

DePaul University
College of Computing & Interactive Media / School of Design
Spring 2020

Semiotics & Visual Design GD270-601

Thursdays 10:00AM-1:15PM
(this is the formal time, we will be flexible)
Professor Dolores Wilber
dwilber@cdm.depaul.edu

Office hours
Tuesdays and Thursdays
8:30AM-10:00AM + 1:30-3:00PM

Phone, Zoom, SKYPE, Google Hangouts

Introduction

This is a very challenging and stressful time in all of our lives. I know this may be the first time you have taken an online class. It is the first time I have taught an online class, as well. I want you to know that I encourage you to email me, or post on the D2L Discussion Board any concerns you have about anything at all. I will do my best to help you figure out whatever challenges you are facing. I can email or talk via Zoom or on the phone or whatever works for you. I will have office hours as noted above. The meetings will run from 10 AM till approximately 11:15AM on Thursday mornings. I am still working on a system of having student break-out groups. Currently the university does not have accounts for students on Zoom but that may happen as the quarter begins and if not, we may work in small groups via Google Hangouts or SKYPE. Please make suggestions on what would work best for you.

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Course Description + Objectives

Design and designed products can be interpreted as signs that are the result of human needs and desires. This course examines theoretical issues in how design of a message or product influences the user's decision to read it, use it or buy it. Semiotics theory examines these concepts as well as design value and criteria for evaluation in contemporary culture.

Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and an explanation of how people extract meaning from words, sounds, and pictures. Understanding semiotics as a designer will instill your work with references that enable them to communicate multiple layers of information.

Expectations

Knowledge of the Macintosh operating system and Adobe CS is essential for success in this course. If you cannot attend a class, please contact the professor to ensure you are current on what is happening. Missing class will make it difficult so do your best, but we understand this is a very difficult time in all our lives.

Learning Goals

- Understand the theory, practice and vocabulary of semiotics and design, including symbols, index and icons
- Create examples of semiotics in design practice
- Explore semiotics in relation to diverse audiences in a variety of settings in advertising, media and culture

Course Outcomes

- Conceptual, visual and critical thinking within research-driven design projects
 - Pre-planning, sketches and preliminary visualization before implementation
 - Iterative approach to refining ideas
 - Composition and manipulation of type and graphic elements
 - Composition and layout with Adobe Creative Suite (if you do not have access to this please let me know and we will figure out alternatives)
 - Verbal and visual presentation of your work
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- Course management system D2L <https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/home>

Class work

Much of your work will be conducted outside the class, especially idea development, content development, planning and sketching.

Critiques

We will have project critiques and presentations that ensure that we learn from one another and share information. Attendance and participation in critiques is mandatory. We will breakdown into small groups. Since this is online, make notes will you are being critiqued and post them to a Discussion Board for each Project.

Projects

Each project is described on the following page. Examples of all projects will be provided by PDFs. VERY IMPORTANT: Post only jpg's or .pdf files. Other formats are often too small to view properly and details are often not clear. You can only post JPGs. You can also submit links to a Google Docs viewable link. Each critique should have a written component describing the intent of your project. Statement your design goals, audience, measure of success and any other relevant information. Please comment on three other student's work for each posting by the Friday following the critique.

All final projects must be posted to D2L.

Attendance

Class attendance and participation are extremely important. If you are having difficulties and cannot be online at the designated time, email me and we will arrange another online meeting soon after the class time.

Textbook

This Means This, This Means That: A User's Guide to Semiotics

PDF Excerpts under Content in D2L

Sean Hall

Laurence King Publishers

2014

ISBN-10: 1856697355

Supplies

Sketchbook

Pencils

Markers

Computer with Adobe Suite or similar

Grading Formula

Class participation in discussion and critique process	25%
Project: Thematic Icon Set	25%
Project: How to Guide	25%
Project: Wayfinding	25%

Project Descriptions

Project: Thematic Icon Set

Students will generate a set of 10 icons and one invented integrated symbol based on the plot of a novel or movie. At least two of the icons must represent abstract ideas rather than concrete objects. The icons will progress from hand-drawn rough sketches to a more refined fidelity, either digitized or through skillful hand-rendering. The set will be fully realized as a digital poster. Student examples will be shared of sketches as well as posters.

Project: How to Guide

For this project, you will create a How-To Guide that outlines the steps to complete a task. The guide must include at least eight steps. Each step must be expressed with both text and iconic visuals, included but not limited to: iconography, photography, illustration. The deliverable possibilities: Booklet, Website, Poster, Card Set, App, Video. Student Examples will be shared.

Project: Wayfinding

Students will create a cohesive a 2-dimension wayfinding system that spans environmental graphics and an interactive touch point. The final deliverables will be digital pieces, as well as “mockup” photographs of the way finding system as it would be seen in the world. Creating convincing mockups will be demonstrated in examples. . Student Examples will be shared.

