

Last fall I took a Design 101 online course. The first assignment asked you to explain why you wanted to learn design.

Making this design, I wanted to fight against the strictly clean and crisp aesthetic of the modern web. Using elements that reflected my personal taste, I went for a look that was soft and feminine.

I would improve this design now by choosing a better font pairing between the headlines and body text. I'd also decrease the weight of the headline text because it's unnecessarily loud.



Hello there.
I'm Linda

WHY PRODUCT DESIGN?

Having worked as a product manager, I saw designers combine creativity and beauty with real-world needs and methodical problem-solving, helping make digital products easier to navigate and a joy to use. I realized that rather than managing creatives, I wanted to be a creative myself, fully participating in the joy (and the pain) that is product design.

WHY DESIGN 101?

I'm often blown away by other people's beautiful and effective designs, and I want to begin the process of building up those design skills in myself. I hope to learn basic theory, gain fluidity with tools, and lay a solid design foundation as I prepare for the UX Academy.



An assignment in Design 101 asked you to analyze a good design and a bad design. This is the analysis of good design.

Making this design, I wanted to use color to draw connections between the design elements vs the design principles. In using numbers to annotate the position of each point I mentioned, I made the analysis easy to scan and reference.

I would improve this design now by adding more margin around the main body text, since they're pressing too tightly against the border box. I'd also add drop shadows to the numbered annotations to match the cards, and use a heavier weight of type for the headlines in the colored boxes to make them easier to read.

DESIGN 101 | Evaluate Design - Part 1

The Weather Underground App

Analysis of a Good Design

Design Elements

1. PLANE

The app uses an inner shadow to portray the map being on a lower plane than the app itself. This suggests to the user that the map is set apart from the rest of the UI. And indeed, when a user clicks on the map, they are taken to a full map view where they can tap and drag to see weather data in other regions.

2. LAYERS

The dot on the map is a separate layer on top of the map background, indicating that the weather is currently being evaluated at that certain point. The layer is made more clear by the shadow from the point, and suggests that the point can move about the surface of the map.

3. POINT

The weather icons act as points, arranged on the same line. This helps create order when understanding the multiple pieces of information, while also guiding your eye horizontally. It sets the expectation that if the user were to swipe left, you would continue to see icons that would provide you with similar pieces of information.

4. LINE

A red line is used on the graph to plot the fluctuation of the temperature forecast. This treatment is clear and simple, helping the user easily compare changes in weather within a day and between days. Where usual weather apps just show numbers, Weather Underground has found a way to make it easy to see weather patterns in just a glance. It's a wonder no other weather app I've seen has caught on!

5. SHAPE

A blue shape is used on the graph to show the precipitation likelihood over time. The shape is defined on the top by the percentage of precipitation that may occur, and shaded in to the bottom of the graph. I define this as a shape, rather than a line, because there is real-world significance to the shading in of the area below the line. Because rainfall is a physical substance, the larger shaded areas represent more of a physical thing that is accumulating. This contrasts with temperature, which does not directly represent a physical accumulation, and thus is treated as a pure line rather than a shaded shape.

Design Principles

1. CLOSURE

In this search icon, even though the magnifying glass is covering the right side of the lines, the user still able to close the shapes. They would see the picture as an object covering a set of lines that span all the way from one side to another, rather than lines that are naturally cut off around the magnifying glass.

2. DOMINANCE

The first thing a user sees when opening the app is the circle that gives a summary of the temperature for the day. Because the circle is so big and even cuts into the shape behind it, it stands out. This is the place for users to quickly get the information that is relevant to them (the current temperature), and thus rightly follows the principle of dominance.

3. PROXIMITY AND ALIGNMENT

All information related to a single day is placed closely together, all aligned to the same center, so it's clear it's referring to a single entity. Although there are different styles for each piece of information, it is proximity and alignment working together that indicate they are all part of a single group.

