Visual Principles for the Screen
Syllabus

Course Overview + Objectives

There is a vast network of skills and fields of practice that contribute to the visual form of the internet — the digital landscape we interact with on a daily basis. In this course, we will delve into the roles of visual designer and user interaction designer. Through designing and prototyping screen-based experiences from the ground up, you will learn the fundamental graphic design skills of layout, hierarchy, typography, use of the grid, scale, balance, color, content curation, and language.

Graphic design, at its core, is a method for creating coherent systems — whether it be for a book, website, brand guide, or wayfinding program. All have an internal logic that bring disparate pieces together, guiding the user through intuitive, engaging, and clear experiences.

As you design in this course, you will learn to think on both a micro and macro level. At the macro level, you will design a broadly consistent and clear systematic approach in projects. At the micro level, you will make design decisions that consider the individual user’s experience, and will coordinate the fine design details that are the essence of a seamless product in today’s world.

Students who complete this course successfully will be able to produce thoughtfully crafted prototypes that clearly demonstrate a given concept. Students will also become practiced in presenting their ideas as an edited and coherent deliverable. As projects progress, so too will their complexity, and the challenge of building flexible yet consistent systems.

Class Meeting Time + Course Schedule

Tuesdays and Thursdays 1–2:20p with lab hours following class from 2:30–4p, during which time the instructor will be available for both additional project feedback and technical support. The semester schedule is available here. Office hours will be established within the first week of class.
Technology + Software

We will work with Sketch software for designing projects, and InVision will be used to bring your final designs into an interactive prototype as the final project deliverable. The Adobe Creative Suite (InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop) may be used for preparing presentations and additional design assets as they arise.

The Kemper 040L and Steinberg 203 computer labs are loaded with Sketch which can support your work in this class. If you choose, you may purchase a student license for Sketch which costs $50.

Ultimately, if you prefer to work in a program other than Sketch for design work, it is up to each student to work in the programs that best suit their workflow and to fulfill coursework to the required standard. Please consult with the instructor before migrating to a different program. The best PC alternative to Sketch is Figma.

Course Structure and Assignments

This class is a studio course grounded firmly in generating design projects that are supported by exploration and research — both visual and conceptual. The course will consist of:

1. Two long-term projects
2. 4 Exercises
3. Assigned Readings

Class hours will be used for lectures, collaborative studio work hours, and critique of varying scales. Both class time and lab hours are for students to consult with the instructor on current project-related progress and technical questions. Due to the condensed class length, students are welcome to make consistent use of lab and office hours to receive instructor feedback.

This course will be demanding of your time and commitment. It is critical to maintain your investment on a weekly basis to steadily progress on course projects. You should expect to spend 3 hours outside of class per week on coursework, though more time is welcome.
Assessment Criteria

Projects

Planning, Preparation, and Process
Design is a cumulative process, and investment in each stage of a project plays a significant role in both your learning and in student assessment. Process is viewed by the quality, depth, and thoroughness of each stage of a project — research, concept development, wireframing, sketching, and design development.

Content
Requirements for content that must be included in the project as outlined by the assignment instructions are met. Content is thoughtfully considered and structured, and copywriting is considered.

Design
Design principles are put to use in project outcomes. Demonstrated, thoughtful reasoning is articulated for design decisions. The craft for both projects and their prototype presentations is polished, annotated, and neatly designed.

Exercises
Exercises are smaller, continuous, in-class opportunities to experiment with design methods and ideas. They provide an opportunity to broaden your experience and knowledge in this course. Exercises are not weighted as heavily as projects. They are assessed based on breadth of exploration, development, and the proper use of class time to progress.

Participation and Investment
Demonstrate consistent and invested progress on all coursework both in and out of the classroom; active contributions made to class discussions and critique; problem-solver attitude, seeking out answers and solutions that contribute to your own learning and progress.

Evaluation Rubric
Students will be assessed based on their participation and commitment, depth and variety in process, and on the overall body of work produced in the course.

15% Participation and Attendance
60% Projects 1 + 2
25% Exercises 1 – 4

Students will receive feedback on their work through individual and group critiques as projects develop. Your instructor will be available by appointment to discuss assignments and overall course progress, and a letter grade is given at the end of the semester.
Expectations + Policies

Students should arrive on time prepared to work with any needed materials/software/hardware, and ready to show and discuss project progress that is due.

On dates when final projects are due, work must be ready to share at the start of class. If not prepared, the project will be considered one day late.

While we will be working in class on computers and phones, you will use them for coursework only. No use of email, facebook, instagram or other non-course related internet browsing will be permitted during class.