Project Evaluation

Along with feedback from your classmates, I will evaluate your progress while you are developing a project, as well as during all intermediate and final critiques. Please remember that any comments toward your work from myself or a fellow student should not be taken personally, but viewed as constructive criticism geared toward making your work stronger and more refined. Final grades will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- \\ Research and Development: Did you develop a clear problem statement?
- \\ Sketches and Ideation: Did you produce a lot of process work?
- \\ Concept: Does the piece work in a cohesive, well thought out manner?
- \\ Elements of Composition: Is the piece visually unified?
- \\ Transformation Incorporation: Did you explore techniques to add visual interest to the work?
- \\ Artistic Quality: Does the final piece look good, overall?
- \\ Craft: Is the piece neat and well made, including attention to details
- \\ Work Ethic: Did you push yourself—and then push yourself further?
- \\ Critique Professionalism: Did you speak up during critique and remain positive/constructive?
- \\ Meeting Deadlines: Is your final work or any stage of the assignment late

A	95-100
A-	93-94
B+	91-92
B	87-90
C+	83-84
C	80-82
D+	76-77
D	72-75
D-	70-71
F	Below 70

Add/Drop dates

Spring Term

<input type="checkbox"/> Date	Event
<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday February 6, 2020	Begin SQ2020 and Summer 2020 Registration
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday March 20, 2020	TUITION DUE: SPRING QUARTER 2020
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday March 27, 2020	"IN" grades issued Spring/Summer 2019 lapse to "F"
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday March 28, 2020	Begin SQ2020 Classes
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday April 3, 2020	11:59 PM Deadline to add classes to SQ2020 schedule
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday April 10, 2020	Good Friday - University officially closed
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday April 11, 2020	Easter Holiday - University officially closed
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday April 12, 2020	Easter Holiday - University officially closed
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday April 13, 2020	Last day to drop SQ2020 classes with no penalty (100% refund of tuition if applicable and no grade on transcript)
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday April 14, 2020	Grades of "W" assigned for SQ2020 classes dropped on or after this day
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday April 14, 2020	Last day to select pass/fail option for SQ2020 classes
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday April 17, 2020	Last day to select auditor status for SQ2020 classes
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday April 25, 2020	Begin SQ2020 optional mid-term exam week
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday May 1, 2020	End SQ2020 optional mid-term exam week
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday May 15, 2020	Last day to withdraw from SQ2020 classes
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday May 25, 2020	Memorial Day - University officially closed
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday June 5, 2020	End SQ2020 Day & Evening Classes
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday June 6, 2020	Begin SQ2020 Day & Evening Final Exams
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday June 12, 2020	Baccalaureate Mass
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday June 12, 2020	END SPRING QUARTER 2020
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday June 12, 2020	End SQ2020 Day & Evening Final Exams
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday June 12, 2020	Graduate Weekend Kick Off
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday June 13, 2020	Commencement
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday June 14, 2020	Commencement
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday June 19, 2020	"IN" grades issued Autumn 2019 lapse to "F"
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday June 19, 2020	"R" grades issued Spring 2019 lapse to "F"
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday June 19, 2020	GRADES DUE: SPRING 2020

Course Evaluations

Student evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in CampusConnect in the last weeks of the quarter. If you have a problem with ANY part of the class, I strongly encourage you to email me or set-up a meeting to help me improve the quality of the course. I am totally open to critique and suggestions.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

Academic Policies

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the University Academic Calendar. Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment.

Online Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in CampusConnect.

Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender policy: <http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>

Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: csd@depaul.edu.

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002 Fax: (312)362-6544 TTY: (773)325.7296

Harassment

The policy as specified in the DePaul Student Handbook will be adhered to in this class.

Changes to Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

Excused Absence

In order to petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or significant personal circumstances should complete the Absence Notification process through the Dean of Students office. The form can be accessed at https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/support-services/academic/Documents/DOS_Absence_Notification_Form.pdf Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. The professor reserves the sole right whether to offer an excused absence and/or academic accommodations for an excused absence.

Withdrawal

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system (<http://campusconnect.depaul.edu>). Withdrawals processed via this system are effective the day on which they are made. Simply ceasing to attend, or notifying the instructor, or nonpayment of tuition, does not constitute an official withdrawal from class and will result in academic as well as financial penalty.

Retroactive Withdrawal

This policy exists to assist students for whom extenuating circumstances prevented them from meeting the withdrawal deadline. During their college career students may be allowed one medical/personal administrative withdrawal and one college office administrative withdrawal, each for one or more courses in a single term. Repeated requests will not be considered. Submitting an appeal for retroactive withdrawal does not guarantee approval.

