graphic design portfolio

Course Overview
DHA 4355 Graphic Design Portfolio is a Lecture/Studio and Critique class with the purpose of helping the student develop and refine a body of design work that constitutes a professional graphic design portfolio. We will also discuss professional issues related to the business of graphic design. The prerequisite is DHA 4354 or 4365.

The preparation of a professional portfolio is an essential part of transitioning from graphic design student to working designer. A strong professional portfolio can also provide an important foundation for the development of a successful future design career. The course assignments will give students guidance in improving their current student portfolio pieces, developing new portfolio pieces, and presenting their work, and themselves, to prospective employers in a compelling way.

Due to the size of the class, the class will be divided into two teams and assignments and critiques will sometimes be staggered. There will be several guest speakers who are design school graduates working locally. They will share their portfolio and job search strategies, and interviewing experiences. Several texts are recommended (see below) for additional guidance and reference.

Course Goals
Graphic Design Portfolio will build competency in the following areas:
- Design Analysis and Critical Evaluation. The ability to judge the effectiveness of portfolio contents through critiques and a better understanding of real-world expectations.
- Job Market Familiarity. The development of an understanding of job opportunities and employer expectations, through research and obtaining an informational interview.
- Personal Marketing. The creation of a self-promotion system.
- Effective Portfolio Presentation. The design of an effective display of your portfolio pieces in several media.
- Pride in Production. Maintaining high standards and craftsmanship as a work ethic.

Recommended Materials and Possible Expenditures
Bring the materials you need to be productive to each class session to work on assigned projects.

At your studio you will need all supplies necessary to create mockups, presentations, and promotional materials for your finished portfolio. Some kind of case or container will be required to hold your physical portfolio pieces. Other expenses may include high-quality computer outputs, web-hosting fees for a portfolio web site, printing costs for a promotional piece or a personal stationery system, or stock photo (royalty-free) purchase costs. Access to, or purchase of, a digital camera may be helpful. The amount of money you spend to create your final portfolio and marketing program is individual, and a specific dollar amount is not required. However, it is not uncommon for a student to spend between $500 and $1500 on a final portfolio.

Required Text Book

Recommended Text Book

Contact Information
Greg Pickman, Adjunct Professor  Work telephone: 952-927-9920  Cell: 952-334-6091  Email: greg@pick2.com

UMN Classroom: McNeal Hall room 146
Office hours: By appointment only
COURSE POLICIES

Attendance Policy
Attendance is required to learn the course material and will be taken each class session. No unexcused absences are allowed. Excused absences are for substantiated medical and personal emergencies only, with documentation.

Punctuality Policy
Please arrive on time and plan to stay the entire session, unless notified otherwise. Tardiness in excess of ten minutes counts as an absence. If I am more than 30 minutes late, assume that there is an emergency and class is cancelled.

Assignment Policy
Assignment due dates and benchmarks are detailed in the Assignment Calendar (p. 6). Assignments must be completed for a passing grade. The final project presentation must be ready on the last day of class, May 3, in order to pass this class.

Conduct Policy
A studio setting is conducive for an informal atmosphere, with student interaction an expected benefit. Please keep the focus on the task at hand, and be respectful of your classmates and their work. Class participation is required, and will impact your final grade.

Critiques
There will be regular critiques. You are required to attend whether or not your own work is ready for presentation. You are expected to critique your own work as well as the work of your peers. Critiques provide important ongoing feedback and support throughout the design process and help students refine their work and develop a constructive critical eye and increased vocabulary. Designers must be able to talk about, explain and defend their work in an articulate, competent manner.

STANDARDS AND GRADING POLICIES

Visual Presentation Standards
- Work should always be carefully presented.
- Intermediate stages of computer comps can be presented in printout form, or reviewed on computer screen.
- Final presentation comps will be mounted in an appropriate material of the student’s choosing.

Grading Criteria
Graphic Design Portfolio will be graded as Satisfactory (S) or Non-satisfactory (N). To receive an “S”, you must:
- Attend every session (an absence is only acceptable in case of emergency or illness).
- Complete the required assignments.
- Have your final portfolio ready for presentation on December 15, the last day of class.

