

GD 1

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Note: this is a work in progress and will change and adapt throughout the semester. The latest version can always be posted to github.com/andymangold/gd1

Course Description

The goal of this course is to teach you to think like a designer, to approach the world with a critical eye, and to arm you with skills and processes that traverse specific tools and media. It is most important that you have fun and learn as much as possible.

The class will consist of many, smaller projects as opposed to fewer, larger ones. This will allow you to take risks, fail quickly, and go through the design process in it's entirety multiple times throughout the course of the semester. Assignments will be focused on ideas and process. You will not be assigned 'hand-turkey' projects. Fundamentals will be taught through example when reviewing work.

For many of the assignments, the format will be left up to you. This is an opportunity to showcase your unique skills and interests (printmaking, illustration, book-binding, building websites, etc.) but you will also be expected to work outside of your comfort zone.

Supplies

- GitHub Account
- GitHub for Mac
- Espresso for Mac (if you are experienced with CSS and already have a preferred text editor, please let me know)

- Sublime Text 2
- Chrome (Browser)
- A backup service, such as Dropbox or Backblaze — I have a zero tolerance policy for “lost/corrupted files” as an excuse for late or incomplete work.

How the Class is Conducted

Your peer network and community at MICA are some of the most valuable assets to your education. We will all meet, in person, every week to maximize in-class time.

Each class will consist of some combination of the following:

- One or more ‘Love Letter’ presentations
- Overview of new assignments
- Review and discussion of in progress or completed work
- A short workshop on technique, software skills, or code

Critiques will be done in a “pin-up” style. Letter-sized printouts of everyone’s work will be hung on the wall and the discussion will be high level, touching on the most and least successful work, as well as themes shared throughout. When the class has identified something they want to discuss further, the work will be pulled up on the student’s website on the projector. Everything represented on the print-outs should be posted to the student’s website and vice-versa.

Standards & Expectations

You will be expected to show up on time every week, exceed the requirements of each project, and actively participate in discussions. Your work should reflect your unique skills and perspective. You should demonstrate a desire to learn and improve your craft. You will be expected to juggle multiple projects at the same time.

You will be graded on the effort you put into your projects, your participation in

class discussions, your responsiveness to feedback, and your improvement as a designer over the course of the class.

- Personal Archive: 30%
- Love Letter: 5%
- Self-Portrait: 5%
- It's the Thought that Counts: 5%
- The Pen is Mightier: 5%
- Nemesis: 15%
- Become the Master: 15%
- Monograph: 20%

Schedule

WEEK 1 — SEPTEMBER 3

IN CLASS

- Review course description
- Complete class survey
- Complete “Selfie”
- Github and basic HTML + CSS workshop

HOMEWORK

- Redo “Selfie” and document the before and after.
- Update and improve your personal archive.

WEEK 2 — SEPTEMBER 10

IN CLASS

- TBD Love Letter Presentation(s)
- Discussion of “Selfie”
- TBD Workshop

HOMEWORK

- Complete and document “It’s the Thought that Counts”.
- Update and improve your personal archive.

WEEK 3 — SEPTEMBER 17

IN CLASS

- TBD Love Letter Presentation(s)
- Discussion of “It’s the Thought that Counts”
- Introduction to “The Pen is Mightier”
- TBD Workshop

HOMEWORK

- Complete and document “The Pen is Mightier”.
- Update and improve your personal archive.

WEEK 4 — SEPTEMBER 24

IN CLASS

- TBD Love Letter Presentation(s)
- Discussion of “The Pen is Mightier”
- Introduction to “Nemesis”
- TBD Workshop

HOMEWORK

- Begin working on “Nemesis” by choosing an existing company to be your foil. Research that company and the market it occupies and be prepared to discuss this research. Come up with at least three different concepts for your brand and prepare visual representations of the concepts.
- Update and improve your personal archive.

WEEK 5 — OCTOBER 1

IN CLASS

- TBD Love Letter Presentation(s)
- In progress discussion of “Nemesis”
- TBD Workshop

HOMEWORK

- Continue working on “Nemesis” based on the feedback you receive in class. Choose one of your concepts and begin to expand it. Present at least five

directions for the brand of your chosen concept. Choose the most important manifestations of your brand to showcase it.

