SUSTAINABLE GRAPHIC DESIGN
or, the Designer as Sustainabilitist
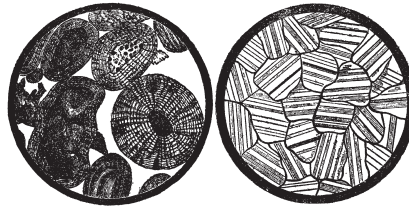
http://teaching.ookb.co/courses/gd314

GD 314.01
Fridays
9:00am–3:00pm
3 Credits
BR308

Kristian Bjørnard
kbjornard@mica.edu
Office: BR317
Office Hours:
Tuesdays / 11:00am–3:00pm
(or by appointment)

I will do my best to always respond to your emails within 24 hours.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This course introduces various facets of sustainability and demonstrates how its principles and philosophies can be applied within the design field. Students become familiar with trends, theories and ideologies, along with practical design needs, and learn to distinguish fact from fallacy. While exploring materials and practices and their environmental and economic consequences, students develop problem-solving alternatives. In addition to new projects, students are asked to rework a previously completed assignment in a sustainable way.
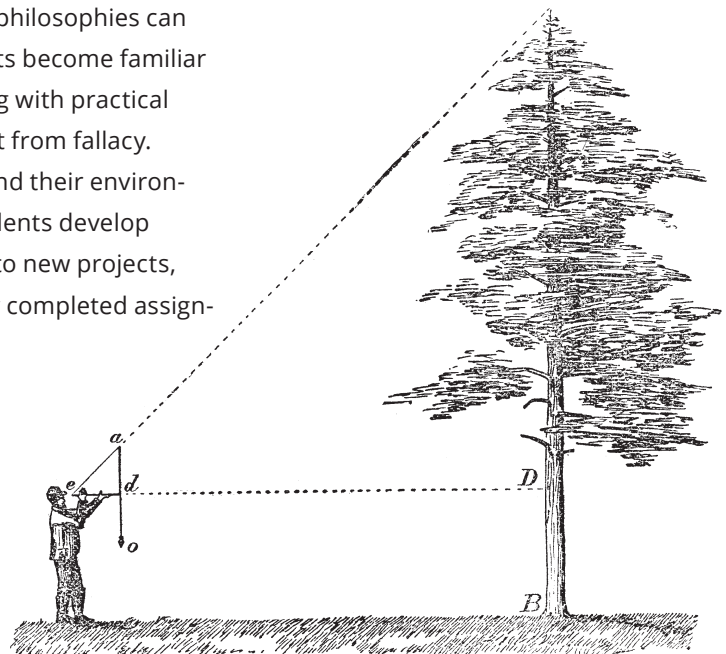
COURSE STRUCTURE & OBJECTIVES

I'll be presenting my ideas, philosophies, and working methods to you over the course of the term (along with the work of other designers and thinkers). You'll be made to work in some of the ways I've found useful in regards to how I think about "sustainability" in my life and design practice. While I ask that you honestly and non-judgementally try these out, once each project or exercise is over you are free to abandon whatever methods we have covered. My main desire for you is not to merely replicate my ideas and practices, but come up with your own methodologies and systems that make sense based on your thoughts or beliefs. Everything I will present is in the service of you coming up with your own philosophy of sustainable design and your own methodologies for your own sustainable design practice.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

1. generate a personal vision for what "sustainability" means in their graphic design practice;
2. define their own patterns and design vernacular as a way towards creating their own "sustainable" design aesthetic;
3. employ concrete sustainable methodologies in the design work;
4. produce a body of design exploring sustainability as subject, content, and constraint;
5. distinguish between sustainable truths and fallacies.
6. formulate practical and fantastical sustainable solutions to design problems.

REQUIREMENTS

— Regular Attendance.
— Successful completion of all projects on the due date(s).
— Class participation.
— At least 3 additional hours of work outside of class each week.
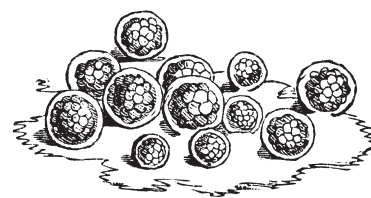
TECHNOLOGY STATEMENT

This course will use industry standard technology, mainly the Adobe Creative Suite: Acrobat, Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign. Other technology used for presentation and prototyping may also be required but will be dictated by the design of each project.