4. SIMILARITY

The user can see that each day's forecast provides similar information because of the similarity of the treatment given to each piece of information. No matter what day is the focus, blue text indicates rain, black text indicates the day of the week, bolded numbers indicate temperature highs and grey numbers indicate temperature lows, etc.

5. CONTINUITY

Although there is a dot in the cutting through the red line that indicates temperature fluctuations, the human eye is still able to see the red line as continuous. The line on the left side of the red dot is part of the same entity as the line on the right side of the red dot (even if the red on the left side is less opaque than the line on the right!).

Linde Huang

09.13.18

An assignment in Design 101 asked you to analyze a good design and a bad design. This is the analysis of bad design, written in letter form to practice giving design critique.

Making this design, I wanted to again use color to draw connections between the design elements and principles in the letter, making them easier to find on the page. Since the letter format doesn't have the same headline callouts as a diagram does, I used color and bolding to make each point clear and easy to find.

I would improve this design now by removing the vertical colored bars, since the number at the top of the paragraph is enough indication. I'd also increase the leading to give more breathing room for the text.

DESIGN 101 | Evaluate Design - Part 2

John Neal Bookseller Website Analysis of a Bad Design



To the John Neal Bookseller Team,

I am a long-time buyer of calligraphy items from John Neal Bookseller and absolutely love the quality of the items you sell. However, I have found it a bit difficult to navigate your website, and I have some ideas for some ways to make it easier for eager buyers to get the products they need.

There are some **design elements** you may consider using more effectively.

- ① For example, there are triangles on the left-hand side of your navigation, calling attention to the first item in a new list. However, they may be unnecessary since the box shading around each section already separates each list from the next. Also, people have come to recognize pointers as part of navigation to indicate where they are on a site, and since these **points** do not serve that function, it can cause a bit of confusion.
- ② You use **lines** to divide each product list, but using dashed lines looks a bit messy. You might want to try thin, solid lines or just a larger blank space without any lines to clean up the look.
- ③ Since you have some product photos with colored backgrounds, you may not need the box around each photo. The **shapes** made by putting the boxes there look a bit messy, so it may help the products look better if they were cleaned up.
- ④ For each section of the website, the colored blocks all look like their own **plane**, but they are not organized in a way that ascribes meaning to each plane. Try choosing the bar color based off of the purpose of the box, rather than the column it is in.
- ⑤ Although each section of the website has many shapes, most of the page looks like it is all on a single **layer**. Try playing with different layers to call attention to the most important parts of the page.

Also, there are some **design principles** I think you could incorporate to liven up your website and make it easier to navigate.

- ① Right now when I first open the page, I'm not sure what to look at first. If you want people to search for a product when they come to the site, try making the search bar much larger to create a **visual hierarchy** emphasizing the most important thing first.
- ② There is a lot going on at the top of the website and as a user it takes me a long time to figure out what it all says, and to find what I need. Consider leaving some **space** around each separate component to make the page easier to understand.
- ③ You're currently using a different style for all of your buttons like "Search", "Sign up for JNB News", and "Quick Order Using Item Numbers". You could bring **modularity** into your website by designing all of the buttons to be a similar shape and color, so people can always recognize an action button.
- ④ The different shades of beige and brown are very similar to each other, especially in the left-hand navigation bar. You could try adding more **contrast** with your colors in order to help users, particularly ones who may be vision impaired, identify the difference between the sections.
- ⑤ Regarding **proximity**, make sure information that is similar is physically close to each other. For example, there are multiple ways to engage with the John Neal company itself: signing up for the newsletter, liking on Facebook, and calling the number. Rather than having those three things on five different parts of the page, try bringing them all together in one place.

Overall, I really appreciate your company and hope that an improved website design will make it that much easier for me and others like me to get a hold of your great products.

Warmly,
Linde Huang

In this Design 101 course, the final project was to redesign a city's tourism website. These are the logos I experimented with for Ann Arbor.

Making this design, I focused on the 'most educated city' claim to fame, as well as the 'arbor' name. I was going for a light, playful mood.

I would improve this design now by taking the words out of the 128x128 designs, using just the mark to represent the logo.

