UNIT 2: HOW DESIGN WORKS
Review Guide

KEY DEFINITIONS

Call To Action: The element on a page prompting the primary desired user action.

Pixel: The smallest "picture elements" of screen based images. Often represented relative to size, i.e. ppi, or pixels per inch.

Below The Fold: The part of a website that can't be seen without scrolling down. *Note:* Not all folds are created equal! This will vary greatly depending on the user's device.

Index Page: Also called the home page, this is the main page on a website.

Prototyping: A part of the design process, usually for the purposes of testing and iterating, in either a digital or analog space.

Iteration: Typical design-speak for the process of creation and destruction whereby new solutions are found while others are abandoned.

Wireframe: The presentation of the basic visual layout of a website. Designers use wireframes in order to quickly present ideas and concepts for testing, allowing them to make rapid changes to the design based on feedback.

Comp: Comps, or composites, are proposed design directions. These may take a number of forms, including sketches, wireframes, and thumbnails.

Primitives: In terms of web design comps, primitives are most commonly used to refer to basic shapes and drawings that represent page elements.

Target Audience: The viewers you anticipate gaining the maximum value from the site.

Responsive Design: The construction of web sites to render in the optimal setting based on the size of the user's browser & device.

VISUAL DESIGN ELEMENTS

Use the following elements as guides for articulating and defending your choices when creating the design for you website.

Visual Balance: The distribution of an object's "visual weight" (often used in relation to positive and negative space on a site). Visual balance can also refer to the overall balance of the elements on a web page.

Size: Refers to the scale of an element on a page, and in turn, its visual relationship to the size of other page elements. Sizing of page elements is a common method of attracing visual attention or organizing elements based on relative importance.

Positive Space / Negative Space / White Space: Positive space, or the content of the page, is framed by the negative space (often called "white space", even if the color isn't white).
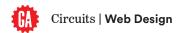
Focal Point: The primary point of visual emphasis, in other words, the element on the site that the user's should focus on. Examples of this include headlines and hero images.

Hierarchy: Hierarchy in web design may refer to the organization of elements on a page, or more broadly as the organization of different pages on a site.

Flow: The movement of the user's eye through the site's content, initiated by a focal point and influenced by hierarchy.

DESIGN PROCESS

1. **Understand The Problem:** If you clearly understand the problem, it will be easier to communicate your idea (solution) to the end user.

2. **Brainstorm:** When you become comfortable with the practice of brainstorming and not feeling as if only "good" ideas are worth further consideration, you will shed the anxiety that often occurs when faced with a blank page.

3. **Create a Sitemap:** By building the site's structure as well as the overall goals for the viewer ahead of time, this will prevent unnecessary and time-consuming site restructuring later.

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DESIGN PROCESS, CONT.

4. **Thumbnail Sketching:** Rapid generation of clear ideas is the purpose of thumbnail sketching. Relationships of size, space, and balance should be evident at this stage.

5. **Iterate:** Don't be afraid to "kill your darlings," or rather, don't be afraid to abandon an unsuccessful design even if it holds special personal significance.

6. **Deploy:** Remember, the design process is iterative in nature. Once your page is live on the web, continue acquiring user feedback to inform future changes on the site.

THE VISUAL DESIGN TOOLSET: DIGITAL PROTOTYPING

» **Apple Keynote**
Useful for laying out rough comps or more detailed drafts as well as adding basic interactivity at the between individual elements and/or pages.
http://www.apple.com/mac/keynote/

» **Balsamiq**
Designed for rapid development of wireframes—supported by a strong user community, and relatively inexpensive.
http://balsamiq.com/

» **Sketch**
Designed to rapidly concept nearly any type of digital execution—allows for the rapid updating of reusable elements such as buttons and other interface styles.
http://bohemiancoding.com/sketch/

» **OmniGraffle**
Useful for diagramming website structure, refining webpage sketches, adding annotations.
http://www.omnigroup.com/omniGraffle

THE VISUAL DESIGN TOOLSET: DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

» **Abobe Creative Cloud**
The most common software found across design disciplines. Adobe CC mobile and desktop solutions are utilized at all steps of design, development, and deployment.
http://www.adobe.com/creativecloud.html

» **Inkscape**
A free, open-source alternative to Adobe Illustrator.
http://www.inkscape.org/en/

» **Kuler**
A free color palette design and discovery resource from Adobe.
https://kuler.adobe.com/create/color-wheel/

» **Mac OS DigitalColor Meter**
A utility included with the Mac OS useful for sampling and saving RGB colors; can be found in the Utilities folder within Application on Mac OS X.

QUESTIONS TO REVIEW WITH YOUR MENTOR

1. What are some examples of "good" web design and "bad" design?

2. Can you show me an example of a website that's effective in guiding the user's eye through the page?

3. What software, hardware, and other tools do you use to design websites? When comparing tools, what features and functionality should I look for in web design hardware/software?

4. What are the most common industry tools for designing web pages?

5. Where do you find web design inspiration?