Incomplete

An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. CDM policy requires the student to initiate the request for incomplete grade before the end of the term in which the course is taken. Prior to submitting the incomplete request, the student must discuss the circumstances with the instructor. Students may initiate the incomplete request process in MyCDM. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptional cases will receive such approval.

If approved, students are required to complete all remaining course requirement independently in consultation with the instructor by the deadline indicated on the incomplete request form. By default, an incomplete grade will automatically change to a grade of F after two quarters have elapsed (excluding summer) unless another grade is recorded by the instructor.

DePaul Design Mailing List

All students are strongly encouraged to sign-up for the DePaul Graphic Design mailing list

Design@mailman.depaul.edu

<http://mailman.depaul.edu/mailman/listinfo/design>

Join the DePaul AIGA on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/AIGAdepaul/>

College office appeals for CDM students must be submitted online via MyCDM.

The deadlines for submitting appeals are as follows:

Autumn Quarter:	Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent winter quarter
Winter Quarter:	Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent spring quarter
Spring Quarter:	Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter
Summer Terms:	Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter

Syllabus

Additional readings, video and other small assignments will periodically be assigned.

WEEK ONE | Thursday 4.2

Introduction to class

Semiotics is about the study of meaning. It is the theory of graphic design.

Semiotics is about visual communication and how we communicate and what means what. It is the study of how meaning is created.

Preparation for Week 1

Read and review

- (1) Syllabus in D2L Content
- (2) GD270 Semiotics Intro.pdf in D2L Content

Watch before first class

- (1) *Semiotics | "Referring To An Object"*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcJJSUZkAPk&index=15&list=PLcaVtvHbXtW-A6WVSsmhPCAcnFkBRcCyXL>
Choose an object — the kind of objects referenced in this video. Describe it as a symbol, an icon and an index.
 - (2) *What is Semiotics? A short film by Creative Semiotics*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mA_LM-WMC1A
What is your clothing sign system? Describe it and compare to a specific person or group of people. This could be from your family, your friends, cultural personalities, artists, performers, etc.
 - (3) *The treachery of Images (This is not a pipe)*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atHOpANmHCE>
Stop at 5:38m
 - (4) *The fused metaphor*
<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/learning-graphic-design-history/the-fused-metaphor?u=2228698>
This requires sign-in through DePaul: <https://offices.depaul.edu/information-services/services/technology-training/Pages/online-training.aspx> Choose log-in through [DePaul LinkedIn Learning Campus Portal](#)
- Optional*
- (5) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwhXg-Bbm5g>
Semiotics of Google
(good discussion using Google; you have to hang in there a bit, the author can be a bit slow)
 - (6) From a film point of view: Semiotics analysis for beginners! | How to read signs in film | Roland Barthes Media Theory (really fun)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlpOaY-HMk>

Our first meeting on Zoom will be introductions to one another and a check-in for questions about the course. Please post questions on the D2L Discussion section beforehand.

For Next Week:**Part One: Observations** (before class uploaded to Discussion: Observations Part 1)

If we were not all confined to home or a single place during the COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) quarantine, the assignment would be to walk through our everyday life, observing systems and signs in place in the world. We would notice patterns, colors, shapes, and symbols that have meaning in your everyday life. Your first assignment is to observe and document through photography or video these observations in the place where you are currently residing -or- you may do this through online sites like google earth in your neighborhood. You should capture at minimum 10 images of parts of a system or system(s). We will discuss these during the Week 2 class. Please submit 3 comments before class to other students uploads to the discussion.

Let me know if you have any questions in the Discussion Board for Syllabus Questions and Comments

Part Two: Observations (before class uploaded to Discussion: Observations Part 2)

A place you may not think of that is full of signs is the museum. Photographs, paintings and every kind of art work are rife with symbols and signs. Here are some collections of street photography where you can choose five photographs and focus on one or more symbols in each photograph. You may choose and upload your own photograph, conduct your own online search or choose from these collections:

<https://petapixel.com/2017/01/28/40-best-street-photos-2016-photographers-around-world/>

<https://iso.500px.com/2017s-best-street-photography-far/>

<https://www.art.com/gallery/id--b180627-c23946/street-signs-photography-prints.htm>

https://www.pinterest.com/didi_kasa/photography-signs/

WEEK TWO | Thursday 4.9

Observations, Part 1 and 2

For Next Week:

Thematic Icon Set

WEEK THREE | Thursday 4.16

Thematic Icon Set

WEEK FOUR | Thursday 4.23

Thematic Icon Set

WEEK FIVE | Thursday 4.30

How-To Guide

WEEK SIX | Thursday 5.7

How-To Guide

WEEK SEVEN | Thursday 5.14

How-To Guide

WEEK 8 Thursday | 5.21

Wayfinding

WEEK 9 Thursday | 5.28

Wayfinding

WEEK 10 | Thursday 6.4

Wayfinding

Final Reflection | Thursday 6.11

Submission of Essay