

# trends in contemporary graphic design

## FALL 2014

4 credits  
Thursdays, 5:45–9 pm  
CDM Center, room 530

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## BRIAN PELSOH

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OFFICE: CDM 709  
HOURS: Thursdays, 5:15–5:45 pm  
and 9–10 pm

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

**TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY GRAPHIC DESIGN** examines the current practice of graphic design in print, digital, and experimental design, both in the United States and abroad. The most cutting edge design, designers, movements, as well as issues affecting the contemporary design field will be examined. Topics covered will focus on the evolution of the field in design theory, aesthetics, technology, and communication methods in the context of changing social, political and cultural climates, and audiences. This course includes lectures, videos, guest speakers, field trips, independent research, and in-class discussion.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

- + Develop your ability to critically partake in the discourse of graphic design
- + Acquire an in-depth knowledge of the forces at work that are shaping the design discipline
- + Understand current topics and issues of debate within the field of graphic design

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. You will be able to discuss, in well-written prose, topics that are relevant to the current practice of graphic design.
2. You will be able to comment on the changing role of the designer in society and the different definitions of what a designer is.
3. You will understand the theoretical underpinnings of graphic design.

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Attendance is mandatory.** Attendance will be called at the beginning of each class session. You are allowed a maximum of two absences throughout the quarter. If your absences exceed the maximum of two allotted, penalties will be applied to your final grade for the quarter.

A third absence will result in a 10% reduction of your final grade for the quarter. Additional absences will result in a 3% reduction per instance.

Tardiness is defined as not being present in the classroom when attendance is called. Tardiness that exceeds 20 minutes will be counted as an absence. Three late arrivals, early departures or a combination of both are counted as a single absence. Students are responsible for reporting to the teacher at the end of class if they missed roll call but were present for most of the class.

If you are absent you are fully responsible for doing the best you can to catch up. Questions or concerns may be emailed to the instructor, or may be addressed in person during office hours. Lectures will not be repeated.

## course work

### RECOMMENDED TEXT BOOKS

All readings will be posted to D2L, but most will come from the following two sources and you are encouraged to purchase them to add to your library:

#### **Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field**

by Helen Armstrong (Amazon: \$18.35 new, \$13.85 used)

#### **Graphic Design: Now In Production**

by Ian Albinson, Rob Giampietro, Andrew Blauvelt, Ellen Lupton  
(Amazon: \$29.17 new, \$17.95 used)

### WEEKLY READINGS AND DISCUSSION POSTS

Each week of the term you will be assigned readings that will prepare you for the following week's lecture and discussion. You may also be asked to conduct research on your own to share with the class. You are required to answer the questions on the online discussion on D2L before class begins or it will be considered late.

This process will prepare you to engage in a thoughtful in-class discussion with an articulated point-of-view. Discussions may also center around research resulting from a field trip or guest speaker. Depending upon time, you may be able to begin working on these assignments during class.

### MIDTERM ESSAY

Your midterm essay requires that you attend either the BrandNew Conference or a panel discussion on Speculative Design and the current exhibit at the Chicago Design Museum. You will then write a 4–5 page paper. Further details will be shared on the assignment sheet. There will be no class on September 25 to accommodate the Brand New Conference.

#### **Brand New Conference (*strongly recommended*)**

Thursday, September 25–Friday, September 26

9 am–6:30 pm

Harris Theater at Millennium Park—205 E. Randolph Street, Chicago, IL

\$250 (\$212.50 if 7 or more students register together)

The Brand New Conference is a two-day event organized by Under Consideration, focusing on the practice of corporate and brand identity—a direct extension of the popular blog, Brand New. The conference consists of eight sessions each day offering a broad range of points of view with speakers from around the world practicing in different environments, from global consultancies, to in-house groups, to small firms.

<http://www.underconsideration.com/brandnewconference>

#### **Speculative Design (*alternative*)**

Speculative Design Panel Discussion

Saturday, October 11, 2014, 1:30–3:30 pm

Chicago Cultural Center—78 E. Washington St., Chicago, IL

FREE

Chicago Design Museum—Block Thirty Seven, 3rd floor, 108 N. State Street, Chicago, IL

Tuesday–Saturday, 12:00–7:00 pm

Through September 30, 2014

FREE

### FINAL RESEARCH PAPER

You are required to write a 6–7 page research paper on the topic you choose from a list of issues in contemporary graphic design, the paper will include research, image gathering, and analysis.

