DHA 4365, Senior Seminar is a capstone experience that will enable students to bring cumulative knowledge to bear in reflecting on personal, professional and civic concerns related to graphic design.

Senior Seminar has been designated as a Writing Intensive course, and also meets the Citizenship/Public Ethics Theme requirement. Written and verbal criticism, analysis, documentation and reflection, with the goal of assessing the roles visual communications plays in our economy, society and culture, will be incorporated into the course.

As an upper-level seminar course in the graphic design program, students are expected to contribute their ideas, observations and opinions in a rigorous, and yet supportive, environment. This will be realized through conversation, debate, visual and oral presentation, and written communication.

Four distinct learning modules constitute the semester:

1. investigation, problem-definition
2. ethical, historical, professional concerns
3. creative design and production
4. dissemination, feedback

The course has these main objectives (Student Learning Outcomes):

a. investigate professional ethics using case studies and structured controversy sessions
b. examine the role of the designer in a society, including responsibilities, rights, and freedoms
c. demonstrate investigative, analytical, and creative abilities
d. demonstrate creative problem solving and critical thinking in the development of project
e. deepen the students’ awareness of visual media, including contemporary aesthetics, through critical and analytical exercises
f. communicate effectively through written and designed media

Text

Good: An Introduction To Ethics In Graphic Design by Lucienne Roberts (required). Assigned readings will also be placed on reserve at the MacGrath (St. Paul) Library circulation desk or provided in class.

Materials

It is expected that students have all the tools and supplies that are needed for the execution of projects, and will purchase additional materials and processes as is necessary.

Students will contribute to a Lulu book (on-demand digital publishing) of essays and images that will be a group project. Being able to purchase your books electronically (i.e. with credit card via secure browser – approximately $30 each) is required. Everyone is required to purchase at least one book.
Attendance policy
Senior Seminar is an environment where all students contribute to the learning experience. Therefore, attendance is required to learn the course material, and engage in dialog. Attendance will be taken daily. Two unexcused absences are the maximum allowed before the final grade is lowered by one letter grade. 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. Unexcused tardiness beyond 10 minutes counts as an absence. Assignments are also due on the specified date; late assignments will be lowered a letter grade.

Assignment policy
Assignment sheets will be handed out for each project, describing the project parameters in detail and providing interim and final due dates. Pay attention to the constraints of the assignment, so that your time and effort are used effectively. Assignments may be resubmitted once, within a week of the due date, for a possible upgrade (except for Final).

Conduct policy
A seminar setting is conducive for an informal atmosphere, with student interaction an expected benefit. Sharing your ideas and opinions is valued. Please keep the focus on the task at hand too, and be respectful of your classmates and their work. Turn off cell phones and iPods please!

Communication policy
There are times when I'll need to reach the class for special announcements, due date changes, etc. It is required that you maintain a University of Minnesota email account, and check it daily, or as close to daily as is reasonable. If you prefer using a non-UMn email address, then set up your “U” account so that it forwards to the other one.

Grading policy
DHA policy dissuades instructors from awarding grades of “A” to more than 50% of any class (this does not mean that 50% of the grades will be “A”, however). I try to use consistent language, both orally and in written feedback, that is indicative of student performance.

A outstanding
A- excellent
B+ very good
B good
B- okay
C+ not bad
C adequate
C- weak
D poor
F failing

PERMANENT GRADES FOR ACADEMIC WORK
(from UM Senate “Uniform Grading Policy” statement)
There are five permanent grades given for a single course for which credit shall be awarded, which will be entered on a student’s official transcript. A-B-C-D-F grades include pluses and minuses, as follows, and carry the indicated grade points. The 5 grade shall not carry grade points but the credits shall count toward the student’s degree program if allowed by the college, campus, or program.

These definitions apply to grades awarded to students who are not enrolled in graduate programs, but the grade points are the same no matter the level or course of enrollment.

A = 4.00 / A- = 3.67
Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.

B+ = 3.33 / B = 3.00 / B- = 2.67
Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.

C+ = 2.33 / C = 2.00 / C- = 1.67
Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.

D+ = 1.33 / D = 1.00
Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.

For the final grade, “+” and “-” grading symbols may be used with the A-F grading system to give further indication of student performance.
dha 4365 senior seminar

Steven McCarthy, MFA Professor

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

september
8. Introduction to course, each other; instructor presentation
10. Discussion of Good sections 1 & 2 (pp. 1-79), in class writing
15. Presentation of personal philosophy collages
17. Discussion of Good section 3 (pp. 81-112), in class writing
22. Topic proposal oral presentations
24. Discussion of Good section 4 (pp. 113-160), in class writing
29. Presentation of research

october
1. Discussion of Good section 5 (pp. 161-192), in class writing
6. Peer review and edits of paper draft
8. Final topic paper due (30%), discussion
13. Review of publication design software, file prep, on-demand publishing
15. Good reflection paper due (20%), discussion
20. Rough image/text/layout presentation
22. Individual meetings (work in progress if no appointment on this day)
27. Individual meetings (work in progress if no appointment on this day)
29. Group work on group book, design and editing

november
3. guest panel discussion
5. Discussion of reading (AIGA Ethics Guidelines)
10. Design ethics unit (structured controversy sections)
12. Design ethics unit (structured controversy sections)
17. Design ethics group report due (20%), presentations
19. Final peer review and edits of group book
24. PDF's of group book due (20%), upload to Lulu.com
26. THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS!

december
1. Revisions, corrections, concerns based on digital proof
3. Printed books in progress
8. wait for the mail...
10. Re-presentation of personal philosophy collages (10%)
15. Presentation of final printed books: guest critic input

The fine print: this syllabus is meant to provide a schedule for the semester, and is subject to change with unforeseen circumstances; reasonable notice will be given.

“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 semester to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request.”