- Update and improve your personal archive.

WEEK 6 — OCTOBER 8

IN CLASS

- TBD Love Letter Presentation(s)
- In progress discussion of “Nemesis”
- TBD Workshop

HOMEWORK

- Complete “Nemesis”. Bring a concise and descriptive visual representation of your fictitious brand, and present it in appropriate context.
- Update and improve your personal archive.

WEEK 7 — OCTOBER 15

IN CLASS

- TBD Love Letter Presentation(s)
- Final review of “Nemesis”
- Introduction to “Become the Master”
- TBD Workshop

HOMEWORK

- Begin working on “Become the Master” by identifying at least three different skills you are suited to teaching. Sketch or mock up at least two different delivery methods for each skill (total of at least 6 sketches).
- Update and improve your personal archive.

WEEK 8 — OCTOBER 22

Fall Break: no class. Actually take a break, you deserve it and it will make your work better.

WEEK 9 — OCTOBER 29

IN CLASS

- TBD Love Letter Presentation(s)
- In progress discussion of “Become the Master”
- TBD Workshop

HOMEWORK

- Continue working on “Become the Master” by choosing one skill and one delivery method. During week 10 we will be testing our designs, so make sure you have a complete version of your project. Bring your assignment and any required props to class next week, ready to be tested.
- Update and improve your personal archive.

WEEK 10 — NOVEMBER 5

IN CLASS

- TBD Love Letter Presentation(s)
- “Become the Master” testing and discussion
- TBD Workshop

HOMEWORK

- Based on the feedback from our testing session, improve and complete “Become the Master”. Be sure to document it fully, perhaps with an example subject.
- Update and improve your personal archive.

WEEK 11 — NOVEMBER 12

IN CLASS

- TBD Love Letter Presentation(s)
- Final Review of “Become the Master”
- Introduction to “Monograph”
- TBD Workshop

HOMEWORK

- Begin working on “Monograph” by identifying at least three potential subjects for your project. Do your research and bring in example content for each of these subjects, some created by you and some curated from elsewhere. Be prepared to talk about each subject and why it interests you.

- Update and improve your personal archive.

WEEK 12 — NOVEMBER 19

IN CLASS

- TBD Love Letter Presentation(s)
- In progress discussion of “Monograph”
- TBD Workshop

HOMEWORK

- Continue working on “Monograph” by choosing your final subject and applying visual design to at least three different pieces of example content. This doesn’t have to be in its final form, but should show color palettes, type treatments, imagery treatments, etc. Continue researching, collecting, and creating content.
- Update and improve your personal archive.

WEEK 13 — NOVEMBER 26

IN CLASS

- TBD Love Letter Presentation(s)
- In progress discussion of “Monograph”
- TBD Workshop

HOMEWORK

- Continue working on “Monograph” by applying the designs to all of your collected content and place it into your decided upon format. Design every aspect/page/spread/layout of your monograph and bring them all in to discuss. Print out your favorite piece of your project and pin it up for critique, but post all of your work to your site.
- Update and improve your personal archive.

WEEK 14 — NOVEMBER 5

IN CLASS

- TBD Love Letter Presentation(s)
- In progress discussion of “Monograph”

- TBD Workshop

HOMEWORK

- Continue working on “Monograph” and be prepared to present it to the class in it’s final form. If it is a book, this means printing and binding it; if it is a website, this means publishing it at its final url; etc.
- Update and improve your personal archive.

WEEK 15 — DECEMBER 3

IN CLASS

- TBD Love Letter Presentation(s)
- In progress discussion of “Monograph”
- TBD Workshop

HOMEWORK

- Complete “Monograph” based on the feedback from class.
- Update and improve your personal archive.

WEEK 16 — DECEMBER 10

IN CLASS

- TBD Love Letter Presentation(s)
- Final review of “Monograph”
- TBD Workshop

HOMEWORK

- Revisit the project from the semester that you are least satisfied with. Make significant improvements or updates to it and document the before and after.
- Update and improve your personal archive. This is your last opportunity to fix anything that has been bugging you and put the final polish on the site.

