DES 1909W: Design in Scotland and England  
Spring 2014

3 credits, Freshman Seminar Abroad, writing intensive, with Liberal Education theme: Global Perspectives.

Wednesday 9:35 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., rooms B22 and B9 McNeal Hall. The on-campus part of the course consists of ten class periods, from January 23rd to April 17th (no class on March 13th and March 27th), and the learning abroad part will consist of eight full days in the UK during Spring Break.

Instructor: James Boyd Brent MFA, Associate Professor, 246e McNeal Hall, 612 624 1731, jboydbre@umn.edu

Office Hour
Wednesday 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and by appointment—room 246e McNeal Hall.
I am available to help each of you with any questions related to this course and the coursework—so please come and see me.

Course description:
This Freshman Seminar Abroad will explore graphic design, from a historical and contemporary perspective, and will focus on the importance of ethical and socially responsible design practice in our contemporary world as well as on the importance of the general concept of design thinking and design creativity as it pertains to local and global issues facing the world today.

We will be studying design in northern England and southern Scotland, as well as in Minneapolis, focusing on how design expressions (graphic design, interior design, architecture, etc.) have played a part in articulating the interconnections and differences that characterize these regions, and have shaped these cultures over time. The coursework will present the connection between design and the formation of culture and cultural identity, and will encourage an appreciation for the need for social responsibility and ethical understanding in design in our times. As well as focusing on the outcomes of design in this course, we will also be paying close attention to design as a process—this is often referred to as “design thinking” (see, for example: http://www.fastcompany.com/resources/design/dzierk/design-thinking-083107.html)

By locating part of the course in the Twin Cities and part in the UK, the course will enable students to make connections between design practice in these places. The historical aspects of design that we will encounter in the UK will stimulate thought and be the starting point for discussion about how issues from the past, such as creating cultural identity, encouraging social reform, and communicating important information to the people, are as pressing now as they have ever been. We will see examples of design used in the past that were perhaps necessary for the condition of the times, such as design used to communicate power and authority. Discussion in the course on these occasions will come back to the question, “what are we using design for now?—what are our priorities at this particular time in history, and what are we communicating to ourselves and to others through our design communication?” In our present time, we have unprecedented reach and range in visual communication, and therefore the practice of design has an important ethical component.

The aim of the course is to present a larger picture of the importance of design as a cultural vehicle for change and also as a response to change, which in turn can help guide individuals towards a stronger sense of their individual and their collective futures.

The United Kingdom has a rich history of visual communication in design; while focusing on historical and contemporary aspects of this visual communication legacy in the UK and on the connections between forms of visual communication and their cultural significance there, the starting point for the course will be the design culture of Minneapolis, a hub of design activity in the US.

As well as three response papers, a semester journal, and a term paper/research project, there will be a creative production part of the course, which will include one or more of the following: screenprinting, letterpress
printing, relief printing, and digital printing. A variety of printing surfaces will be used, including paper and fabric. The research component will focus on the course themes mentioned above.

Global Perspectives Theme:
This course “addresses a particular issue, problem, or phenomenon (the importance of design thinking and ethical responsibility in contemporary design practice) with respect to two or more countries, cultures, or regions.”

The course focuses on design and culture in the region of the UK where Scotland and England meet, and uses a study of design in Minneapolis as a point of reference for this study of design at the border of England and Scotland. The study of historical aspects of design in the UK is presented solely in order to highlight the issues mentioned above (the importance of design thinking and of ethically and socially responsible design practice) in our present times, and to make the more universal point for students about the cultural importance of social responsibility in design, and the connection between the phenomenon of social responsibility in design then and now, and how this is similar and how it differs between the US and the UK. Students will be actively engaged with a visual/written journal on their trip: writing and visual work will respond to such questions as “how is this design used to communicate ideas, and what are these ideas? What are the predominant ideas that our contemporary cultures are preoccupied –or should be preoccupied–with? What characteristics and skills do contemporary designers need? Where does our responsibility lie as designers now? This writing will expand understanding of the importance of socially responsible and cultural aware design in our future.

The course focuses in depth on visual communication through design in text (writing, inscriptions) and images (graphic design), and architecture in northern England and southern Scotland, historically and in contemporary design practice. Students will be asked to analyze and evaluate design expressions in the context of how it communicates identity both locally and from afar, and from within a specific culture and from one culture to another.

This journal, writing, and discussion focus relates directly to the Global Perspectives theme that asks that “Students discuss and reflect on the implications of issues raised by the course material for the international community, the United States, and for their own lives.”

