathy (voter turn out)
- » Walmart (and other big box stores)
- » War
- » Women's Rights
- » Worker rights
- » etc....

Choose an issue you feel passionately about.

## Class Schedule

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- » Week 1: Jan 28 Form and Meaning  
Topic: Shaping content and context with visual forms
- » Class Activity: Review of Design III topics and learnings
- » Week 2: Feb 4 Objective and Subjective representation  
Topics: visual hierarchy, typographic grids, page layouts, type/image relationships
- » Week 3: Feb 11 Objective and Subjective representation, continued  
Class Activity: work in progress

*Feb 18 No Class on Monday, President's Day. Instead we will have class on Tuesday Feb 19.*

- » Week 4: Feb 19 Objective and Subjective representation, continued  
Class Activity: work in progress, midpoint in-class review
- » Week 5: Feb 25 Objective and Subjective representation, continued  
Class Activity: work in progress
- » Week 6: Mar 3 Visual explanations  
Topics: Maps, charts and diagrams  
Class Activity: project critique  
*\* Midterm Review*
- » Week 7: Mar 10 Visual explanations  
Class Activity: work in progress

*Mar 17 No Class this week, Spring Break*

- » Week 8: Mar 24 Visual explanations  
Class Activity: work in progress
- » Week 9: Mar 31 Visual explanations  
Class Activity: project critique
- » Week 10: Apr 7 Sequence, narrative and storytelling  
Topics: storyboards, ternary form, visual learning through sequence and pictorial instructions  
Class Activity: Begin narrative project
- » Week 11: Apr 14 Sequence, narrative and storytelling  
Class Activity: work in progress
- » Week 12: Apr 21 Sequence, narrative and storytelling  
Class Activity: work in progress
- » Week 13: Apr 28 Sequence, narrative and storytelling  
Class Activity: work in progress
- » Week 14: May 5 Sequence, narrative and storytelling  
Class Activity: Preliminary review and revisions on work in progress
- » Week 15: May 12 Final Presentations

In the rare instance that I am delayed arriving to class. If I have not arrived by the time class is scheduled to start, please wait a minimum of thirty minutes for my arrival. In the event that I will miss class entirely, a sign will be posted at the classroom and an e-mail will be sent to you indicating the next week's assignment.

## Grading Standards

Your grade is determined by your performance in following areas:

25 % Participation (discussion at critiques), attendance, and use of in-class work time

How much did you contribute to class discussion, lectures, and critiques? Were you a valuable asset to your fellow students?

25 % Homework (Average of individual grades)

Did you complete your assignments? How well did you complete the assignments? Did you take care in the craft and presentation of your assignments? Did you complete and comprehend the readings? Did you surpass the requirements and push the boundaries of the assignment?

50% Final Project Presentation

Did you make a professional presentation? Was your design systematic in nature? How dedicated were you to your project? Did you keep a consistent index of your work? Can you track your process with your preliminary research and documentation? Did you strive for excellence in design?

General Assignment Assessment System

Letter Grade	4-Point Scale	100-Point Scale	Description
A	4.0-3.9	96-100	Work of Exceptional Quality
A-	3.8-3.5	91-95	Work of Very High Quality
B+	3.4-3.2	86-90	Work of High Quality, Higher than Average Abilities
B	3.1-2.9	81-85	Very Good Work; Satisfies the Goals of the Course
B-	2.8-2.5	76-80	Good Work
C+	2.4-2.2	71-75	Above Average Work, Average Un-derstanding of Course Material
C	2.1-1.9	66-70	Average Work; Passable
C-	1.8-1.5	61-65	Passable Work but Below Good Aca-demic Standing
D+	1.4-1.2	56-60	Passable Work but Significantly Below Good Academic Standing
D	1.1-0.9	51-55	Below Average Work
D-	0.8-0.7	46-50	Barely Passable Work
F	0.0-0.7	0-45	Failure; No Credit
WF	0.0	0	Unofficial withdrawal
I			A grade of "Incomplete" is given only with the written approval of the instructor and the Program Director or Department Chair. The Request for an Incomplete Grade Form must be filled out by the stu-dent and instructor prior to the end of the semester. If a grade of incomplete is approved, outstanding work must be submitted within a period of four weeks after the last day of class.