You will begin work on your final project early on in the quarter, to be kicked off in the coming weeks. Your paper will be complemented by an in-class presentation to be given at the end of the quarter. Details to come.

## **class policies**

### **TAKING NOTES IN CLASS**

During lectures, use a writing implement and paper. The use of computers, tablets or other digital media during lectures is prohibited unless otherwise instructed. Students may be asked to turn monitors off, spinning them sideways to ensure they're not in use.

If you wish to use a recording device in class for any purpose, you are required to ask the instructor for permission. The instructor reserves the right to say no.

### **TURNING IN ASSIGNMENTS TO D2L.DEPAUL.EDU**

All course-related documents and assignments will be posted to the DePaul D2L site. Unless instructed otherwise, all assigned work must be completed and submitted through the D2L system on the date and time specified under each assignment posting. (See "Late Assignment Policy" below for information on late submissions.)

Depending on the assignment, your project files will most likely be PDFs or Word Docs. If presentations or design-centric solutions result in large file sizes, you may have problems uploading to the D2L system. If a file fails to upload, you may need to create a smaller file and attempt a re-upload. You may also try compressing the file in a .zip format.

To make sure a file successfully uploaded, you may want to download it to your computer and re-open it after posting. If this results in success, you'll know it uploaded correctly in the first place!

If all else fails, you can use [dropbox.com](https://www.dropbox.com), a free file storage website. This service is particularly handy for larger files. Once an account is created, you can upload your files and grant me access to that particular folder or file. You must let me know at least one class ahead of time if this is the route you're going to take.

### **LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY**

Assignments and projects turned in late will result in a 10% grade reduction for every day past the assigned due date (in addition to being graded based upon defined criteria).

A student has 10 days to turn in an assignment or project before it is considered irrevocably late, at which time zero points will be earned. Turning in a late assignment is far better than not turning it in at all—some points are better than none!

If students would like more feedback on work than what is received in class, they can email the instructor or arrange for a discussion during office hours. Feedback will be given on a first-come first-serve basis, with no guarantee that all email correspondence will be responded to.

Do not ask for extensions or leniency outside of the policies outlined above.

### **COMPUTER LAB LOGIN, LOCATION AND ACCESS**

You will need a user name and password to access D2L. Your Campus Connect username and password should do the trick! D2L will be used for assignment submission, file access, class-related information, etc. Making sure you have access as outlined above is your responsibility.

### **DISCUSSION, DEBATE AND IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Group discussion of topics and issues at hand is key to this class. It allows students to learn from each other, share ideas, and formulate opinions and arguments in real-time. Due to time limitations, length of group discussion may vary from week-to-week. When there is a discussion that involves assignment presentation, we may not be able to review everyone's work due to time constraints. This will be determined throughout the quarter.

Thoughtful participation in group discussions, the presentation of assignments when asked, and attendance on field trips all count towards an individual's "class participation," a factor in the student's final grade. This can not be made up after the fact due to an absence, as it required physical presence in the classroom.

## GRADING

20% IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

20% READING DISCUSSION POSTS

20% MID-TERM ESSAY

40% FINAL RESEARCH PAPER & ACCOMPANYING PRESENTATION

EXCELLENT	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	SOMEWHAT UNSATISFACTORY	SUBSTANTIALLY UNSATISFACTORY
A 100-93	B+ 89-88	C+ 79-78	D+ 69-68	F 59-0
A- 92-90	B 87-83	C 77-73	D 67-73	
	B- 82-80	C- 72-70	D- 62-60	

## CELL PHONES, LAPTOPS, TABLETS, HEADPHONES & MORE

The use of cell phones, tablets and gaming devices is strictly prohibited. The use of laptops and computers is also prohibited during lectures unless otherwise instructed.

Turn off your phone before entering class. The unauthorized use of a digital media device in class will result in a 5% deduction per instance off of a student's final grade at the end of the quarter. If you receive a call that is of utmost importance, leave the classroom quietly to go somewhere private and note that you'll call the individual back. You do not need permission to leave to do this. Do not answer the phone as you're leaving the classroom.