Inclusive Learning Environment

This course functions as a studio—a shared space of creative work and dialogue. All interactions in class will be civil, respectful, and supportive of an inclusive learning environment for all students. I encourage you to speak to the instructor, Erika Roos (Erika Harano), Department Chair John Hendrix, or an advisor about any concerns you may have about classroom participation and classroom dynamics.

The best learning environment—whether in the classroom, studio, laboratory, or fieldwork site—is one in which all members feel respected while being productively challenged. At Washington University in St. Louis, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive atmosphere, in which all participants can contribute, explore, and challenge their own ideas as well as those of others. Every participant has an active responsibility to foster a climate of intellectual stimulation, openness, and respect for diverse perspectives, questions, personal backgrounds, abilities, and experiences, although instructors bear primary responsibility for its maintenance.

A range of resources is available to those who perceive a learning environment as lacking inclusivity, as defined in the preceding paragraph. If possible, we encourage students to speak directly with their instructor about any suggestions or concerns they have regarding a particular instructional space or situation. Alternatively, students may bring concerns to another trusted advisor or administrator (such as an academic advisor, mentor, department chair, or dean). All classroom participants—including faculty, staff, and students—who observe a bias incident affecting a student may also file a report (whether personally or anonymously) utilizing the online Bias Report and Support System.
Attendance Policy

- Attendance is mandatory, and will be documented for all course meetings. Sam Fox students are expected to arrive ready to participate and be fully engaged in the day’s coursework during the entire scheduled class period.

- Participation in major critiques and reviews by all students is essential to the development of all students. Failure to do so will have an impact on your final grade.

- Following university policy, class will begin promptly with the start time listed in the undergraduate bulletin.

- Students are allowed two unexcused absences. After two unexcused absences, students will receive one full letter grade penalty for each subsequent absence.

- Three late arrivals and/or early departures will equal one absence. If a student misses more than 20 minutes of a class, they are considered absent.

- Missing a review or critique equals two absences. If a student must miss a critique, please inform the instructor beforehand.

- Any student who misses class is responsible for contacting a fellow student to find out what they missed, for making up all work, and for being prepared for the next class.

- In the case of severe medical or family emergencies, contact the Dean of Students Georgia Binnington as soon as possible: gbinning@wustl.edu, 314-935-6532.

Penalties for Late Work and Requests for Extensions

Work handed in late will go down one letter grade for each day it is delayed. If there are exceptional circumstances affecting the delivery of a final project, please speak with both the instructor and Dean of Students Georgia Binnington. Extension requests should be made directly to the instructor and will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Regrading Policy

Main projects can be submitted for regrading if submitted two weeks before the last class of the semester. Significant, clear changes need to have been made to substantiate a new evaluation.

Grade Dispute Policy

The Sam Fox School aims to provide each student with a fair assessment of their academic work and studio. Students have the right to dispute their overall course grade (not individual assignments) if they believe that grade does not accurately reflect the quality of their work. A grade dispute must be submitted to the faculty member who assigned the grade within 30 days of receipt of the grade. The School stresses that every effort to resolve this dispute be made by the faculty and student involved. A student’s eligibility for advancement in sequential coursework requires timely resolution of the grade dispute. For more information visit https://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/files/Greivance%20Policy_Update%202019.pdf.
Technology Policies

Computers or other electronic devices, including “smart pens” (devices with an embedded computer and digital audio recorder that records the classroom lecture/discussion and links that recording to the notes taken by the student), may be used by students at the discretion of the faculty member to support the learning activities in the classroom. These activities include taking notes and accessing course readings under discussion. If a student wishes to use a smart-pen or other electronic device to audio record lectures or class discussions, they must notify the instructor in advance of doing so. Permission to use recording devices is at the discretion of the instructor, unless this use is an accommodation approved by Disability Resources.

Non-academic use of laptops and other devices and use of laptops or other devices for other coursework is distracting and seriously disrupts the learning process for other people in the classroom. Neither computers nor other electronic devices are to be used in the classroom during class for nonacademic reasons or for work on other coursework. Non-academic use includes emailing, texting, social networking, playing games, instant messaging, and use of the Internet. Work on other coursework may include, but is not limited to, use of the Internet, writing papers, using statistical software, analyzing data, and working on quizzes or exams. The nonacademic use of cell phones during class time is prohibited, and they should be set on silent before class begins. In the case of an emergency, please step out of the room to take the call. The instructor has the right to hold students accountable for meeting these expectations, and failure to do so may result in a loss of participation or attendance points, a loss of the privilege of device use in the classroom, or being asked to leave the classroom.

The Sam Fox School Information Technology Infrastructure has many services for your benefit. Visit https://sites.wustl.edu/insidesfs/it/ for more information.