DESIGN 101 | Vector Logos

Logo Exploration

1024x1024



512x512



128x128



1024x1024



512x512



128x128



Fall 2018 Sketch

In this Design 101 course, the final project was to redesign a city's tourism website. This is the mood board to inspire the design.

Making this design, I wanted a playful color scheme with the use of bright, crisp photography. The main brand words selected were: curious, natural, energetic, and social.

I would improve this design now by editing the photos so that the brand colors would be clearly defined and drawn out. I'd also reduce the weight of the white dividing lines to give the board a fuller feel.

DESIGN 101 | Mood Board

			
			
			
			

Curious

Natural

Energetic

Social

Linde Huang | 09.19.18

Fall 2018 Sketch

In this Design 101 course, the final project was to redesign a city's tourism website. These are my final designs.

Making these designs, I wanted to give visitors a sense of the area using sharp photography. Sections are clearly divided, giving the visitor a clear outline of how to navigate the page.

I would improve this design now by reducing the amount of yellow—it's a great accent color but I was too heavy-handed with it. I also would reduce the amount of fade in the mobile versions; I think that design style has gone out of vogue.

DESIGN 101 | Final Designs

The image displays three wireframe prototypes of a tourism website for Ann Arbor, arranged side-by-side. Each prototype includes a header with the Ann Arbor logo and navigation links for 'Plan a Trip', 'Popular Attractions', and 'Events'. A search bar is also present in the header.

- Desktop Version:** Shows a large banner image of a city skyline. Below it is a 'PLAN A TRIP' section with categories like 'B&B Neighborhoods', 'Lodging', 'Dining', and 'Transport'. A 'See All Categories' button is available. Under 'POPULAR ATTRACTIONS', there are cards for 'Ann Arbor History On Museum', 'Matthew Botanical Garden', 'University of Michigan Museum of Art', 'University of Michigan Museum of Natural History', 'Gullfoss Park', and 'University of Michigan Arboretum'. Each card includes a thumbnail, name, a brief description, and a 'Learn More' link. A 'See More Attractions' button is at the bottom. The 'EVENTS' section shows a calendar for October 2018 with various events listed, each with a 'More Details' link. A 'See All Events' button is at the bottom. The 'FEATURED LOCAL BUSINESS' section features a photo of a restaurant interior with a caption about Ari Weinzweig. A 'See Full Article' button is below. The 'WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW' section shows five small images of local scenes. Social media links (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) are at the bottom right. Footer links for 'About Us', 'Contact', and 'News' are at the very bottom.
- Tablet Version:** The layout is similar to the desktop version but is adapted for a smaller screen. The 'PLAN A TRIP' and 'POPULAR ATTRACTIONS' sections are more compact. The 'EVENTS' and 'FEATURED LOCAL BUSINESS' sections are also simplified. The 'WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW' section shows five small images.
- Mobile Version:** The layout is further simplified for a mobile device. The 'PLAN A TRIP' and 'POPULAR ATTRACTIONS' sections are condensed. The 'EVENTS' and 'FEATURED LOCAL BUSINESS' sections are also simplified. The 'WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW' section shows five small images.

In another online design course, I analyzed a few differences between a geometric and humanist font.

Making these designs, I wanted to show side-by-side differences, using color to call out key differences.

I would improve this design now by aligning the paragraph lines on the two fonts, instead of using a single hard return between each. It would give the piece a better sense of overall alignment. Also, I would make the columns the same width for greater cohesion.

Futura Geometric font



The **eye** of the “a” is a perfect circle, revealing the classification of this font is geometric.

The **aperture** of the “g” consists of two curving forms with curves very similar to each other.

The **shoulder** of the “m” is a smooth curve with constant width throughout the curve.

There is no **stroke modulation** in the letters. All strokes are exactly the same width.

For size 36pt font, **x-height** is 17pt, and **cap height** is 30 pt. These taller heights make Futura more readable than Garamond.

The **stems** on the “a” and “g” fall shorter than the x-height.

