

GD MFA Studio_Visual Research_Syllabus_MICA_Fall_2008

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Over the course of the semester, we will systematically explore a variety of techniques for conducting visual research and expressing ideas visually. All studies, experiments, and final pieces will be rigorously documented to create a body of evidence that will be incorporated next year into a book on visual thinking. In order to keep this experimental phase open-ended and intellectually pure, we won't focus on the book until later, but instead will allow this research and development process to take its own path.

Required books:

John Thakara, *In the Bubble: Designing in a Complex World* (MIT Press, 2005).

Dan Roam, *The Back of the Napkin: Solving Problems and Selling Ideas* (Penguin, 2008).

Roland Barthes, *Image/Music/Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).

Additional readings will be provided via links and photocopies.

September 8

9:00–12:00

All students:

- Discuss Thakara reading, p1–72.
- Discuss Roam reading.
- Discuss Social Studies team projects

Work due next week, all students: Select a simple fact from the Thakara reading to visualize. Apply the methodology described in Chapter 7, "Frameworks for Showing," to the process of visualizing your piece of data. Following Roam's methodology, do sketches before working on the computer. Save your sketches! You must make the data graspable in a short time (approx 5 seconds), so choose data that is not overly complex. Save your work as a PDF. Bring multiple versions if desired. Constraints:

- 8.5 x 11 landscape, full bleed; black background; 1.5 inch margin.
- Text is white Helvetica Regular, 24 point. Edit text to occupy no more than two lines. Text must not go outside of margins.
- Combine text with hand-drawn sketches and diagrams. Use black and white predominantly; add color if it's useful.
- In addition to producing your visualization with a black background, do a version with a white background.

1:00–3:00

Thesis presentations, Pecha Kucha

Armstrong, Bjornard, Clifford, Davis, Galbreath, Ha, Lewis-Archibald, Muir, Venne

Thesis, due next week: Use an aspect of Roam's methodology to delineate the scope of your thesis project. Consider especially Chapter 4, "No Thanks, Just Looking." Establish the coordinates of your thesis. Your thesis is a means of "looking" at a subject area (Globe Posters, design for low vision, the language of sustainability); what is the framework of your endeavor—its depth, breadth,

structure, perspective, etc? Diagram your topic and visualize your thinking in the form of one or more charts, maps, timelines, flowcharts, and/or scatter plots.

Reading due next week, all students: Thakara, "Learning," "Literacy," and "Smartness," p135-209. Read also "[Literacy Debate: Online, R U Reading?](#)" New York Times, July 27, 2008. What design problems does Thakara propose for graphic designers? What are new problems in typographic design? The problems might be large or small, local or global.

September 15

9:00–12:00

All students:

- Put all PDFs on teaching station for projection by 9:00 am.
- Discuss visualizations.
- Discuss Social Studies teams. Define first deliverables for each team.

1:00–3:00

Thesis: *Armstrong, Bjornard, Davis, Muir*

Show and discuss thesis visualization.

Work due next week, all students: Refine your visualization as needed. Submit a pdf for projection (white on black) as well as a second pdf of each one for potential publication later (black on white). Make sure scans of any drawing are 300 dpi! Provide source file/links as needed. Put all your pieces in a single FOLDER labeled "Your_name_visualization." Label each FILE with your name as well (your_name_visualization_1.pdf and your_name_visualization_2.pdf). Include source files (ai, indd, psd) and links in addition to PDFs.

Everyone: Start work on Social Studies teams.

September 19, 20, 21

Mike Perry weekend

Party at Lupton Miller House

Saturday, September 20

6:00–9:00 pm

September 22

9:00–12:00

All students:

- Submit digital files for Visualization exercise.
- Meet in Social Studies teams. Define next deliverables for each team.

1:00–3:00

Thesis: *Clifford, Galbreath, Ha, Lewis-Archibald, Venne.*

Show and discuss thesis visualization.

Due next week, all thesis students: Writing Exercise 1

September 29

9:00–12:00

All students: Meet in teams to discuss Social Studies projects.

1:00–3:00

Thesis: Armstrong, Bjornard, Davis, Muir. Show thesis development.

Due next week, all Thesis students: Writing Exercise 2

October 6

9:00–11:00

All students: Meet in teams to discuss Social Studies projects.

11:00–12:00

Everyone meet together to share progress.

1:00–3:00

Thesis: Clifford, Galbreath, Ha, Lewis-Archibald, Venne. Show thesis development.

Due next week, all Thesis students: Writing Exercise 3

October 13

9:00–12:00

All students: Meet in teams to discuss Social Studies projects. Use time as needed for production/finalizing work.

Noon–1:00 Break

1:00–3:00

Thesis: Individual meetings as needed.

October 17

Noon–3:00

Stefan Bucher workshop

October 17, 18, 19

Social Studies Conference

October 20

Fall break, no class

Reading due next week, all students: Roland Barthes, "The Photographic Message" and "The Rhetoric of the Image," p15–51, Image/Music/Text

Work due next week, first-year students: Sign Study 1

Work due next week, Thesis students: Barthes Writing Respons 1.

October 27

9:00–12:00

All students: Discuss reading.

First-year students: Show and discuss Sign Study 1.

1:00–3:00

Thesis: *Armstrong, Bjornard, Davis, Muir.*

Present thesis progress.

October 31, November 1, 2

Andrew Blauvelt Workshop

Reading to be announced.

November 3

9:00–12:00

First-year students: Show and discuss Sign Study 1.

1:00–3:00

Thesis: *Clifford, Galbreath, Ha, Lewis-Archibald, Venne.*

Present thesis progress.

Thesis, due next week: Mid-semester review, 10-minute presentations.

November 10

9:00–12:00

First-year students: Show and discuss Sign Study 1.

Prepare work for final submission next week.

1:00–3:00

All thesis students: Mid-semester presentations, 10 minutes each.

All first- and second-year students to attend.

Reading due next week, all students: Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," p142–148, and "From Work to Text," 155–164, *Image/Music/Text*

Work due next week: Sign Study 2.

See project sheet for details.

November 14, 15, 16

Gail Anderson Workshop

Party at Lupton Miller House

Saturday, November 15
6:00–9:00 pm

November 17

9:00–12:00

All students: Discuss reading.

First-year students: Show and discuss Sign Study 2.

1:00–3:00

Thesis: *Clifford, Galbreath, Ha, Lewis-Archibald, Venne*

November 21, 22, 23

Tom Ockerse workshop

Reading to be announced.

November 24

9:00–12:00

First-year students: Show and discuss Sign Study 2.

1:00–3:00

Thesis: *Armstrong, Bjornard, Davis, Muir*

December 1

9:00–12:00

First-year students: Show and discuss Sign Study 2.

1:00–3:00

Thesis: *Clifford, Galbreath, Ha, Lewis-Archibald, Venne*

December 8

9:00–12:00

First-year students: Show and discuss Sign Study 2.

1:00–3:00

Thesis: individual meetings as needed

December 14

9:00–11:00

Wrap up with first-year students

Noon–3:00pm

Thesis Forum with Alice Twemlow

All students required to attend.

ADA Compliance / Students with Disabilities

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Learning Resource Center at 410.225.2416, in Bunting 458, to establish eligibility and coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: <http://www.mica.edu/learningresourcecenter/>

Learning Outcomes

Develop original visual work that is informed by conscious strategies of thinking, planning, and analysis.