

Parsons School of Design
BFA Communication Design
Core Studio Typography
PUCD2025 Section H—CRN 4218
Mondays and Thursdays
7:00–9:40PM
2 W 13TH Street, Room 809

Tracy Ma
mat@newschool.edu
www.tracyma.com

Class website
pucd.github.io/2025H/

Course Description

Typography is language made visible. This first-semester Sophomore requirement introduces students to the history and current practice of type in all areas of communication design: from the simplest publication to the most advanced information graphics and screen-based interactive media. Students will learn to see, understand, and manipulate the visual aspect of language as a powerful communicative tool. This class will teach students an understanding of the properties of typefaces, their context and how typography helps readers read and navigate a text. The class will investigate letterform structure and type classification systems, typographic terminology, history of type and printing, principles of spacing, use of typographic contrast in composition, legibility, hierarchy, and typographic form as a tool for expression and communication.

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Deliverables
By the end of the semester, students will complete the following:

Project 1—Letter
due 9/14

Project 2—Word
due 9/28

Project 3—Text
due 10/12

Project 4—Book
due 10/9

Project 5—Display
due 10/30

In addition to projects, students are required to submit journal entries on a shared document on a weekly basis. The document will be an ongoing record of the class's collective development, as well as individual student's participation.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1 Use a basic vocabulary of visual language and typographic terms to both give and respond to critique productively. Including individual evaluation through the instructor, group critique in class, outside critique as well as written anonymous critique.

2 Evaluate how typography and its variables are applied to textual content to convey and augment its inherent message, express it meaningfully and aid the viewer in orienting to and processing information.

3 Understand the structure of the grid, its application and the importance of typographic balance, rhythm and flow in both print and digital media layout.

4 Understand type as image and its use in conjunction with image to successfully convey a chosen concept or idea.

5 Demonstrate an understanding of the iterative making process in graphic design, using incremental methods such as prototyping, user testing and evaluation to build toward more advanced work.

6 Research historic and current design precedents to contextualize own work and develop an understanding of typographic movements and its formal relationship to new technologies (hot metal type, wood type, litho, digital, etc) and historical movements (Renaissance, Neue Typography, etc).

7 Be able to archive and document work that is printed, on screen or time based in a reflective manner for learning portfolio.

8 Understand and articulate how font management and licensing works.

9 Demonstrate a comprehension of skills, methods, techniques and processes to typeset for various media and manipulate typographic components including:

Anatomy

x-height, ascender, descender, baseline, cap height, terminals, counter forms, glyph,

Shaping

Point size, weight and posture

Spacing

Kerning, leading, letterspace, tracking

Composition

The typographic grid, white space, axis, edge of page, margins, columns, baseline grid, international and US paper sizes, standard screen sizes desktop/mobile

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Course Outline

Project 1—Letter

The first segment of Core Typography introduces letterforms as a fundamental element in communication design. Through a game of roulette in class, students will each be randomly assigned a small business, each accompanied by a theme. Using a typeface assigned, students will experiment with various typography treatments for use as the business's wordmark/logo.

Project 2—Word

After experiencing exclusively formal aspects of typography students will explore how type is applied to textual content to convey and augment its inherent message. Write a motto to further solidify the core identity of the small business. Then, using the same typeface assigned, convey the meaning of the motto using type as a sort of 'image'. The typographic treatment of the motto should in the end sit nicely with the wordmark/logo. The logo and motto should be presented together on a business card.

Project 3—Text

A short text, either a news article covering the small business or an interview with the small business owner will be provided. Students will then take the text and typeset it in a newsletter format, incorporating elements from previous projects. Through experimentations and the evaluations of various options, students will begin to develop an understanding of hierarchy, balance and contrast. Students will be introduced to typographic terminology like leading, alignment etc. The newsletter should be presented on a letter-sized sheet.

Project 4—Book

Students will further apply everything they learnt to a larger project that addresses topics like typographic layout, visual rhythm applied to several pages (grids) and the concept of style (sheets) for larger amounts of text. Elements from previous projects, plus new material such as photos and short descriptions, will be combined to produce a store catalogue.