Overall, Futura is a very thick and bold font, expressing a clean and crisp mood.

Garamond Humanist font



The **eye** of the “a” is a unique shape resembling an oval with a flat side, or a sideways teardrop, revealing the classification of this font is humanist.

The **aperture** of the “g” is made up of a clear curve on top, while the bottom is more of a diagonal line.

The **shoulder** of the “m” has a curve that is smaller further away from the stem, and thicker as it approaches the stem.

There is slight **stroke modulation** through the letterforms. The strokes are the thinnest where bowls connect to stems, and thickest at the stems of the letters.

For size 36pt font, the **x-height** is 15pt, and **cap height** is 24pt. These shorter heights make Garamond less readable than Futura.

Overall, Garamond is a slender font with unique shapes throughout, expressing a formal and refined mood.

Winter 2018

Figma

This assignment gave sample text and a series of images, and I put them together to create a news story layout.

Making this design, I wanted to explore how to lay out a content-rich page. I used a few grey bars for style, but the typography is the main player.

I would improve this design now by employing more white space. The design feels a bit too cluttered and condensed.

Climate Change The Observer



A Dismal Future for Arctic Life

With scores of new species now in danger, the habitat loss caused by global warming is wreaking havoc on the food chain

BY REBECCA ELVES
Thursday, January 13, 2017

In a few days the Arctic's beleaguered sea ice cover is likely to set another grim record. Its coverage is on course to be the lowest winter maximum extent ever observed since satellite records began. These show that more than 2 million square kilometres of midwinter sea ice have disappeared from the Arctic in less than 40 years.

The ice's disappearance – triggered by global warming caused by rising carbon emissions from cars and factories – is likely to have profound implications for the planet. A loss of sea ice means a loss of reflectivity of solar rays and further rises in global temperatures, warn researchers.

But there are other pressing concerns, they add. Sea ice loss is now posing serious threats to the Arctic's indigenous species – its seals, fish, wolves, foxes and polar bears. "The Arctic food chain relies on a stable sea ice platform and that is now disappearing, putting the region's wildlife at risk," said marine ecologist Tom Brown, of the Scottish Association for Marine Science (Sams), in Oban.

Sea ice provides a platform from which polar bears can hunt, and it links communities of land animals such as foxes and wolves. "The sea ice cap has been retreating for decades, and as it does the animals who live on its edge have had to move north," said Andrew Shepherd, professor of Earth observation at Leeds University.

"But that process takes them further and further away from land – and there is likely to be a limit about the distance they can tolerate."

In fact, the erosion of sea ice threatens at the very root of the Arctic ecosystem, for it provides a surface on which algae – the basic material on which the entire food chain in the region depends – can grow. "Algae lingers on the underside of sea ice and as spring begins there is a major increase in its growth," said Brown. "It is then eaten by tiny creatures called zooplankton, and they in turn are eaten by fish that are in turn eaten by seals, which are in turn consumed by polar bears. But if algae levels drop the whole food chain is disrupted."

Other dangers facing the Arctic were highlighted by Professor Julianne Stroeve, of University College London. "Consider the example of harp seals," she said. "They often give birth on snow mounds on sea ice. But if that sea ice is thin or formed late it breaks and the seal pups are dumped into the ocean and they drown." In addition, Stroeve pointed to the problem of increasing numbers of warm spells during which rain falls instead of snow. "That rain then freezes on the ground and forms a hard coating that prevents reindeer and caribou from finding food under the snow," she added.

Caribous face another danger posed by climate change. Normally they try to take advantage of a range of nutritious plants that bloom in the Arctic spring in order to help them recover from the fierce Arctic winter and to strengthen females before giving birth. But the plant species on which they rely are now blooming earlier and earlier as spring in the far north arrives sooner each year – while the caribou's internal clock remains unchanged and locked into the wrong biological cycle. As a result, the plants on which they rely pass their best when caribou arrive and so there is less nutrition available when they give birth. As a result, fewer calves are born.

