

PR 488: INTRO TO VISUAL COMMUNICATION

SOLVING PROBLEMS THROUGH DESIGN

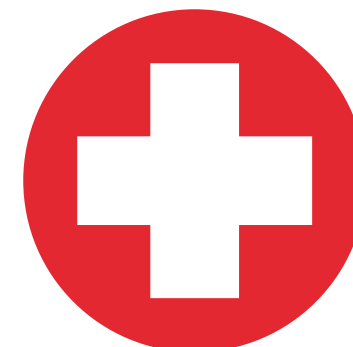
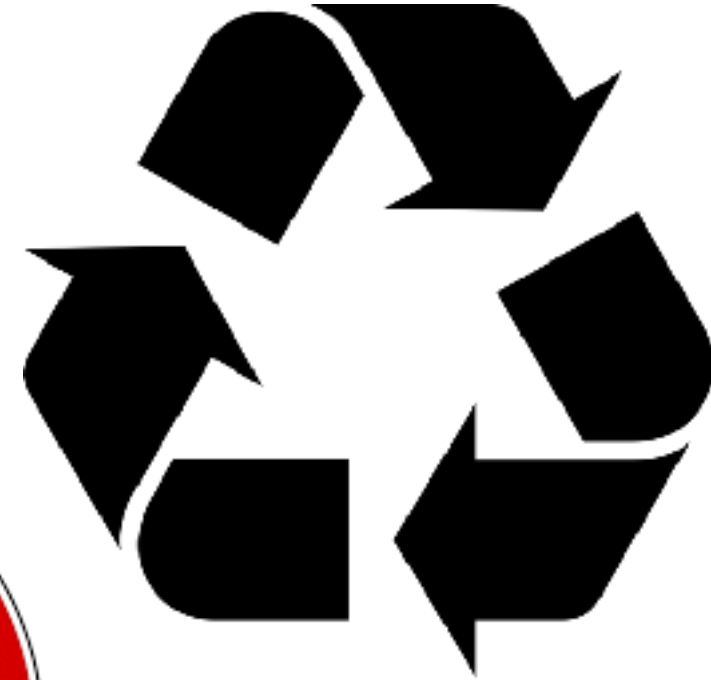
**A MIND THAT WORKS PRIMARILY WITH
MEANINGS MUST HAVE ORGANS THAT
SUPPLY IT WITH FORMS.**

Suzanne Langer, American philosopher

THINK ABOUT HOW SYMBOLS HAVE BEEN USED SINCE EARLY HUMAN TIMES.



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**WHEN VISUAL ARTS WAS AN EMERGING
FIELD A FEW DECADES AGO, IT WAS
OFTEN SEPARATED INTO TWO SCHOOLS
OF THOUGHT AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL:**

FINE ART AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION.

FINE ART

- ▶ Often is from the artist's (or artists' point of view).
- ▶ A lot of creative freedom and expression, sometimes seems more freeform.
- ▶ "Art for art's sake."

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Often has to start from a client's point of view.
- ▶ Room for creativity, but you have to adhere to certain constraints (client's color palette and style, certain tone, audience, etc.).
- ▶ Often more of a commercial purpose to a piece, and should be functional in some way.