The University policy guidelines for a course graded on the S-N system are as follows:
- In connection with all symbols of achievement, and especially for the S, instructors shall define for a class, at one of its earliest meetings and as explicitly as possible, the performance that will be necessary to earn each (subject to the provision in this policy that the amount and quality of work required for an S may not be less than that required for a C-). [In any class, instructors have the right to set the level of performance required for an S at any level. They may not set it at less than a C-] Students who enroll for a course on the S-N system shall receive an N if such grade is warranted.
- S – represents achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better (achievement required for an S is at the discretion of the instructor but may be no lower than equivalent to a C-)
- N – represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I (Incomplete).

For further reference, please visit http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/policies/gradingpolicy.html
CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS GUIDELINES*

Credits & Workload Expectations
For undergraduate courses, one credit is defined as an average of three hours of learning effort per week (over a full semester) necessary for an average student to achieve an average grade in the course. For example, a student taking a three credit course that meets for three hours a week should expect to spend an additional six hours a week on course work outside the classroom.

Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be grounds for awarding a grade of 'F' or 'N' for the entire course.

Academic Misconduct
Academic misconduct is defined as any act that violates the rights of another student with respect to academic work or involves misrepresentation of a student's own work. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to: cheating on assignments or examinations, plagiarizing pieces of work, depriving others of necessary course work, and sabotaging another's work. Discovery of academic misconduct is grounds for an 'F' or 'N' for the course.

Harassment
The University of Minnesota is committed to providing a safe climate for all students, faculty, and staff. All persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation. Reports of harassment are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help.

Access
It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact their instructors early in the quarter to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request.

Expectations of Students
- Students are responsible for all class meetings and materials, including any information contained in the syllabus.
- Students are responsible for being on time and preparing for all class sessions.
- Students are responsible for meeting all course requirements, observing all deadlines, examination times, and other course procedures.
- Students are responsible for seeking help when needed. Students who need special accommodations are responsible for working with the instructor and the relevant University offices.
- Students may not make commercial use of their notes of lectures or University-provided materials without the express written consent of the instructor.
- You are expected to be attentive during class, ask questions if you do not understand something, and to offer your opinion. You are also expected to listen respectfully to other students and your instructor when speaking. Racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, ageism and other forms of bigotry are inappropriate forms of expression in this class.

*Approved by the University Senate, April 20, 2000. To view the entire ‘Classroom Expectations Guidelines’ go to: www1.umn.edu/usesenate/policies/classexpectguide.html
ASSIGNMENTS
The FIVE ASSIGNMENTS in the Graphic Design Portfolio class are designed to help you assemble a polished, professional portfolio and present yourself to a prospective employer. The assignments may all be started at the beginning of the term, and each student will be expected to work diligently throughout the term, with benchmarks indicated on the course calendar. Each student may work at their own rate, but all must have these assignments completed by December 15th and be ready, on that day, to display the following:

- A Professional Portfolio, mounted and in a case. This includes an expanded or new project you have developed for this class, and projects that you have refined or improved to be featured in your portfolio.
- A Personal Stationery Set (letterhead, business card, envelope).
- A Web Portfolio (at minimum features 3 projects).
- An Informational Interview Summary plus interviewer business card

Assignment #1: Portfolio Inventory
STEP 1. VISUAL AUDIT: Take an inventory of all your work: school assignments, group projects, internship work, freelance projects, etc. Make a master list of work you want to include in your final portfolio. Organize your list in a way that seems appropriate, with creation date, class, project type (identity, web, packaging, campaign etc). Then make a chart or table ranking your projects/pieces one by one: Does it have the potential to be in your final portfolio (definitely, maybe, only if I’m desperate). Does it need to be revised/reworked? Make notes about what’s required to bring the piece up to a professional standard (revise layout, new type, images etc). Then, rate your projects on a scale of 1 to 5.5 means the highest design quality (looks professional), 1 means needs work (looks too amateur). Finally, create a schedule or timeline to upgrade and finish your portfolio pieces by the end of the semester.

STEP 2. SLIDE SHOW OF CURRENT PORTFOLIO: Now that you’ve identified the finalists, make a low-res digital presentation of your portfolio as it is now to present in class. This slide presentation can be made in PowerPoint, Keynote, pdf or Flash. You can get digital images of your work by exporting native files as PDFs or JPs. For some pieces use screen shots, photographs or scans. Some projects will need to be depicted in multiple views. This slide show is not intended as a final portfolio presentation, but rather as a low-res survey to help you plan and edit your work. As you flip through this presentation, we’ll be able to see trends and identify any gaps in your portfolio. Revise your schedule based on feedback.