It is a problem of synchronicity. The alignment of different lifecycles is being disrupted by sea ice loss and it is affecting animals on both land and in the ocean. "It is a bit like having your breakfast time changed," said Filipo Cottier, senior lecturer in polar oceanography, who is also based at Sams. "You are used to sleeping in to 8am, but one day breakfast is served at 6am but no one tells you. The result: you go hungry. That is what is beginning to happen all over the Arctic."

Animals in Danger

Caribou
As the Arctic warms up, rain more frequently falls instead of snow and then freezes over the ground preventing caribou and reindeer from finding food.



Harp Seal
Harp seals give birth on mounds of snow on sea ice. If this is weakened or thinner than normal and formed late in the year, it can break apart, causing pups to drown.



Zooplankton
Zooplankton form a critical part of the food chain. They live off algae that form on the underside of sea ice and in turn they are eaten by fish such as Arctic cod and also by baleen whales.



Polar Bear
Polar bears use sea ice as platforms from which to hunt seals and other creatures. Male and female bears also roost on ice sheets to mate.



Narwhal
Slow-moving whales like the narwhal use sea ice to hide from predators like killer whales, and could also be affected as shipping in the region increases as ice retreats.



“ The result: you go hungry. That is what is beginning to happen all over the Arctic.

Winter 2018

Illustrator

In another online design course, I created personas for the users of an uploading tool of a website builder software.

Making these designs, I wanted to use iconography and other visuals to more clearly represent the most important pieces of information.

I would improve this design now by adjusting the interaction between the title content and the large quote. The left-alignment of information about age and city clashes with the center-alignment of the quote text.

Betsy Bridal

OWNER OF A
BRIDAL SHOP

Female
32 y.o.
Toledo, MI



“ I love seeing a bride's face light up when she finds that perfect dress **”**

WEBSITE MOTIVATION
To get people to make appointments on her website

UPLOADER GOALS

- To make it easy to add dresses every season
- To make it easy to remove old dresses every season
- To edit product descriptions when new lines come in

UPLOADER CHALLENGES

- Dress photos from last season are hard to keep track off
- Needs to basically shuffle out site content multiple times a year
- Easy to lose so many logins

WEBSITE NEEDS
Moderate website functionality

TECH SAVVY
Uncomfortable with most tech

IMAGES VS TEXT
More Images than text

FEATURES DESIRED

Uploading files	Advanced image editing
Editing text within the tool	Managing versions
Organizing content	Collaborating in real-time

BIO

Betsy runs a bridal shop in southeast Michigan with three employees. She prefers using a book for scheduling appointments, but knows that to attract more customers she needs a professional website. Still, she'd much rather spend time with her husband and two kids than on website design.

Tiana Tutor

WEBMASTER AT
YOUTH NONPROFIT

Female
25 y.o.
Atlanta, GA



“ These kids need people in their life they can count on to be there for them **”**

WEBSITE MOTIVATION
To get people to donate their time or money to the nonprofit

UPLOADER GOALS

- To add upcoming events
- To add blog posts
- To keep program descriptions current
- To show off past events
- To write content with others

WEBSITE NEEDS
Advanced website functionality

TECH SAVVY
Comfortable with most tech

IMAGES VS TEXT
Even split between text and images

FEATURES DESIRED

Uploading files	Advanced image editing
Editing text within the tool	Managing versions
Organizing content	Collaborating in real-time

BIO

Tiana grew up in a disadvantaged neighborhood, so she wants to give back to her community and show the next generation of kids that they deserve more than they think they do. She grew up in the digital age very comfortable with technology, but wants to spend her time at Activate Youth with the kids in the tutoring program. In her free time she likes to read and spend time with friends.

Winter 2016 - Winter 2018
Pointed pen or brush pen

I've always loved calligraphy, but it wasn't until a few years ago that I tried to do it myself. I'm a huge fan of words of affirmation and giving tokens of gratitude, so I'm quite grateful I've picked up a hobby that gives me an excuse to write cards and make gifts for the wonderful people in my life.

