

GDES 222
CORE STUDIO II
M + W 2-5:20p (EST)
ONLINE

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(office hours by appointment)
<https://aidanquinlan.net/core2/s21/>

“Embark on a garden with a Vision
but never with a plan.”
—Ian Hamilton Finlay

Description

There is no right way to be a graphic designer. The key is to be open to any methods, forms, and processes that are appropriate to the content and which communicate effectively. That being said, there are so many ways to communicate. We have to be sensitive to our audiences and allow ourselves time to experiment and play to find the right solution.

We also must embrace the role that research—a particular type of research—plays in the life of a designer. Form and content do not arise spontaneously, but draw upon diverse and open-minded engagements with source material.

Design research of this kind is often akin to the practices of the collector, archivist and possibly even the hoarder. Developing a practice of collecting, archiving and using/reusing source materials will be very much a part of the work.

The ultimate goal of this course is to make and make and make in order to uncover a process for working and thinking that is unique to you—a process that is guided in equal parts by criticality, intuition, and joy.

Goals

1. To consider how methods of ideation and fabrication affect outcomes and meaning.
2. To exercise control and intentionality of form to generate meaning.
3. To identify and assess the effectiveness of expression, interpretation, and translation.
4. To employ research as a generative part of the design process.
5. To identify a practice and process that is inspiring and generative for you.

Assignments and Projects

In this course we will carry out a broad range of projects and exercises that build one on another and in sequence. It is part of the culture of this course to deliver challenges incrementally and with some degree of surprise. Therefore, the details and topics of particular projects are not specified in this document. However, a general structure and key dates can be seen in the attached schedule.

This course places most emphasis on process. While final outcomes are important, the primary aim of the course is to demonstrate the importance of methods and processes that enrich your work and which lead to unexpected and exciting outcomes. This class is as much about play as it is about work.

Daily Practice

You will be responsible for establishing a daily practice focused on exploring and developing a healthy ritual of making. You will document this daily, generative process on a blog, created specifically for this course. You will be required to upload a minimum of 5 posts a week.

This will be also be used to display your process work on various projects, and final works, as well as whatever you would like to post on this platform—so long as it is relevant to your process, practice, and research.

This blog can be hosted on a variety of platforms—I recommend using tumblr, are.na, Instagram, or Twitter. Keep in mind that you'll be posting a variety of content and mediums (image, text, sound) so make sure that whatever platform you're using is capable of posting more than just images/text. If you plan on using something different from what I have listed here, just send me an email so I can confirm that it is an appropriate space.

Online

This class will take place entirely online, with some flexibility on potentially meeting in person for individual meetings. Unless stated otherwise, we will regularly meet (synchronously) during the scheduled class times using Zoom. We will use the same zoom room for each class session so save the link/room for easy access.

You will also have access to the scheduled class space in Pollak Room 315 if you wanted to use that space during class time, though we will still all collectively meet online through Zoom. One thing to note is that departmental policy, at the time, only allows 10 students in a classroom at a time and only during the scheduled class time.

Class Discord

As this class will take place online, we will be using a Discord server to centralize communication and announcements for the class. The class Discord will also serve as a space for feedback and comments during feedback sessions. If there are any updates/changes to the class I will announce them on the Discord, so be sure to check often.

Attendance/Presence

The standard VCU attendance policy states that student absences during the semester are not expected to exceed the number of times the class meets in one week (2). This semester, because we are facing unprecedented circumstances, we will be following a revised policy that addresses larger issues of expected engagement in the course, articulated below. Consistent engagement is a vital component of successful completion of the 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 a successful completion of the course objectives. Each of us carries different circumstances and capacities; we are accountable for our own agency. This is always true, but especially crucial now.

If at any point during the semester you are unable to be present, communicate this with me as soon as you can. While presence in class is important, my primary concerns with this class are your wellbeing. Please remember to prioritize your mental and physical health over school.

VCU Policies and Resources

The University requires all students and faculty to be aware of policies outlining expectations, requirements and student services related to academic life. Please visit the following link and review these at the start of each semester: go.vcu.edu/syllabus

COVID-19 Updates

For information regarding institutional adjustments, policies, and safety precautions during COVID-19 please consult the web page for One VCU: Responsible Together.

	Monday	Wednesday	
1/25	introductions	project 1.0	1/27
2/1	project 1.0	project 1.1	2/3
2/8	project 1.2	project 1.3	2/10
2/15	project 1.3	project 1.4	2/17
2/22	research	research	2/24
3/1	research	research	3/3
3/8	vision	vision	3/10
3/15	midterm checkpoint	midterm checkpoint	3/17
3/22	vision	no class	3/24
3/29	vision	vision	3/31
4/5	space	space	4/7
4/12	space	space	4/14
4/19	space	space	4/21
4/26	space	space	4/28
5/3	space	finish (flag)	5/5

(subject to change, check website for daily itinerary)

VCUarts Syllabus Statements

The School of the Arts is deeply committed to the university's mission of advancing knowledge and student success. We do this in a number of ways, including fostering an inclusive environment and ensuring students' well-being.

Any member of the community that would like to report an incident of bias, a violation of academic integrity, a Title IX incident, concerning behavior or a general conduct violation may do so by clicking the 'VCU classroom safety' link found on the desktop of all university computers, or by going to <https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?VirginiaCommonwealthUniv>

The aim of University Counseling Services is to provide comprehensive evaluation and consultation for students on best options for their mental health care. This can include any of the following: case management, referral services to a community provider, brief individual and couples therapy, group therapy, consultation, and resiliency workshops.

Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (SAEO) is the designated office that provides reasonable accommodations and services to students with disabilities enrolled on VCU's Monroe Park Campus.

University Student Health Services offer a wide range of primary care services in the following areas: allergy shots, blood and/or body fluid exposures, immunizations, mental health & ADHD, nutrition consults, sexual health & wellness and more.

The Wellness Resource Center offers a wide range of services and resources for students, including information on mindfulness, stress reduction, nutrition, sleep, substance use, and recovery support.

Gender inclusive restrooms within the university can be located with this online map: students.vcu.edu/gib-map.

Holly Alford, VCUarts director of diversity, is available to provide assistance and support. She can be reached at artsinclusive@vcu.edu or (804) 827-3476.

The Student Code of Conduct can be found at conduct.students.vcu.edu. Students should note that VCUarts values artistic freedom and expression. Because safety is a top priority, students should consult their instructor for guidance as they assess potential physical safety concerns related to a proposed project or performance. Any project or performance that is determined by the school to present an unreasonable safety risk, including to the physical safety of the artist or any other person or to property, will not be graded and may result in additional university administrative and disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct and/or other university policies.