Learning Outcomes:
Student Learning Outcomes (SLO): these are important skills that have been identified and defined by the University (http://www.slo.umn.edu) as learning expectations for you in your undergraduate education here at the U. The SLO’s that this course specifically addresses are:

Can identify, define, and solve problems:
You will learn to negotiate another culture and also to apply design thinking to your understanding of culture.

Can locate and critically evaluate information:
You will learn an important part of the creative production process: how to evaluate your own work and the work of others. You will do this by reviewing work in groups and individually. You will also learn about the history of design, and each of you will learn how, through research, you can bring to life an aspect of design or a particular period in design history.

Have mastered a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry:
The body of knowledge is this course is the how and the why of design in a cultural context, which will include an appreciation of the visual and tactile aspects of design. You will gain this visual appreciation, and will also gain confidence with hands-on design materials, and also learn to appreciate the value of craft in design production.

Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies:
You will learn about and experience studio culture, the creative environment that is particular to design production. This will include learning about what working in a studio is like, and how to work collaboratively
as well as on one’s own.

Can communicate effectively:
Using writing throughout the semester, you will develop verbal understanding of the subject matter, and also develop writing skills to better communicate your ideas. Another important aspect of communication in this course is learning to verbally articulate one’s design ideas through discussion and review of work. Also, as mentioned above, visual communication is another skill tackled in this course: learning to communicate through images—developing visual literacy.

Understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression across disciplines:
We will study design in a broad context both here in the US and in the UK, observing and evaluating designs across disciplines and also how design expressions themselves intersect with other aspects of society, such as the economy and transportation.

Class format:
In St Paul: lectures and class visits, and introduction to some of the design technologies that will be studied in design examples in Minneapolis and the UK, such as introductions to letterpress and screenprinting.

Class visits to Spunk and to Highpoint Center of Printmaking will both involve class studio work that will be undertaken in these two places. The trip to the James Ford Bell Library will be for a historical overview of some of the design/printing technologies that we will be learning about during the semester.

In the UK: students will keep a written and visual journal (students are expected to document their trip using photography, video, and drawing) and start to work while there on their term papers which will be presented back in class after Spring break.

System of grading/evaluation:
You will be evaluated on written response papers, your semester journal, blog entries while in the UK, and term paper/research project. The final course grade will be 75% research (writing, including written project descriptions and analysis), and 25% studio projects. There will be three response papers and one longer term paper. These account for 90% of the final grade. 10% is for active class participation and engagement with class material and projects. All papers will be evaluated on content as well as on the effectiveness of the writing. There are opportunities to revise work, improving both the flow of ideas and the quality of writing.

Weekly schedule:

1. Jan 23rd: Introduction: Design in the UK, design in Minnesota
2. Jan 30th: In class project: creating identity (screenprint)
4. Feb 13th: Design history in England
5. Feb 20th: Design history in Scotland
6. Feb 27th: Contemporary design practice: Field trip to Spunk Design, Minneapolis
7. March 6th: Introduction to traveling in the UK: Lecture and discussion.
8. March 13th: No class
9. March 16th to 24th: Learning abroad trip to the UK
10. March 27th: No class
11. April 3rd: Class discussion and recap
12. April 10th: Class presentations
13. April 17th: Final class period: Class presentations

Trips:
During the on-campus part of the course we will make the following field trips:
Highpoint Center for Printmaking, Spunk Design, and the Rare Books collection of the James Ford Bell Library.
In the UK, as well as including workshops and lectures with design professionals, professors and students at the School of Design at Northumbria University in Newcastle, the learning abroad trip will include visits to:

- Glasgow, Scotland, home of the prestigious Glasgow School of Art
- Cherryburn Cottage Museum, the birthplace of wood engraver, Thomas Bewick
- Hadrian’s Wall, one of the greatest monuments to the power - and limitations - of the Roman Empire
- Abbotsford House, historic estate designed by writer, Sir Walter Scott
- Lindisfarne, Northumbria, England-where the Lindisfarne Gospels were created
- Caerlaverock Castle, Scotland

Examples of Texts/weekly readings:
The Lure of the Local, Lucy Lippard
Designing Across Cultures, Ronnie Lipton
Design Writing Research, by Ellen Lupton
The Meanings of Modern Design, by Peter Dormer
The Nature and Aesthetics of Design, by David Pye
Use and Contemplation, by Octavio Paz
Here by Design, Goldstein Museum, University of Minnesota
Terence Conran on Design, Terence Conran, Elizabeth Wilhide
The Value of Things, Marysia Lewandowska
Mythologies, by Roland Barthes
A Whole New Mind: Why Right-brainers Will Rule the Future, Daniel Pink
Ten Faces of Innovation, Tom Kelly

Student Release of Work Statement:
Students understand that enrollment in this course grants consent for their work to be selected for inclusion in college or departmental publications (online or in print). Your instructor may select to use your work to represent her/his skills as an instructor in a teaching portfolio (online or in print).