## Class Policies

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### Student Responsibilities

- » Treat class time as an opportunity
- » Arrive to class on time, with all materials, ready to work steadily
- » Be prepared with all your required materials for every class
- » Complete assignments and readings on time
- » Back up all your electronic files each week.
- » Always strive for excellence in design. Clear visual presentation of all stages of work will be essential.
- » Any papers should be neatly typed. No handwritten papers will be accepted.
- » Participate in class discussions and critiques
- » Ask for help when needed
- » Respect your fellow students at all times
- » You are responsible for cleaning up after yourself at the end of each class
- » No iPods or cellular phones are allowed in class (you will be asked to leave class if your phone rings and will be marked absent)
- » MAKE SURE YOUR PHONE IS OFF BEFORE EVERY CLASS

### Academic Integrity and Honesty

Academic honesty is the duty of every member of an academic community to claim authorship of his or her own work, and only for that work, and to recognize the contributions of others accurately and completely. Academic honesty is fundamental to the integrity of intellectual debate and creative and academic pursuits. All members of the University community are expected to conduct themselves in accord with the standards of academic honesty. Students are responsible for knowing and making use of proper procedures for writing papers, presenting and performing their work, taking examinations, and doing research.

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind in the course of academic work will not be tolerated. Academic honesty includes accurate use of quotations, as well as appropriate and explicit citation of sources in instances of paraphrasing and describing ideas, or reporting on research findings or any aspect of the work of others (including that of instructors and other students). These standards of academic honesty and citation of sources apply to all forms of academic work (examinations, essays, theses, computer work, art and design work, oral presentations, and other projects).

It is the responsibility of students to learn the procedures specific to their discipline for correctly and appropriately differentiating their own work from that of others. Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, academic warning, disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, or dismissal from the university.

Every student at Parsons signs an Academic Integrity Statement as a part of the registration process. Thus, you are held responsible for being familiar with, understanding, adhering to and upholding the spirit and standards of academic integrity as set forth by the Parsons School of Design Student Handbook .

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## Attendance Policy

Full participation in the studio and classroom experience is essential to the educational process. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly.

- » Perfect attendance will be considered in the evaluation of your final grade.
- » 3 absences leads to a one full grade deduction off the final grade (e.g. from a B to a C);
- » 4 absences leads to failure.

The following may be counted as an absence:

- » Coming to class without the required materials
- » Sleeping in class
- » Being asked to leave class because of disruptive behavior.
- » Doing other course work in class.

### Tardiness

Two tardies will be counted as one absence.

Class begins on the hour sharp. The door to the classroom will be closed at that time. Anyone walking in after the door has closed (when class has started) will be marked late. Even 5 minutes is considered tardy.

NOTE: When a student is absent, it is a student's responsibility to obtain missed assignments from other classmates, the professor (via e-mail) and/or the class web site and make-up the work in time for the next class.

## Materials

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### Essentials

- » journal / sketch book
- » 18 or 24 inch metal straight edge
- » ruler (with both picas and inches)
- » x-acto knife with package of #11 blades
- » technical pen(s) (00 and /or 1)
- » 12 x 17 inch pad of sketch paper
- » 12 x 17 inch pad of 4-ply white bristol paper, smooth finish
- » tracing paper, pad or roll
- » white art tape
- » hot press illustration board
- » black and white gouache paint. medium or large tubes.  
(suggested brand: Winsor & Newton Designer)
- » black India Ink
- » quill Ink pen holder and at least 3 ink nibs to go with your pen  
(fine, super fine and medium nib points)
- » water color brushes (type Round, size #1, #3, and one 1" wash brush)
- » 12"x18" (or larger) Cutting Mat
- » rubber cement (no spray mount in class)
- » rubber cement pick-up
- » white vinyl or pink pearl eraser
- » scissors
- » burnisher (an old spoon works best)
- » 2 USB flash drives
- » Digital camera

You will need access to a digital camera for your research.