Project 5—Display

Finally, design a campaign to promote the small business. Establish a visual language by completing a poster. Having established the core message and visual identity, extend the design to a billboard, an awning, and animated on a mobile screen.

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Deliverables and Assessment

Letter 10%
Word 10%
Text 20%
Book 20%
Display 20%

Attendance and Class Participation
20%

General Supplies

Digital camera
X-Acto blade
Cutting surface/mat
Steel ruler (18")
Painters' Tape
Pencils
Gluesticks
Scissors
Bone folder

Submission of Physical Files

Physical objects (printed paper, bound books) are for in-class review only, on the days where critiques happen as well as on the day that the projects are due. Certain classes will specify that the students show up with printed samples of their current process. The final files that get graded on will be digital files—designed images representative of the final object (PDFs, photographs, 3D mockups, etc.).

Submission of Digital Files

Students are required to submit PDFs of each assignment to a shared Google Drive folder (PUCD2025H Finals).

When applicable, students may be required to submit Keynotes or Google Slides decks. Students may also be required to submit moving image files such as h264 MOVs. Raw formats like Illustrator, Indesign packages, etc. are not permitted.

Class Website

pucd.github.io/2025H/ is the online home of our class. Check it frequently for schedule updates and general communications. It's also the central hub for our shared Google Drive.

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Schedule
(Subject to change)

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| | | | |
|-------|---|-------|------------------------------------|
| 8/28 | Course introduction Individual project briefs assigned Project 1: Letter introduction | 10/16 | Book: Project introduction |
| 8/31 | Letter: Logo—1:1 critiques | 10/19 | Book |
| 9/4 | LABOR DAY (No Class) | 10/23 | Book |
| 9/7 | Letter: Logo—1:1 critiques | 10/26 | Book |
| 9/11 | Letter: Logo—critique of final 3 options | 10/30 | Book |
| 9/14 | Letter: Project due, group critique Project 2: Word introduction | 11/2 | Book |
| 9/18 | Word: Mottos | 11/6 | Book |
| 9/21 | Word: Mottos | 11/9 | Book: Project due, group critique |
| 9/25 | Word: Mottos | 11/13 | Display: Project introduction |
| 9/28 | Word: Project due, group critique | 11/16 | Display: Poster |
| 10/2 | Text: Project introduction | 11/20 | Display: Poster crit |
| 10/5 | Text | 11/23 | THANKSGIVING (No Class) |
| 10/9 | Text | 11/27 | Display: Awning and Billboard crit |
| 10/12 | Text: Project due, group critique | 11/30 | Display: Mobile ad crit |
| | | 12/4 | Final Project Presentations |
| | | 12/7 | Final Project Presentations |
| | | 12/11 | LAST DAY OF CLASS |

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Attendance & Grading

Two absences lowers an overall grade one-third letter (i.e., A to A-). Three absences lowers an overall grade by a full letter (i.e., B to C). More than three absences are grounds for failure or dismissal from class. Tardiness beyond one half-hour will be counted as an absence. Three latenesses beyond one half-hour will be treated as one absence. Final grades are based on meeting deadlines, your execution of tasks given, and on your participation in class. Faculty members determine the grades that each student will receive for work done under their instruction. Depending on the character of the class, grades reflect the degree of accomplishment these following elements: concept, technical facility, execution, preparation for class, individual progress, class participation, and attendance. Instructors discuss their grading practices with students during the first class session.

| | |
|----|---|
| A+ | ≥97.5% Work of professional quality, which goes beyond the stated goals of the course. This is rare. |
| A | ≥92.5% Work of exceptional quality. |
| A- | ≥90% Work of very high quality |
| B+ | ≥87.5% Work of high quality that indicates substantially higher than average abilities. |
| B | ≥82.5% Very good work that satisfies the goals of the course. |
| B- | ≥80% Good work. |
| C+ | ≥77.5% Above-average work. |
| C | ≥72.5% Average work that indicates an understanding of the course material; passable. |
| C- | ≥70% Passing work but below that required for good academic standing. |
| D | ≥62.5% Below-average work indicating that a student does not fully understand the assignments. Probation level though passing for credit. |
| F | Failure; no credit. |