Assignment #2: Expand an Existing Project or Create a new Portfolio Project
This project offers a chance to create a campaign for project you designed in a GD2 or GD3. You may want to design and ad campaign or website for a packaging project. Or, if you’ve identified a gap in your portfolio you can concept and design a new project for your portfolio. This project should be in an area of design that’s of special interest to you, and should fill a gap in your book. You will concept, research and develop this project to be pertinent to the business world. It should have a client (can be fictitious), target audience, competition, and a business and design strategy. Some examples might be: Design a new line of packaging for a sports company; or, redesign a company’s brand identity or website. After you have chosen your Expanded or New project, create a typewritten project outline (not to exceed one page) that gives a clear project overview. This outline is due in class on Tuesday, October 6th We will discuss the proposed projects in class.

Assignment #3: Create a Personal Identity and Stationery Set
Design a personal logo or wordmark, stationery system (letterhead, business card, envelope). Be sure that your contact information and other pertinent details are somewhere communicated within your personal identity system.

Assignment #4: Design a Web Portfolio
Design a website that features your portfolio. Make sure to use your personal logo, and to design a visual vocabulary for the site that is related to your stationery system. Your website must feature at least 3 projects. Each student should obtain an available domain name through register.com, Network Solutions, go daddy. Get a web host and upload your web site when functional. Make sure your portfolio website url is on your stationery.

Assignment #5: Obtain an Informational Interview
Research local design firms, ad agencies, pr firms, and companies with in-house design departments. Identify a company that interests you as a possible employer. Contact the company and arrange for an informational interview. If possible, bring your portfolio to the interview and request a review of it. Obtain the business card of your interviewer (It’s ok to scan card). After the interview, write a brief summary (2 paragraphs) describing the company, the person who interviewed you, and what you have learned from the experience.
CLASS EXPECTATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

This is one of the most important classes you will take in terms of your future success as a designer, despite the fact that it is pass-fail. The more effort you put in to participation and collaboration, the more you will get out of the class. Take a proactive attitude and work very hard to design the best portfolio you can. Your future job depends on it. With a large number of students and only one class session per week, it is difficult for me to give everyone a lot of feedback. So you must also help each other. I strongly recommend you follow these guidelines to insure your success in this class and in your job search:

1. DO THE ALL THE CLASS ASSIGNMENTS. ON TIME. Meeting deadlines is a very important skill to master. Respect the syllabus calendar and don’t get behind. Set aside enough time for the class assignments and come to class prepared with your work finished. The Portfolio Inventory project will help you organize and plan a strong foundation for your portfolio. The slide show part of the project will help you make the best decisions about which projects to revise, add or dump. Your Personal Brand Identity and Website will give you the opportunity present your work to perspective employers in a memorable way that showcases your personality and creativity. The Informational Interview will give you experience networking and interviewing.

2. Every week, come to class ready to work as a team, with me and with each other. Give constructive feedback on each other’s work. You’ve spent many semesters together and this is a time when you can help each other reach your full potential. Be open to criticism and self-improvement. Your work can always be better. The best designers don’t finish a project, it gets yanked out of their hands. Throughout the semester I’ll be asking you “Can the design be improved?” “What would make it stronger conceptually and visually?” And I hope to hear you ask and answer the same question for each other.

AIGA Student Portfolio One-on-One

It is strongly recommended that each student participate in this program, which takes place in the spring (check website or call for exact date, minnesota.aiga.org). Here is the program description:

Since 1993, AIGA Minnesota’s annual Portfolio One-on-One event has provided advice, insight, and industry information to design students from around the upper Midwest. Over the course of two days, students interact with professional designers during studio tours, portfolio reviews, and other activities. Students gain invaluable career insights and make connections that can lead to internships, mentorships, and jobs.

Studio tours give students a glimpse of different types of work environments. A panel discussion provides a chance to hear advice from and ask questions of experienced design professionals. Students are also given the opportunity to submit their portfolios for scholarship awards. Workshops on a variety of topics relevant to students and entry-level designers are held in tandem with the portfolio review sessions. Each student is given the opportunity to participate in at least three of these scheduled review sessions. The 20-minute sessions place the student one-on-one with a design professional who critiques the student’s portfolio and evaluates their presentation skills. The designers who donate their time to the event come from large and small studios throughout the Twin Cities. They all have several years of experience in the industry and represent all varieties of print, multimedia, and interactive design.