Grading criteria for course:
To achieve a satisfactory grade (C) you need to:
Attend all class sessions and be punctual, and participate in all class discussions, complete all assignments, as well as all parts of each assignment, with creativity, thoroughness, and thoughtfulness, present your work professionally, and meet assignment deadlines (late work will result in one grade lower than earned). Also, each of you is expected to treat your classmates with respect and be willing to learn from them, as well as being prepared to share your ideas.
Assignments: 90% . Active class participation: 10%

University grading standards:
A = outstanding. B = very good. C= good/average - meets course requirements. D= meets course requirements, but work below average

Attendance:
You are expected to attend all class sessions, be punctual and not leave class early, present your work at critiques, participate in critiques of your own and others’ work, and show respect for your colleagues at all times. Work not presented at critiques will be deemed late--late work is work that will be accepted up to one week after the due date but will be graded one letter grade less than otherwise earned. You are expected to contribute to the class--your final grade will reflect your contribution to the class as well as the quality of your work.

Weekly reading load: an article/chapter on historical and contemporary design.

Course writing and work load:
In St Paul: three short papers, semester journal, and one term paper are due during the course. All papers will be evaluated on content (on the depth of your ideas) as well as on the clarity and expression of your writing.
There will be opportunities to revise response papers and term project, improving both the flow of ideas and the quality of writing.

In the UK: blog entries (while in the UK), photography, video, written journal

Academic workload:
You are required to complete all the class projects. Work will need to be done outside of class studio time—an average of three hours per week (in addition to the 2 hours on class contact time).

University grading standards
A = outstanding, B = very good, C= good/average - meets course requirements, D= meets course requirements, but work below average, F= fails to meet course requirements

Accepting and returning assignments:
Assignments should be handed in—they will be graded and returned within ten days.

Grading late work:
Late work within one week of due date will be accepted but will incur a third of a grade point penalty—afer one week the penalty will be one full grade point.

Policy for missed exams:
Any tests or exams can be made up provided prior notice of absence is given and arrangements made in advance.

Makeup work for legitimate absences:
If there are serious medical or family considerations, late work and/or absences will not result in reduction of grade. Please see:
http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html
Students are required, though, to keep the instructor informed and up to date.

Extra credit options: n/a

PEDs in classroom:
Use of laptops is encouraged but the instructor may restrict or prohibit the use of personal electronic devices in his or her classroom, lab, or any other instructional setting.

Use of class notes and materials:
http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/CLASSNOTESTUDENTSS.html
The faculty of the University encourages students to take and share notes in their classes, laboratories, and the many other instructional settings in which they participate as they pursue their education at the University. Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. The faculty recognizes that collaborative note-sharing and discussion helps students learn.

Scholastic dishonesty and student conduct code:
http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf

Sexual Harassment: http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/SexHarassment.pdf

Statement on climate of inclusivity:
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 to me when speaking. 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 and facilities without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation. Racism, sexism,
homophobia, classism, ageism and other forms of bigotry are inappropriate to express in this class. Reports of harassment are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. (or refer to http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/administrative/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf)

**Academic freedom and responsibility:**
http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Academic_Freedom.pdf

**Disability statement**
Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the instructor to work out the details for any necessary accommodation at the beginning of the semester. You will also need to work with the Office of Disabilities Services, 12 Johnston Hall, 612-626-1333.

**Availability of disability and mental health services:**
The University of Minnesota is committed to providing all students equal access to learning opportunities. Disability Services (DS) is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

☐ Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g. mental health, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical or systemic), are invited to contact DS to arrange a confidential discussion at 612- 626-1333 (V/TTY) or ds@umn.edu.

☐ Students registered with DS, who have a letter requesting accommodations, are encouraged to contact the instructor early in the semester to discuss accommodations outlined in their letter.
As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via www.mentalhealth.umn.edu or contact Counseling/Consulting Services at 612-624-3323.

Student Academic Success Service 340 Appleby Hall, Mpls 612-624-3323
Counseling/Consulting Services 199 Coffey Hall, St. Paul 612-624-3323
Disability Services 180 McNamara, Mpls 612-626-1333
Center for Writing 10 Nicholson Hall, Mpls 612-626-7579

**Notes:**
Thinking about your identity—how would you represent this, describe it, how do you think others would characterize it?

What is a UK identity---how could this be expressed/represented?