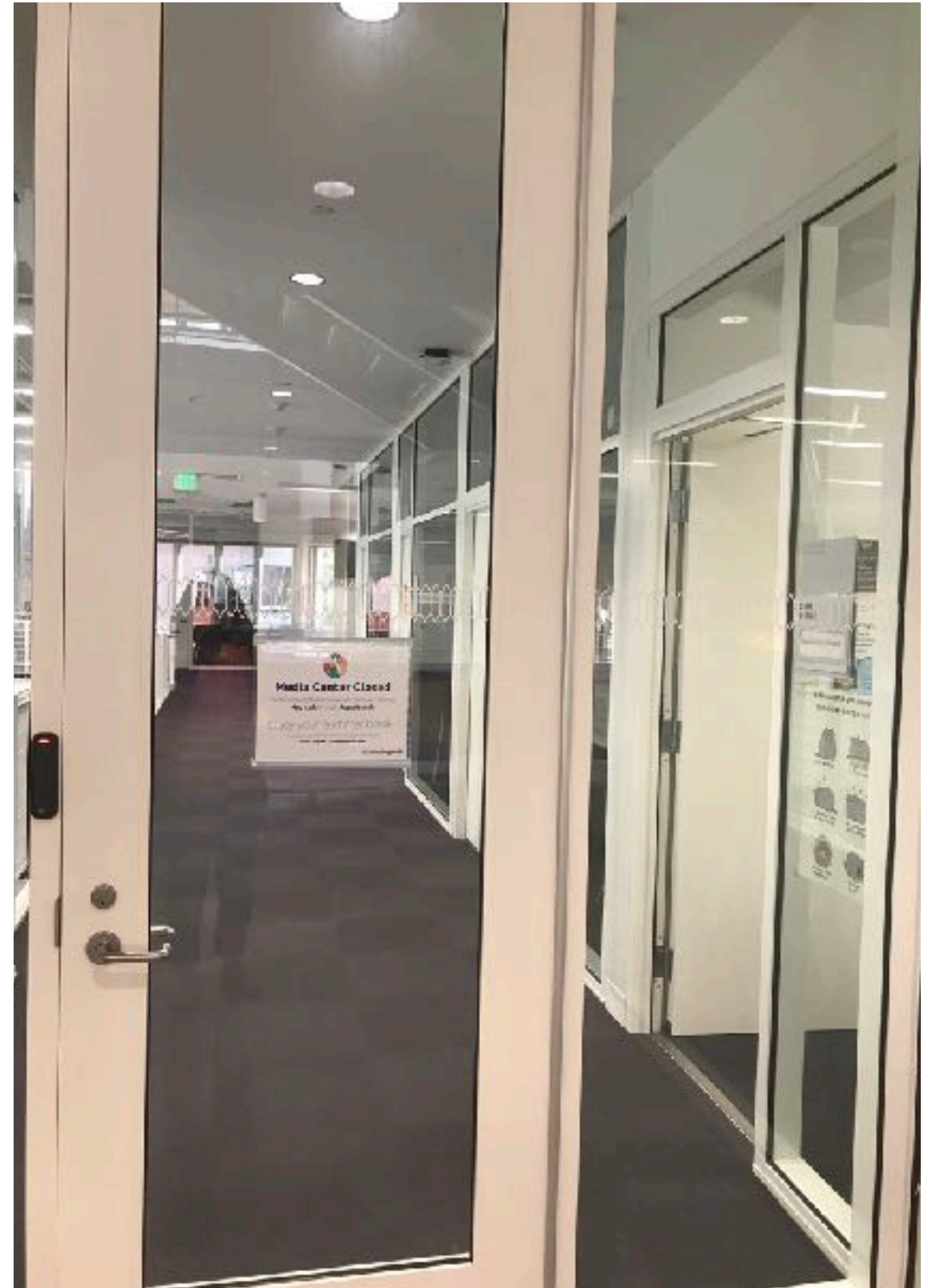
**WHILE ART AND DESIGN PIECES CAN BE CREATIVE
AND LOOK GOOD, THE MAIN THING THAT SEPARATES
GRAPHIC DESIGN FROM ART FOR ART'S SAKE IS
PURPOSE.**

**ALWAYS THINK ABOUT WHAT PROBLEM YOU'RE
TRYING TO SOLVE AND WHO YOU'RE SERVING WITH
YOUR DESIGN.**

THE DOOR TO NOWHERE

This door is on the second floor of Wallis Annenberg Hall (ANN). It is a restricted access door, and poor souls often gather here in search of a room that doesn't exist in this building. They often have to be directed to the other Annenberg building on campus.

How can you use design to solve this problem?



“WHEN YOU LOOK AT A PROBLEM YOU WANT TO SOLVE WITH DESIGN, LOOK DEEP. LOOK PAST THE SURFACE TO WHAT IT MEANS — NOT THE COMPONENTS OR CODE, BUT TO THE HUMAN BEINGS.”

Erika Hall

SOLVING A PROBLEM WITH DESIGN

- ▶ Define the problem. Is there a bottleneck? Is there a lack of awareness about an issue? The problem is rarely “we just need this thing made for us”; find out the deeper need.
- ▶ Know your audience. It’s not just the company and client, but who the client serves.
- ▶ Brainstorm. Even if your first idea is a good one, you never know what you’ll find through discovery.
- ▶ Remember you’re not designing for yourself. Always keep your final purpose in mind.

**DESIGNERS ARE THE MOST
INCLUSIVE PEOPLE OUT THERE
BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO THINK
ABOUT WHO THEY ARE SERVING.**

John Maeda, head of global computing, Automattic

AUDIENCE IS NOT JUST ABOUT
WHO THESE PEOPLE ARE, IT'S
ALSO ABOUT **WHY** THEY MAKE
THE DECISIONS THEY DO.

THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

- ▶ What are their habits? How do these habits affect the way a person would use your company's product or consume information from your client?
- ▶ Are there hardware or software limitations?
- ▶ Are there structural / institutional / societal limitations?
- ▶ Does your audience have special needs or cultural sensitivities you need to be aware of?

CREATING YOUR ROADMAP

- ▶ Many people create an overall creative brief when taking on a new client. It's also helpful to write smaller creative briefs for each project so everyone is on the same page and your objectives are clear for that particular project.
- ▶ Here's a great article about [writing short-form creative briefs](#).

CREATIVE BRIEF TIPS

Creative briefs usually answer the following questions:

- ▶ What is the message?
- ▶ To whom are we speaking?
- ▶ How do we want to be perceived?
- ▶ What are the executional guidelines or other constraints?
- ▶ How do you plan to solve these problems? Through print collateral? Digital components? A mix of different items?

CREATE YOUR COMPANY

Now that you've had some time to mull over the merits and purpose of visual communication, you can apply that knowledge to a project!

Create a company or organization of your choosing. Remember, this is the entity you will create material for the rest of the semester. This company or organization should provide a service, sell a product, or have a cause tied to it. Write a creative brief detailing your company name, what its purpose is, who its audience is, and one or two problems this company may have that you hope to solve using design.

Due via email to jdelafue@usc.edu by 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, August 28.