Headphones are not to be worn or used during class. A 5% deduction per instance off of a student's final grade at the end of the quarter if they do not remove their headphones.

## INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

Other forms of inappropriate behavior in class will be determined by the instructor, and will result in a 5% deduction per instance off of a student's final grade at the end of the quarter, the possibility of being asked to leave the class, or possible removal by security. Leaving class due to inappropriate conduct will result in an absence.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Work done for this course must adhere to the DePaul University Academic Integrity Policy, which can be reviewed in the Student Handbook or by visiting <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>

## EMAIL POLICY

The instructor will respond to email received from students to the best of his ability, although there is no guarantee that this will be done swiftly and with regularity. There is no guarantee that all email received will be responded to. Email received on Saturdays and Sundays will not be reviewed until the following Monday. The best way to ensure response for feedback is to visit during specified office hours during the week.

## LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Assignments and projects turned in late will result in a 10% grade reduction for every day past the assigned due date (in addition to being graded based upon defined criteria).

A student has 10 days to turn in an assignment or project before it is considered irrevocably late, at which time zero points will be earned. Turning in a late assignment is far better than not turning it in at all—some points are better than none!

If students would like more feedback on work than what is received in class, they can email the instructor or arrange for a discussion during office hours. Feedback will be given on a firstcome first-serve basis, with no guarantee that all email correspondence will be responded to.

Do not ask for extensions or leniency outside of the policies outlined above.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>

**PLAGIARISM**

The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work any assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

**INCOMPLETE**

An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family, a serious illness, etc. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be made at least two weeks before the final, and approved by the Dean of the College of Computing and Digital Media. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.

**RESOURCES FOR 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:

Student Center, LPC, Suite #370

Phone number: (773) 325.1677

Fax: (773) 325.3720

TTY: (773) 325.7296

## **schedule**

### **WEEK 1: SEPTEMBER 11: INTRO TO POST-MODERN GRAPHIC DESIGN**

READINGS: *Designer as Producer*, Ellen Lupton; *Fuck Content*, Michael Rock

### **WEEK 2: SEPTEMBER 18: DESIGNER AS \_\_\_\_\_**

READINGS: *Research and Destroy: Graphic Design as Investigation*, Daniel van der Velden  
*Unraveling*, Lorraine Wild

ASSIGN: Midterm

### **WEEK 3: SEPTEMBER 25: NO CLASS—BRAND NEW CONFERENCE**

ALT: Tour Chicago Design Museum (closes 9/30) and attend Speculative Design panel (10/11)

### **WEEK 4: OCTOBER 2: EXPRESSIVE EXPERIMENTATION**

#### **FIELD TRIP: CHGO DSGN tour at Cultural Center 5:30**

READINGS: *Logocentrism*, Jessica Helfand;  
*Designing Identities for Living Organisms*, Irene van Nes

ASSIGN: Final

### **WEEK 5: OCTOBER 9: BRAND IDENTITY**

READINGS: *Dematerialization of Screen Space*, Jessica Helfand;  
*Designing Design*, Kenya Hara

Speculative Design panel (Chicago Cultural Center, 10/11, 1:30–3:30)

### **WEEK 6: OCTOBER 16: DIGITAL**

READINGS: *The Making of Typographic Man*, Ellen Lupton;  
*We don't need new fonts...*, Peter Bilak

DUE: Midterm

### **WEEK 7: OCTOBER 23: LETTERING AND TYPOGRAPHY**

READINGS: *What is Design Thinking Anyway?*, Roger Martin;  
*Design for Social Change*, Andrew Shea

HIKE CONFERENCE, October 24–25

### **WEEK 8: OCTOBER 30: DESIGN THINKING AND SOCIAL DESIGN**

READINGS: *Bubbles, Lines, and String: How Information Visualization Shapes Society*, Peter Hall;  
*Escaping Flatland*, Edward Tufte

DUE: Draft of final

### **WEEK 9: NOVEMBER 6: INFORMATION VISUALIZATION**

READINGS: *Future of Print*, Experimental Jetset; *Print and Pixel*, Nancy Levinson

#### **FIELD TRIP: DAVID BOWIE at MCA, 5:45**

### **WEEK 10: NOVEMBER 13: RETHINKING THE BOOK**

### **WEEK 11: NOVEMBER 20**

FINAL PRESENTATIONS

DUE: Final