IN-CLASS TECHNOLOGY USE

During class hours, please don't chat online, send/check messages on phones/computers, check emails, communicate or browse content on social media networks, nor browse the web for content that does not relate directly to class. Please stow cell phones out of sight! Failure to comply with this rule may result in deductions from your final grade.

COMPLAINTS

Students are encouraged to discuss complaints and concerns regarding a class, project or grade with me first, during my office hours or at a time chosen by our mutual consent. Issues that students do not find to be resolved should then be reported to the Department Chair (currently Zvezdana).
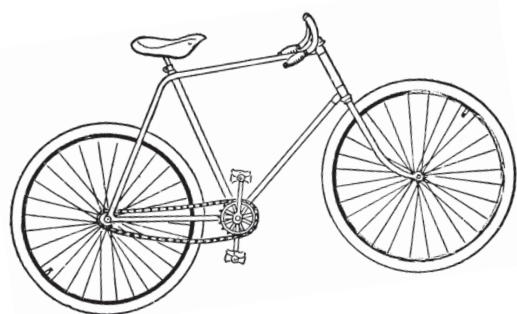
ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend all meetings of each class in which they are enrolled. They are expected to be ready to start work at the opening of class and to remain for the entire class session. Irregular attendance or habitual tardiness will lead to lower grades and, ultimately, to probation or dismissal. ***Unexcused absence from as few as three classes will result in a failing grade*** (this isn't my policy, it is MICA policy across the board). In the case of extended illness or other legitimate absences that may keep the students from attending a class for more than three meetings, students must contact the *Student Development Specialist* in the *Division of Student Affairs* so that instructors can be notified.

If you miss a class, check the course website (moodle or preferably teaching.ookb.co). Info will be posted each week on what we discussed and instructions, files, and readings that might be needed. If you have additional questions please contact me immediately; don't wait until the next week. You will still be expected to present or be prepared for the following class after any absence.

It is also important you show up to class on time and prepared. We've got a lot to cover and it sets the whole class behind when any of you shows up late. However, being late — even 2 hours late — is favorable to not coming at all.

PARTICIPATION

You are expected to take an active part in this class. Come prepared to discuss readings and the strengths and weaknesses of your classmates work (as well as your own). You are expected to offer, as well as accept, constructive criticism. The ability to effectively articulate and explain your ideas and design decisions is a critical skill that you must develop. Treat your classmates professionally at all times. We will have some sort of critique almost every class period and when we are not lecturing/critiquing/doing demos you will be expected to work on the current project in class. This allows you the benefit of real time feedback from both your peers and your instructor. Take advantage of your class time; the constant interchange of ideas usually leads to better, stronger design solutions.

MATERIALS

— Flickr acct. (post DADs there)
— Books:
  Flourishing (bit.ly/flourishingbook)
  The Upcycle (bit.ly/theupcycle)
  Shaping Things (bit.ly/shapingthings)

DUE DATES

All projects are due at the START of class on the assigned due date. Projects turned in after that will not be accepted. I repeat: *No late projects will be accepted.* This means you will earn a zero for a late project. If you will be unavailable on a due date make arrangements to turn it in early or by email during that class period. *You are responsible for turning in work on time regardless of attendance.* Do keep in mind that something is better than nothing, so if you aren't finished at least bring what you have so far to critique. In the case of school closing projects will be due at the start of our next regularly scheduled class meeting.
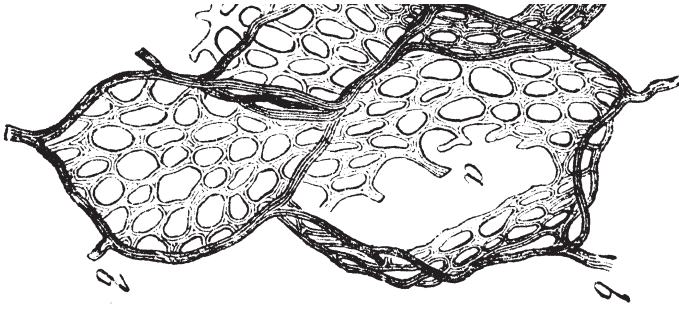
GRADES

Merely completing a project is absolutely not a guarantee of a passing grade! You will eventually be hired based on your portfolio which art directors will review and compare to other designer's they've seen before hiring someone. Your ability to set yourself apart in concept and execution will determine your success in this field both academically and in the real world, so let's start practicing that now. Your grade for the term will be an assessment of how completely you have explored your ideas, researched each project, the success of the design in solving the various assigned problems, uniqueness, CRAFT and presentation.

