| 16 Jan p.01  **GDES 440 003**  **Synthesis** / Spring 2024  **Steven Hoskins** / He / His / Him  **T 9:30am-1:50pm**  **822 West Broad**  **F 9:00am-1:20pm**  **Pollak 317**  **6 credits (Studio)**  [Slhoskins@vcu.edu](mailto:Slhoskins@vcu.edu)  **Office** / Pollak 326  Office hours by appt.  **Zoom** (when used) /  <https://vcu.zoom.us/j/92071110172>   | **16 January 2024**  ***UPDATED 16 January*** | | --- |   **Syllabus** | **Description:**   * This studio provides students the opportunity to synthesize knowledge, skill, and experiences accumulated over their progression through the program. Students are required to define and execute a capstone project that demonstrates their readiness and capacity to engage responsibly and creatively in the field. The class culminates in a public exhibition.   **Objectives:**   * This studio is the distinct space and time for students to explore and embrace their agency as a design practitioner. Student projects are self-defined and self-managed during the 15-week work cycle. In addition to regular peer feedback, students consult with instructors, outside critics, and VCU faculty. Students present their initial proposal, their research, and ongoing work throughout the semester for assessment and evaluation. This leads to a final articulation of the work that is publicly exhibited.  | 1  To initiate and pursue  a focused design inquiry.  2  To demonstrate that work,  from conception to production is held accountable to an internal logic established by  the critical frameworks  of the work. | 3  To demonstrate a synthesis  of knowledge through verbal, visual, and written articulation.  4  To engage meaningfully and  productively within the studio and community. | | --- | --- |   **Shared Google Drive Course Folder for this class:** |
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| [**https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1AffTSd5dBthmTmodpGi7Ygn0HAiw2BeP**](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1AffTSd5dBthmTmodpGi7Ygn0HAiw2BeP) |
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| 16 Jan p.02 **P**  **We meet on**  **Tuesdays (T)**  **at 822 West Broad St.,**  **and on Fridays (F)**  **at Pollak (usually in 317).**  **Important Dates**  **Monday 22 January**  Last day to add/drop a course  last day for late registration  **Wednesday 24 January**  Deadline to provide advance  written notification of intent  to observe religious holidays  to instructors  **03–10 March**  Spring break, no classes  **Friday 22 March**  Mid-term grades due  **Friday 29 March**  Last day to withdraw from a  course with a mark of «W»  **Tuesday 30 April**  Last day of Spring classes prior to final exams.  **Saturday 10 May**  Spring commencement  **Tuesday 14 May**  Final grades due  Students should visit [**http://go.vcu.edu/syllabus**](http://go.vcu.edu/syllabus).  Review all syllabus statement information.  The full university syllabus statement includes information on safety, registration, the VCU Honor Code, student conduct, withdrawal and more.  Students should also read [**VCUarts Syllabus Addendum Spring 2024**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BAP00WnDra-iJyH0DzlHrHUvqkZNbq6r/edit?usp=share_link&ouid=101381930627843950683&rtpof=true&sd=true)  Review all syllabus addendum information. | **GDES Class Presence Policy:**  The standard VCU attendance policy states that student absences during the semester are not expected to exceed the number of times the class officially meets in one week. The department has adopted a revised policy that addresses more significant issues of expected engagement in a course, articulated below in this revised Class Presence Policy. Consistent engagement is a vital component of the successful completion of course objectives.  The progression of this course requires all participants to be present and actively engaged in class, both during synchronous on-screen meetings, in person, and with asynchronous activities. Consistency of engagement is vital for successful completion of the course objectives. Each of us carries different circumstances and capacities, and we are accountable for our own agency. This is always true, but it is especially crucial now.  Be present for this class, participate consistently in the regular give-and-take of the classroom environment, be willing to share thoughts and experiences, and be willing to listen to the thoughts and experiences of others actively. Asynchronous engagement is equally essential for your success in this course. If, at any point during the semester, you cannot be present, communicate this clearly with your faculty in a timely manner. Think about the manner in which you feel you will be able to be fully present and active with your community; this may differ from how others respond. Communicate this with your faculty so we can show up for you.    **Social Contract:**  This class operates on the principles of charity and respect. We will take everything presented in good faith and provide the due diligence necessary to assume its positive value and motive. The intellectual burden falls equally on all parties. Active listening is essential to engaged participation, so please be gracious and generous with both.  Active participation is mandatory and rigorous; lively discussion (and debate) is encouraged. You are tasked with asking questions and making connections between course material, personal interests, contemporary culture, and design practices. Discomfort is productive; kindness is mandatory, and defensiveness is discouraged. Please arrive open and engaged.  In our shared space (virtual, physical, and otherwise), we will also be taking a cue from the [Design Justice Network’s principles](https://designjustice.org/read-the-principles)—sharing design knowledge without gatekeeping, claiming not expertise but rather facilitation, and affirming the importance of sharing our  collective knowledge and tools. |
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| 16 Jan p.03  *You are required to upload all project documentation, critical reviews, research material, etc.to a personal folder to the* Student Work Folder.  *Student archives must be complete, uploaded, and organized by the end of the semester.*  *To identify and organize files more clearly, students must follow the following file naming conventions:*  *GDES440\_SynthesisStudio\_STUDENTNAME\_PROJECTNAME.pdf (or .jpg, etc.)* | **Evaluation**  The process of grading will be undertaken corroboratively (which means I take roll, and keep track of who is participating, and who is not). Your grade will be a reflection of the following metrics:  ***Process 40%***  Independence and adventurousness in expanding your horizons; venturing out to experience new things/ideas/situations; finding connections between these activities and your evolving design practice.  ***Realization 40%***  Production, manufacture, and manipulation of  in-process prototypes and final artifacts.  ***Participation 20%***  Presence, contribution and effort in preparing for class discussions, engagements, and collaborations throughout the semester.  **Grading**  A (4.0) = Exceptional achievement. Substantial effort and achievement in the areas of critical thinking, technique, and presentation.  B (3.0) = Very good work that satisfies goals of course; clear and convincing structure of a project that is complex and unique.  C (2.0) = Average. Original capstone project executed, but does not go beyond the minimum requirements.  D (1.0) = Below average. Very little effort or is incomplete. Lacks full commitment.  F (0.0) = Failure, no credit. The student exhibits an unsatisfactory ability to communicate and execute ideas and a pattern of low productivity.  **Sharing and labeling work:**  We will extensively use the Shared Google Drive Course Folder linked on page 01, and sent to you by email prior to class. Within the Student Work Folder, you have editing access to upload work and schedule meetings. *Please don’t change anything that is not yours, but you can add comments on anything you like.*  **Attendance and class structure:**  As an in-person, synchronous course, you will be meeting at times that have been scheduled for this course (T/F). You need to make yourself available during these times, even though we will not always meet the full duration every class period. You will know—or schedule yourself or as part of a team—what timings you specifically will need to be in attendance.  **Things to expect everyday we meet as a full class:**  Class roll is taken with a handout each meeting day when we meet as a full class at the same time. Make sure your name is on **the class roll** for the day so that you are not counted as absent. Missing a scheduled appointment you make with me is an absence. |
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| 16 Jan p.04 **P**  **Week 1** 16/19 January  [Sign-up sheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/18O5ujhLke8vV2_Ryp_XN8tqv1ruPMi_GuQwWy8banvs/)  [opens 16 January](https://docs.google.com/document/d/18O5ujhLke8vV2_Ryp_XN8tqv1ruPMi_GuQwWy8banvs/)  **Week 2** 23/26 January  **Week 3** 30 January / 02 February  Sign-up sheet for individual studio visits opens 26 January  **Week 4** 06/09 February  **Week 5** 13/16 February  **Week 6** 20/23 February  Sign-up  coordinated across  all 4 sections | **Preliminary schedule (Last updated 16 January).**  (T) Preliminary introduction to course, [Multi II discussion](https://docs.google.com/document/d/11-p3l5OyEbKZI7YJrCEqbzWRUSfLfsMqCjDTqSP86-8/edit?usp=share_link) (822 W. Broad)  (F) Full Intro to course / curatorial prompt intro (Pollak 321) / individual intro presentations, session 1 (Pollak 317) / notify me if you need card access to 822WB.  **Introductory Research Presentation.