W

The grade of W may be issued by the Office of the Registrar to a student who officially withdraws from a course within the applicable deadline. There is no academic penalty, but the grade will appear on the student transcript. A grade of W may also be issued by an instructor to a graduate student (except at Parsons and Mannes) who has not completed course requirements nor arranged for an Incomplete.

Z

The grade of Z is issued by an instructor to a student who has not attended or not completed all required work in a course but did not officially withdraw before the withdrawal deadline. It differs from an “F,” which would indicate that the student technically completed requirements but that the level of work did not qualify for a passing grade.

I

The grade of I, or temporary incomplete, may be granted to a student under unusual and extenuating circumstances, such as when the student’s academic life is interrupted by a medical or personal emergency. This mark is not given automatically but only upon the student’s request and at the discretion of the instructor. A Request for Incomplete form must be completed and signed by student and instructor. The time allowed for completion of the work and removal of the “I” mark will be set by the instructor with the following limitations:

Work must be completed no later than the seventh week of the following fall semester for spring or summer term incompletes and no later than the seventh week of the following spring semester for fall term incompletes. Grades of “I” not revised in the prescribed time will be recorded as a final grade of “F” by the Registrar’s Office.

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Divisional, Program and Class Policies Responsibility

Students are responsible for all assignments, even if they are absent. Late assignments, failure to complete the assignments for class discussion and/or critique, and lack of preparedness for in-class discussions, presentations and/or critiques will jeopardize your successful completion of this course.

Participation

Class participation is an essential part of class and includes: keeping up with the shared journal, in-class assignments, projects, contributing meaningfully to class discussions, active participation in group work, and coming to class regularly and on time.

Attendance

Parsons' attendance guidelines were developed to encourage students' success in all aspects of their academic programs. Full participation is essential to the successful completion of coursework and enhances the quality of the educational experience for all, particularly in courses where group work is integral; thus, Parsons promotes high levels of attendance. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly and in compliance with the standards stated in this course syllabus.

While attendance is just one aspect of active participation, absence from a significant portion of class time may prevent the successful attainment of course objectives. A significant portion of class time is generally defined as the equivalent of three weeks, or 20%, of class time. Lateness or early departure from class may be recorded as one full absence. Students may be asked to withdraw from a course if habitual absenteeism or tardiness has a negative impact on the class environment.

Faculty will assess each student's performance against all of the assessment criteria in determining the student's final grade.

Class Website

The class website will be a valuable resource for students. Please check the website for schedule updates each week before coming to class.

Delays

In rare instances, I may be delayed arriving to class. If I have not arrived by the time class is scheduled to start, you must wait a minimum of thirty minutes for my arrival. In the event that I will miss class entirely, a sign will be posted at the classroom indicating your assignment for the next class meeting.

Electronic Devices

The use of electronic devices (phones, tablets, laptops, cameras, etc.) is permitted when the device is being used in relation to the course's work. All other uses are prohibited in the classroom and devices should be turned off before class starts.

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Suggested Readings
Lupton, Ellen, *Thinking with Type*, 2nd revised and expanded edition: *A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York 2010

Craig, Jame, *Designing with Type: The Essential Guide to Typography* / 5th Edition Watson-Guptill Publications, New York 2006

Brighurst, Robert, *The Elements of Typographic Style*, Hartley and Marks Publishers; 3rd edition, Vancouver 2004

Dodd, Robin, *From Gutenberg to OpenType: An Illustrated History of Type from the Earliest Letterforms to the Latest Digital Fonts*, Hartley and Marks Publishers 2006

Heller, Steven (Editor) and Philip B. Meggs (Editor), *Texts on Type: Critical Writings on Typography*, Skyhorse Publishing, New York 2001