WEEK 17 — DECEMBER 17

IN CLASS

- Final review and celebration of work completed!

Projects

Personal Archive

Every week, you will be responsible for documenting your work and putting the documentation onto your personal website, which will be built in the first week alongside the first assignment. This documentation can take the form of photography, video, audio, screenshots, writing, or computer generated graphics. Grades will be based solely on the documentation of the work. You may bring physical props to supplement the documentation, but an undocumented project will receive a failing grade.

In addition to completing the assignment each week, you will be responsible for adapting and improving your personal website to accommodate the latest work. At the end of the semester, you will have a complete website featuring all of the work you produced over the course of GD 1 that has been through 16 design iterations.

Learning:

- HTML, CSS, and Javascript
- An understanding of iterative design, specifically as it applies to the web
- How to properly and thoroughly document design work
- Maintainability and best practices for asset management

Things to consider:

- How can I best tailor my website to my work and the way in which it is documented?
- What decisions can I make that will make me more likely to update my site regularly?
- How can I make it easy to change the design of my site without creating a lot of manual labor for myself?

Related Reading:

- “It’s the End of the Web as We Know It” by Adian Short
- “Graphic Designers are Ruining the Web” by John Naughton

Love Letter

Over the course of the semester, you and each of your classmates will be responsible for sharing something you love with the class. This can be anything creative, such as a book, album, person, place, time, film, product, or something else altogether. Present it in a way that makes the most sense for what you’re sharing. Your presentation should be about 10 minutes in length.

We will start off class with one, or when necessary two, Love Letter presentations every week. You will sign up ahead of time for a slot.

Learning:

- How to give a presentation
- How to talk about art and design positively
- How to tailor medium to message
- About the things your peers and classmates love

Things to consider:

- What do you know about the origins of your subject?
- What can we learn about design from your subject?

Related Reading:

- Jesse Thorn’s “Outshot” from Bullseye
- Ned Sparrow’s class on Music & Lyrics
- Robin Sloan’s “Fish: A Tap Essay”
- Ira Glass on the gap between taste and skill

Selfie

Create a self-portrait in black and white. Use this as an opportunity to teach the rest of the class something interesting and unique about yourself. Avoid simple facts, or any information about you that others may already know. This is a rare opportunity to make a completely considered first impression; don't waste it.

Learning:

- How to work quickly
- How your peers identify themselves

Things to consider:

- Would my friends or loved ones recognize this as me if they saw it out of context?
- In what ways are you similar to the other people in the classroom? In what ways are you distinct? Focus on the latter.

Related Reading:

- Bob Gill's Self-Portrait assignment from ["Design as Idea"](<http://www.skillshare.com/classes/design/Design-as-Idea/982735118/>)
- Bruno Munari's Human Face Variations

It's the Thought that Counts

A good designer should be an excellent gift-giver. Give a gift to someone in your life. This gift must not be for an occasion or otherwise expected. Document your process, the gift itself, and (if non-intrusive) the delivery of and response to the gift.

Learning:

- How to be conscious of and connect with your audience
- How to use your skills and knowledge to do something good
- How and why to choose a certain format
- Design is often about an experience, not an object

Things to consider:

- What gift are you uniquely suited to give?
- Who do you know in a special way?

Related Reading:

- The “Touch Someone” project from Design Coalition
- “Tag Savage: A Man”
- Keetra Dean Dixon’s “Souvenir” project

The Pen is Mightier

Prepare a written critique of a piece of design in the news (I will provide a list of options the day the assignment is given). We will use everyone’s written piece as a jumping off point for an in class critique. It is more important that your criticism be thoughtful and enlightening than your writing be exceptionally creative or high quality. Refer to the provided guidelines when writing your criticism.

Learning:

- How to write intelligently about design
- Awareness of the complex considerations behind every piece of design

Things to consider:

- Can my criticism be informed by any special knowledge or experience I have?
What unique perspective can I provide?