If you do not own one the university has digital cameras which you may borrow.

For more information: [http://www.newschool.edu/at/agreements/s\\_eqc\\_agreement.html](http://www.newschool.edu/at/agreements/s_eqc_agreement.html)

Note there may be additional materials as required for specific projects.

## Preparing electronic files

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You should bring your electronic source files to each class on a thumb drive. All electronic source files are to be submitted at the end of the semester on a CD or Thumbdrive.

When naming your files use the following convention when you submit your work each week. Last name, first initial, week number, and a short descriptive project name followed by the file suffix e.g. jpg, .jpeg, .indd, tiff, eps, pdf, .doc, .ppt, etc. Web servers do not like spaces or most punctuation in a file name, so run everything together and use characters (aBc), numbers (123) and the underscore (\_).

Examples:

**Incorrect:** andrew robinson week1/projectname, ar#1 project:na.me.doc

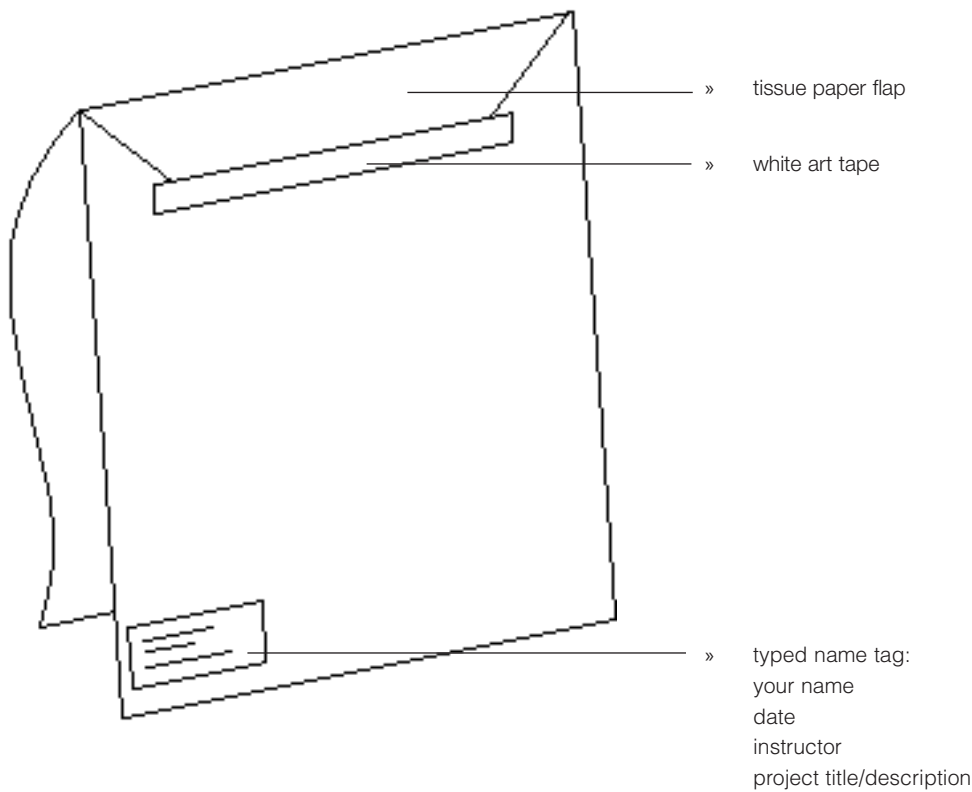
### How to prepare a project for submission.