Ruder, Emil, *Typographie: A Manual of Design*, Verlag Niggli AG; 7th Revised edition, Sulgen 2001

Burke, Christopher, *Paul Renner : The Art of Typography*, Princeton Architectural Press; 1 edition, New York 1998

Friedl, Friedrich, *Typography*, Konemann UK, London 1998

Coles, Stephen, *The Anatomy of Type: A Graphic Guide to 100 Typefaces*, Harper Design, New York 2012

Tschichold, Jan, *The New Typography* (Weimar and Now: German Cultural Criticism), University of California Press; 1 edition, Berkeley 2006

Hochuli, Jost, *Detail in Typography*, Hyphen Press, London 2008

Highsmith, Cyrus, *Inside Paragraphs: Typographic Fundamentals*, Font Bureau, 2012

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Academic Honesty and Integrity

Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, academic warning, disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, or dismissal from the university.

Students are responsible for understanding the University's policy on academic honesty and integrity and must make use of proper citations of sources for writing papers, creating, presenting, and performing their work, taking examinations, and doing research. It is the responsibility of students to learn the procedures specific to their discipline for correctly and appropriately differentiating their own work from that of others.

The full text of the policy, including adjudication procedures, is found at <http://www.newschool.edu/policies/#>. Resources regarding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it can be found on the Learning Center's website: <http://www.newschool.edu/university-learning-center>

The New School views "academic honesty and integrity" as the duty of every member of an academic community to claim authorship for his or her own work and only for that work, and to recognize the contributions of others accurately and completely. This obligation is fundamental to the integrity of intellectual debate, and creative and academic pursuits. Academic honesty and integrity includes accurate use of quotations, as well as appropriate and explicit citation of sources in instances of paraphrasing and describing ideas, or reporting on research findings or any aspect of the work of others (including that of faculty members and other students). Academic dishonesty results from infractions of this "accurate use". The standards of academic honesty and integrity, and citation of sources, apply to all forms of academic work, including submissions of drafts of final papers or projects. All members of the University community are expected to conduct themselves in accord with the standards of academic honesty and integrity. Please see the complete policy in the Parsons Catalog. Intellectual Property Rights: <http://www.newschool.edu/policies/#>

Guidelines for Written Assignments

Plagiarism is the use of another person's words or ideas in any academic work using books, journals, internet postings, or other student papers without proper acknowledgment. For further information on proper acknowledgment

and plagiarism, including expectations for paraphrasing source material and proper forms of citation in research and writing, students should consult the Chicago Manual of Style (cf. Turabian, 6th edition). The University Writing Center also provides useful online resources to help students understand and avoid plagiarism. See <http://www.newschool.edu/admin/writingcenter/>. Students must receive prior permission from instructors to submit the same or substantially overlapping material for two different assignments. Submission of the same work for two assignments without the prior permission of instructors is plagiarism.

Guidelines for Studio Assignments

Work from other visual sources may be imitated or incorporated into studio work if the fact of imitation or incorporation and the identity of the original source are properly acknowledged.

There must be no intent to deceive; the work must make clear that it emulates or comments on the source as a source. Referencing a style or concept in otherwise original work does not constitute plagiarism.

The originality of studio work that presents itself as "in the manner of" or as playing with "variations on" a particular source should be evaluated by the individual faculty member in the context of a critique. Incorporating ready-made materials into studio work as in a collage, synthesized photograph or paste-up is not plagiarism in the educational context. In the commercial world, however, such appropriation is prohibited by copyright laws and may result in legal consequences.

Student Disability Services (SDS)

In keeping with the University's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations is welcome to meet with me privately. All conversations will be kept confidential. Students requesting any accommodations will also need to meet with Jason Luchs in the Office of Student Disability Services, who will conduct an intake, and if appropriate, provide an academic accommodation notification letter to you to bring to me. SDS assists students with disabilities in need of academic and programmatic accommodations as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973. <http://www.newschool.edu/student-disability-services>