A+	A	A-	Superior
B+	B	B-	Above Average
C+	C	C-	Average
D+	D	D-	Below Average
F			Failure

Plus or minus may be used. However, for purposes of obtaining a quality point average, each grade category is assigned the following quality points:
A = 4 / B = 3 / C = 2 / D = 1 / F = 0

(For more information see the Statement of Academic Standards in the Student Handbook.)

— Class participation is paramount & should show marked progress in the student's ability to talk about design intelligently & constructively.
— Punctuality & participation to in-progress & final critiques will have an impact on the grade for each project.
— Work lost due to technological problems will be considered late. It is important to get in the habit of backing up & duplicating files. Technical trouble is not a valid excuse for missing a deadline — neither academically or professionally.

HINTS FOR SUCCESS

Attend class regularly and on time, meet deadlines, take thorough notes, participate in class discussions and critiques, show a strong sense of concept and design. Do your absolute best on each project and push yourself to do even better on the next project. Strive to be perfect in both concept and craft. Do more than is asked for. Be inventive! Think! Experiment! Bring a positive, enthusiastic, open mind to class. Take advantage of opportunities to be responsible for your own education!

HINTS FOR FAILURE

Don't come to class. Don't complete the projects to the absolute best of your ability. Disrupt class often with snide and personal insults directed at student's work or at them personally. Don't participate in class critiques. Don't ask questions when you have questions and need clarification. Decide you're not responsible for your own education and expect me to somehow pour the information and practice into your brain.
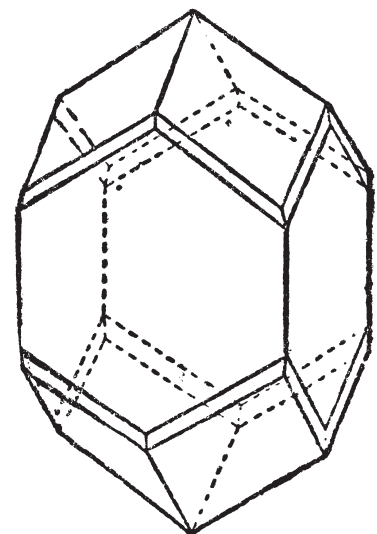
READINGS

1. *Flourishing* (excerpts)
2. *The Upcycle* (excerpts)
3. *Shaping Things* (excerpts)
4. *Veridian Manifesto*
5. *Eternally Yours* (you'll be given excerpts)
6. Hans Haacke's *Ideas For Making*

I need you all to purchase *Flourishing* (bit.ly/flourishingbook), *The Upcycle* (bit.ly/theupcycle), and *Shaping Things* (bit.ly/shapingthings). The rest will be given to you as PDFs or URLs. We will have in class discussions each week there is a reading due. The readings should also be helpful in your formulating your own opinions and ideas around sustainability as it pertains to design. They should also influence your daily designs and your final essay, as well as the sustainable design decisions you are making on other projects through the term (and hopefully beyond).

More non-required (but still recommended) reading can be found at:
library.thesustainabilitist.com

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For the checkin days, I think it will be most useful to break up the class into a couple groups, and look at just 3–4 students work each week. The whole class will be involved in the critiques, ideas, etc. but this way we can easily spend 30–45 minutes per student and really investigate how what we're talking about can be applied to a given peice.

ROUGH SCHEDULE

01/24 Intro; Prof. Bjornards general sustainability introduction. Hans Haacke reading. "What is Sust. GD" project. Assign D-A-D's. Get required books…

01/31 First reading from books starts this week. Look at "WISGD" pieces. Discuss "sustainabilitizing" student works.

02/07 Discussion, Lecture, Workday.

02/14 Discussion, Lecture, Workday.

02/21 Checkin with sustainabilitized works, Discussion, Lecture. Hopefully Print Rep is coming to discuss speccing a Sust. Project.

02/28 Checkin with sustainabilitized works, Discussion, Lecture.

03/07 Checkin with sustainabilitized works, Discussion, Lecture.

03/14 Checkin with sustainabilitized works, Discussion, Lecture. Start working on the Essay assignment.

03/21 *SPRING BREAK*

03/28 Checkin with sustainabilitized works, Discussion, Lecture.

04/04 Checkin with sustainabilitized works, Discussion, Lecture.