** The Introductory Research Presentation is a 10-15 minute overview of the research related to your capstone project, following on the work you completed for Critical Inquiry in the Fall. These presentations are casual, and are just for starting a conversation about what your capstone project may be, no matter its current state. Three consecutive class meetings are devoted to this.  (T) individual intro presentations, session 2 (822 W. Broad)  (F) individual intro presentations, session 3 (Pollak 317) / Curatorial teams follow-up  **Curatorial Group Presentation.** Following the research presentations, the class will be split into two groups. Each group will spend five weeks developing a curatorial concept for the senior exhibition that will happen on 03 May at 822 Broad St. The exhibition location is subject to change depending on students pursuing and confirming an alternative on their own.  The curatorial concept will outline a general framework that can be applied to all aspects of the exhibition including the identity, catalog, website, and installation design. On 23 February all Synthesis Faculty host curatorial concept presentations by all the student groups across the four Synthesis sections. Of the 8 presentations, a winner will be collectively chosen as the decided framework for the exhibition design.  (T) Individual Studio Visits (TBD) / (F) Curatorial team work (Pollak 317)  **Individual Studio Visits (TBD).** You are expected to sign up for at least two 30 minute individual studio visits across the semester–one before and after Spring Break. Students are expected to come prepared with an in-depth progress review of their capstone project.  (T) Individual Studio Visits (\*) / (F) Curatorial team work (Pollak 317)  \* This week, 05-08 February (M,T,W,R) GDES classes are canceled due to juniors’ Third Semester Reviews, including Synthesis morning class (9:30am-1:50pm). **Individual Studio Visits will be scheduled for sign up during Multi-Studio II (3:30pm-4:50pm) on both Tuesday and Thursday, 06/08 February.**  (T) Individual Studio Visits (TBD) / (F) Curatorial team work (Pollak 317)  (T) Curatorial team presentation planning (822 W. Broad)  (F) Curatorial presentation party + voting (Pollak TBD)  **Exhibition Group Production Schedule.** Following 23 February curatorial group presentations, seniors organize into four exhibition groups, each are advised by a separate Synthesis faculty. The groups are Identity (TBA), Catalog (TBA), Installation (TBA), and Website (TBA).  Each exhibition group is required to submit a production schedule on 01 March to the faculty advisor of their respective group.    The production schedule should outline the budget and a detailed timeline for realizing the group’s deliverable of the exhibition. The document should also include which of the students are assigned as the two co-leaders of the exhibition group. |
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| 16 Jan p.05 **P**  **Week 7** 27 February / 01 March  Sign-up sheet  opens 30 January  **Week 8** 12/15 March  **Week 9** 19/22 March  Sign-up sheet for individual studio visits opens 12 March  **Week 10** 26/29 March  **Week 11** 02/05 April  **Week 12** 09/12 April  **Week 13** 16/19 April  **Week 14** 23/26 April  **Week 15** 30 April / 03 May  **Week 15 +1** 10/11/12/13 May | **Preliminary schedule continued**  Mid-semester research presentations  (in MultiStudio II - Tuesday + Thursday, **27 + 29 February**)  Committee production schedules due (F)  **Mid-Term Presentations.** A formal 15 minute articulation of your capstone project to the GDES 380 Multi Studio I students, as well as your peers, in the Synthesis class. At this point in the semester, your capstone project should be clearly defined and not hypothetical, with a tangible form that can be understood and critiqued.  The week will conclude your involvement in Multi-Studio for the semester.  **Spring Break —**  SOME OF THE FOLLOWING IS A LITTLE FLUID AT THE SEMESTER START.  UPDATED BY SPRING BREAK  Professional-practices workshop / Alumni panel  (T) Individual Studio Visits (TBD)  (F) Senior Show Committees (Pollak)  (T) Individual Studio Visits (TBD)  (F) Senior Show Committees (Pollak)  (T) Individual Studio Visits (TBD)  (F) Exhibition GroupCommittee design presentation  **Exhibition Group Presentation.** On 05 April there will be another event for each of the four exhibition groups (Identity, Catalog, Installation, and Website) to present to all the students across the Synthesis sections. These presentations are an opportunity for each group to provide all necessary design templates and plan for the final realization of the exhibition.  (T) Individual Studio Visits (TBD) / (F) TBA  (T) Individual Studio Visits (TBD) / (F) TBA  Portfolio upload (TBA), Senior exit interview (TBA), Course evaluations deadline (TBA)  6th semester reviews (TBA), First Friday exhibition spectacular  Sat 11 (UNCONFIRMED) May Commencement & Show closing & family reception event.  Group de-install and clean-up (TBA) |
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