Related Reading:

- Brand New
- The Why Axis

Nemesis

Create a brand that is in direct competition with a prominent, existing company. Carefully choose a company and a market that you have some knowledge or experience with, or that is badly in need of a new voice. Think about the practical considerations of your brand and realize that what will set your fictitious company apart will not be simply color, typography, or a logo. Be bold and indulgent. Design the kind of company you want to exist in the world. The “well designed version of X” is not an acceptable competitive edge, nor is painting colorful shapes or lines on existing products. Try harder.

Learning:

- The complexity, compromise, and interconnectedness of branding
- How to identify a product or service’s unique position in a market and represent that position visually
- How to construct and present a complete and thorough brand

Things to consider:

- How is your nemesis distinct from the consumer’s perspective? Do you need to educate them in some way before they can understand your brand’s position?
- In what ways should your brand look similar to existing brands in your market? In what ways should it look different?

Related Reading:

- Tesla Motors, SpaceX, and the rest of Elon Musk’s projects

- AirBNB
- Netflix
- Brand New

Become the Master

Use your design skills to teach something you're specially qualified to teach. Your goal should be for everyone that views your work to learn something new and retain this knowledge. Focus on something simple but unique, such as the unique way you fold your shirts, or the most effective way to cut an onion. The viewer should feel good if they are able to learn something from your project.

Learning:

- Designing for a specific outcome
- How to make the unfamiliar digestible
- How to choose a medium to maximize for communication
- The value of user-testing
- How to measure the success of a piece of design in the real world

Things to consider:

- How can you teach the most people with the least amount of effort? How can you teach the least people with the most effort? What are the trade-offs of each?
- How will written language make it easier for you to get your message across? How will it make it harder?

Related Reading:

- Lifehacker
- Instructables
- Ian's Shoelace Site

- diy.org
- IKEA Assembly Instructions

Monograph

Share something you have special knowledge or expertise on in a concise way. The format can be a publication, book, website, or something else, as long as it has a clear beginning and end. You are responsible for authoring, creating, collecting, or curating all of the content in the monograph.

Related Reading:

- Eric Mortensen's "Wikipedia Zine"
- "The Book of Warriors" by Shumeng Ye

The Fine Print

Americans with Disabilities Act

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Learning Resource Center at 410-225-2416, in Bunting 458, to establish eligibility and coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)

It is the responsibility of faculty and students to follow health and safety guidelines relevant to their individual activities, processes, and to review MICA's Emergency Action Plan and attend EHS training. It is each faculty member's responsibility to coordinate with the EHS Office to ensure that all risks associated with their class activities are identified and to assure that their respective classroom procedures mirror the EHS and Academic Department guidelines. Each of these policies and procedures must be followed by all students and faculty. Most importantly, faculty are to act in accordance with all safety compliance, state and

federal, as employees of this college and are expected to act as examples of how to create art in a way to minimize risk, and reduce harm to themselves and the environment. Faculty must identify and require appropriate personal protective equipment for each art making process, for each student, in all of their classes, when applicable. Students are required to purchase personal protection equipment appropriate for their major. Those students who do not have the proper personal protection equipment will not be permitted to attend class until safe measures and personal protection are in place.

Plagiarism

Each discipline within the arts has specific and appropriate means for students to cite or acknowledge sources and the ideas and material of others used in their own work. Students have the responsibility to become familiar with such processes and to carefully follow their use in developing original work.

Policy

MICA will not tolerate plagiarism, which is defined as claiming authorship of, or using someone else's ideas or work without proper acknowledgment. Without proper attribution, a student may NOT replicate another's work, paraphrase another's ideas, or appropriate images in a manner that violates the specific rules against plagiarism in the student's department. In addition, students may not submit the same work for credit in more than one course without the explicit approval of the all of the instructors of the courses involved.

Consequences

When an instructor has evidence that a student has plagiarized work submitted for course credit, the instructor will confront the student and impose penalties that may include failing the course. In the case of a serious violation or repeated infractions from the same student, the instructor will report the infractions to the department chair. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the department chair may then report the student to the Office of Academic Affairs, which may choose to impose further penalties, including suspension or expulsion.