

DESIGN 3

DETAILS

Instructor	Prof. Jeff Thompson
Email	jeff.thompson@stevens.edu
Office/hours	Morton 208, Tues/Thurs 2–3pm
Meeting times	Thursdays 9.00am–12.50pm
Location	Visual Arts & Technology Lab
Course materials	www.github.com/jeffThompson/Design3

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is the culmination of the Design sequence in the VA&T program, and as such it is mostly about long-form, self-directed design research. The goal is for you to continue to hone your voice and interests as a designer, to take on a large project requiring considerable creative investigation, and to make work that aligns with your goals as a professional.

Rather than be about technical tutorials and short-term projects, after the first few weeks (where we will loosely follow the Design 2 class with ramp-up projects), you will pitch a large-scale, multi-part design project to undertake for the rest of the semester.

Our theme for this semester's project will be **The Future**. You're welcome to approach it in any way you see fit, whether from the exploring the future of books and reading or our worries about machine learning and AI or promoting a new kind of basketball shoe or chronicling technological utopias or what the MTA might look like in 5 years... it's wide open. The goal will be to visually articulate a view of the future.

I don't want you to come up with a specific project yet, but it would be good to starting thinking about a direction you'd like to investigate and to work on researching this theme, since we'll jump right in at week four. We'll do group readings, interviews, and other wide-ranging research, and develop a project brief out of that work. We will have weekly (or so) individual chats and periodic group critiques of work in progress. The course will culminate in a cohesive exhibition and presentation of your project, including detailed documentation of your process.

ATTENDANCE

Though we will not be doing demos every week, your attendance is still important. You are allowed two absences per semester to use at your discretion – each additional absence will result in your final grade being lowered by ½-letter. Late arrivals will be marked tardy, with 3 tardies equaling one absence. The only exception is severe illness – if this is the case, please let me know as soon as possible and provide a doctor's note documenting your illness.

HOMEWORK

Because this is the capstone course of the Design sequence, I expect you will not need prodding to make exciting, challenging, and large-scale projects. Since much of your work will be done independently and there are no directed assignments after the first few weeks, it will be critical that you are self-motivated and set deadlines. That said, I don't want to see your work clamp down – use this time to experiment boldly, play with materials and processes and ideas, and make great work that may at times fail.

“I think it is healthy to have certain level of humility and fear. I tell my students when they worry about such feelings, it shows me they are demonstrating care, and care involves a great deal of uncertainty. That means treating your work well - lending it your best craft, your best intentions, your love.” – Erik Brandt

GRADING

The goal of all assignments is for you to think and make, and to apply all of the skills and creative thinking you have accumulated through your design courses.

To get a C (an average grade) you should:

- + Put time into your projects each week
- + Complete everything on time
- + Participate in critiques and discussions

For a B or an A, you should additionally:

- + Take risks and try things enthusiastically
- + Be an active and unsolicited participant in critiques and discussions
- + Take assignments beyond their minimum requirements

Final grades will be determined as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| + Ramp-up homework: | 20% |
| + Class participation: | 30% |
| + Self-proposed project: | 50% |

COURSE CALENDAR

Please note this is subject to change – be sure to check GitHub and your email regularly.

WEEK 1

In class: Introductions and syllabus
Homework: Photocopier Collage; bring in brushes, ink, and other materials for mark-making; start looking for a reading to share

WEEK 2

DUE: Photocopier Collage
In class: Add type to Photocopier Collage, print final results, install exhibition of collage projects; mark- and letterform-making with various materials
Homework: Create vector typeface inspired by your mark-making experiments; bring a PDF or photocopy of a reading for the group

WEEK 3

DUE: Finished typeface design; reading for the group
Demo: Using the CNC mill and etching press
In class: Mill/print your typeface, scan, pick a complementary font
Homework: Type Specimen Poster

WEEK 4

DUE: Type Specimen Poster
In class: Ideation session on major project theme
Homework: Initial project findings: materials, images, textures, texts, and inspiration
Reading: Group readings

WEEK 5

DUE: Initial project findings
In class: Discussion of group readings
Homework: Continue research and inspiration gathering
Reading: “Design and Crime” (Foster) and “10 Principles” (Rams)

WEEK 6

DUE: One-on-one or small group research crits
Discussion: Foster/Rams readings and the role of decoration
Demo: Keeping a process book
Homework: Wrap up project research into cohesive presentation with pitch for a design question to address

WEEK 7

DUE: Presentation of project research and design question
In class: Feedback session with Design 2 class
Homework: Work on early iterations for in-progress critique

WEEK 8

DUE: First work-in-progress critique with class
In class: Work day
Homework: Continue working on project

MARCH 13-17: SPRING BREAK

NO CLASS – continue working, though ☺

WEEK 9

In class: Work day
Homework: Prepare work for second in-progress critique
Reading: Excerpt from “Design of Everyday Things”
(Norman), “Interaction Design is Dead. Now
What?” (Ammer)

WEEK 10

DUE: Second work-in-progress critique
Discussion: Print vs screen paradigms
In class: Work day
Homework: Continue working on project

WEEK 11

In class: Work day
Homework: Prepare work for third in-progress critique

WEEK 12

DUE: Third work-in-progress critique
In class: Work day
Homework: Continue working on project

WEEK 13

In class: Field trip to Cooper Hewitt or MoMA
Homework: Continue working on project

WEEK 14

Demo: Documenting design projects
In class: Come up with comprehensive plan for
documenting your project
Homework: Finish project deliverables; print and bind process
book

EXAM PERIOD (DATE TBA)

DUE: Final project deliverables, process book, and
documentation
In class: Critique