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Execute all assignments in a professional manner: clean, neat, well presented. This is taken into consideration when evaluating your work it will impact your grade.

All final projects unless otherwise instructed should be mounted on 2 or 3 ply white hot press illustration board. The art work should be mounted using rubber cement (no spray mount inside the class room please). Neatly trim the art work and mount the work centered on the face of the illustration board. The illustration board should have a neatly cut mat and even boarder around the face of the work. Provide for a 2" margin on the top, left and right and a 4" margin on the bottom. For example if your project art work is 8.5x11" portrait format. Mount art work vertically on a 10.5x15" piece of illustration board. Cover the face of the work with a protective flap of Tissue (glassine, or tracing paper). Create a label with your name, date, instructor and project name and attach it to the back securely.

Example below shows the BACK view of the board which includes the label.



## Readings and Resources

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There is no one required text book for this class. Instead there will be several readings distributed in class. In addition to the readings below is a list of various texts that may be referenced and offer an excellent source of information about the topics we will be covering in class.

### Visual language and Graphic Design

- » Alexander, Christopher. Notes on the Synthesis of Form. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.
- » Dondis, Donis A. A Primer of Visual Literacy. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973.
- » Müller-Brockmann, Josef. Grid systems in graphic design, 4th revised edition 1996, Arthur Niggli Ltd, Switzerland.
- » Wong, Wucius. Principles of Two-Dimensional Form. New York: Van Nostrand, 1988.

### Typography

- » Thinking with Type, A Critical Guide For Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students. by Ellen Lupton. Princeton Architecture Press, New York, 2004
- » Carter, Rob, Ben Day, and Philip Meggs. Typographic Design: Form and Communication. New York:Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993.
- » Bringhurst, Robert. The elements of typographic style, 2nd. edition. Point Roberts, WA : Hartley & Marks, 1996, 1999, 2001.
- » Heller, Stephen. Typology: Type Design from the Victorian Era to the Digital Age. New York:Chronicle Books, 1999.
- » Spiekermann, Erik and E.M.Ginger. Stop Stealing Sheep & Find Out How Type Works, Second Edition. New York: Pearson Education, 2002.
- » Adams, Thomas F. Typographia; or, The printer's instructor : a brief sketch of the origin, rise, and progress of the typographic art, with practical directions for conducting every department in an office, hints to authors, publishers, etc. Philadelphia : L. Johnson, 1854. (page images, Making of America)
- » <http://www.typophile.com>

### Information Design

- » Mijksenaar, Paul. Visual Function: An Introduction to Information Design. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997.
- » Jacobson, Robert, ed. Information Design. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999.
- » Kosslyn, Stephen M. Elements of Graph Design. New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1994.
- » Mijksenaar, Paul and Piet Westendorp. Open Here: The Art of Instructional Design. New York: Joost Elffers Books, 1999.
- » Norman, Donald. The Design of Everyday Things. New York: Basic Books, 1988.
- » Wildbur, Peter. Information Graphics: a survey of typographic, diagrammatic and cartographic communication. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1989.
- » Wildbur, Peter and Michael Burke. Information Graphics: Innovative Solutions in Contemporary Design. London: Thames & Hudson, 1998.
- » Tufte, Edward. The Cognitive Style of Powerpoint. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press, 2003.
- » Tufte, Edward. Envisioning Information. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press, 1990.
- » Tufte, Edward. The Visual Display of Quantitative Information. 2nd Edition. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press, 2001.
- » Tufte, Edward. Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press, 1997.
- » Wurman, Richard Saul. Information Anxiety 2. Pearson Education, 2000.

Additional readings will be listed online <http://www.acrstudio.com/teaching/dmdesign4/reading.htm>

A collection of related links is stored on the public Del.icio.us account and tagged with Design4. Check out these links <http://del.icio.us/acrstudio/Design4>