License For Non-exclusive Right to Reproduce and Distribute

Erika Roos (Erika Harano) has non-exclusive right to reproduce and distribute work produced in this class as part of a publication or body of work, which may include products from this course or other works. Students retain ownership of all rights held under copyright. This permission is revocable for 3 months following the conclusion of this course via notification in writing to Erika Roos (Erika Harano).

Ethics Violations of Academic Integrity

Ethical behavior is an essential component of learning and scholarship. Students are expected to understand, and adhere to, the University’s academic integrity policy: wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html. Students who violate this policy will be referred to the Academic Integrity Policy Committee. Penalties for violating the policy will be determined by the Academic Integrity Policy committee, and can include failure of the assignment, failure of the course, suspension or expulsion from the University. Additionally, students should If you have any doubts about what constitutes a violation of the Academic Integrity policy, or any other issue related to academic integrity, please ask the instructor.
Always cite sources when ideas are presented and/or language that was developed by another individual, including material from class lectures and discussions.

Violation of this policy includes collaborating on assignments where collaboration is not allowed and/or utilizing notes, texts, etc. on any assignment where use of such materials is not allowed.

**English Language Proficiency**

If English language proficiency is such that the student may need special assistance in lectures, reading, written assignments, and/or exam taking, please communicate these needs to the instructor who may refer the student to the English Language Program (ELP). ELP is a University-wide resource that provides classes and academic English language support designed to increase non-native English speaking students' English language proficiency and to facilitate their academic success at Washington University. Other Academic Assistance resources are available through the Office for International Students and Scholars.

**Religious Holidays**

The Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Art recognizes the individual student’s choice in observing religious holidays that occur during periods when classes are scheduled. Students are encouraged to arrange with their instructors to make up work missed as a result of religious observance, and instructors are asked to make every reasonable effort to accommodate such requests.

**Resources for Students**

For information on all available student resources, including disability accommodations, campus safety, mental health resources, writing assistance, grievance procedures, and much more, please go to https://insidesamfox.wustl.edu/students/advising/student-campus-resources/

**Disclaimer**

The instructor reserves the right to make modifications to this information throughout the semester.
Project Submission

All projects must be submitted digitally, as a PDF or Google presentation, to your Box folder.

Exercises, projects, and presentations completed before Spring Break will be submitted to your Box folder by Sunday March 8 for the mid-semester review.

Remaining projects and exercises will be submitted to Box at the end of the semester for final review.

Assignments

EXERCISE 1: I-con

EXERCISE 2: Breaking Down the Grid

EXERCISE 3: Interview

PROJECT 1: Archive (DUE March 5)

Mid-Semester Portfolio Submission (PDFs ⇨ Box Folder by March 8)

EXERCISE 4: Infographic

[EXERCISE 5: Weather]

PROJECT 2: Site (Due April 23)

End of Semester Portfolio Submission (PDFs ⇨ Box Folder by May 1)
Assignment Structure

Class Structure

PROJECT 1

PROJECT 2

IN-CLASS EXERCISES

WEEKLY READINGS

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Resources

Course Lectures

Lecture 1: Visual Designer and the Digital Landscape
Lecture 2: Project Methods and Workflow
Lecture 3: Hierarchy and the Grid
Lecture 4: Typography + Typographic Hierarchy
Lecture 5: Assembling your Prototype Presentation Document
Lecture 6: Design for Mobile & Information Graphics
Lecture 7: Drawing Icons

Glossary of Terms and Tools

An ongoing glossary of design terms and Sketch functions can be found here for your continued reference.
Website Repository

Ongoing collaborative repository collecting websites referenced in class

Software Assistance

Sketch App Forum
Lynda: Sketch Basics Tutorial
LevelUpTuts Sketch Tutorial
Sketch Keyboard Shortcuts

Design References

Comprehensive Overview
Google Material made a great primer on various design elements

Typography

*On Web Typography*, Jason Santa Maria
*Thinking With Type, Letter and Text*
*The Paragraph in Web Typography & Design*, 2008

Grids and Layout

*Thinking With Type, Grids*
*Grids are Good, Right?, Khoi Vinh and Mark Boulton, 2007*
*Content-out Layout, Nathan Ford*
*Information Architecture Basics*

Web Typography Resources

Google Fonts
Webtype.com
Adobe Fonts
Fonts.com
Typecast
Fontstand

Assets and Tools

InVision Prototyping App
Craft | Invision (plug-in that syncs Sketch with InVision)
Google Material Design
Google Material download for Sketch
Further Reading

*Digital Design Theory*, Helen Armstrong
*Type on Screen*, Ellen Lupton
*Conversations with the Network*, Khoi Vinh

**Understanding Roles in Web Design**

*UI, UX: Who Does What? A Designer’s Guide To The Tech Industry*