04/11 Checkin with sustainabilitized works, Discussion, Lecture.

04/18 Checkin with sustainabilitized works, Discussion, Lecture.

04/25 Checkin with sustainabilitized works, Discussion, Lecture.

05/02 Sust. GD essays due. Work day.

05/09 Last Day, Final Crit for sustainabilitized designs as well as D-A-Ds, all documentation due

PROJECTS

— *What is Sust GD.*

Find an example of something that you think is "sustainable graphic design." Explain your choice.

1. *What Does Sustainable Graphic Design Look Like. (Design-a-Day)*

I ask that you make something everyday. Spend an hour or less on each day's design. I know this doesn't sound "sustainable" to just generate a ton of work, but I think this assignment is useful a) to experiment with visualizing sustainable messages, and b) to learn about re-using ideas, coming up with recyclable solutions, and various other options for what sustainability can mean as a design tool. Use whatever content you desire (pulling in content from assigned readings, general sustainable thoughts that interest you, or visuals that try to explain some aspect of your opinions on sustainability and graphic design would be good areas to look into). Whatever content you choose the aim is this: make designs that interpret sustainability, examine potential "sustainable aesthetics," and practice making work that has "reuse" or "recycle" as part of its imperative. This is about patterns and design vernacular (a design language). Patterns are a way of seeing and relating to the world. A design language is a set of patterns that describe a standard way of solving problems.

— Ongoing over term.

— Minimum of 65 total: 13 weeks, 5 per week (start week 2, skip spring break, and skip week 16). For you over achievers, you can do more if you want. The most you could foreseeably make would be 105 (7/wk for 15 weeks).

— Please create a flickr account (if you don't already have one), make a WSGDLL set, and upload each piece to that daily as you go. I'll link to everyone's from the class site.

— Full flickr feed to be confirmed @ end of term (& I'll be checking throughout the term too).

2. *Sustainabilitize your Designs*

At three times during the term you'll be ask to present work you're creating (for other classes or specifically for this class) which you've decided to make "sustainable." We'll look at these in class and discuss ideas as a group for what's successful and what's not (aesthetically and sustainably), and how each student's works can be made more sustainable. This might be speccing different materials, changing a form, or re-envisioning why the thing is being designed in the first place. This should be fun. These solutions can be fantastical or practical.

— Ongoing over term.

— Documentation of the project(s) due at end of term.

3. *The Designer As Sustainabilitist (The Essay)*

Write and design a 1000-2000 word essay on what sustainability means in regards to your graphic design practice. I'll give you page size constraints (everyone will get the same page size), and then you can do whatever you want within those constraints that helps to illustrate and iterate your written ideas. As long as you adhere to the page constraints, this is basically a wide open assignment.

— Due @ 2nd to last week of term.

— *Project Epilogue*

I think these projects will allow you to explore how "sustainability" and "graphic design" fit together without me prescribing forms or solutions to you. The choices are yours to make. Let me know if you have any questions or concerns. You have my permission to fail. No one learns anything just trying safe, easy stuff.

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Fridays / 9:00A–3:00P / BR308**
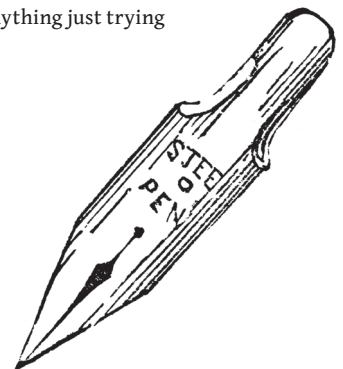
ADA (AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT)

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. Contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs. For additional information please refer to: http://www.mica.edu/LRC

EHS (ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY)

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.

Appeal Process: Students who are penalized by an instructor or department for committing plagiarism have the right to appeal the charge and penalties that ensue. Within three weeks of institutional action, the student must submit a letter of appeal to the department chairperson of the course for which actions were taken. The chairperson will assign three members of the relevant department to serve on a review panel. The panel will meet with the student an the instructor of record and will review all relevant and available materials. The panel will determine whether or not to confirm the charge and penalties. The findings of the panel are final. The panel will notify the instructor, the chairperson, the student, and the Office of Academic Affairs of their findings and any recommendations for change in penalties.

**Kristian Bjørnard / kbjornard@mica.edu / http://teaching.ookb.co/courses/gd314
*recommended reading: http://library.thesustainabilitist.com***