Instructor: Mary Jo Pauly  

**Course Summary:**
Introduction to the book format (structure and materiality) as a means of communication: as a conceptually driven, cohesively designed sequence of images/ideas organized in a physical form that enhances and illuminates meaning. Coursework will develop basic technical proficiencies as well as fundamental awareness of creative potential (and specific vicissitudes) of physicality in coherently communicating ideas.

**Learning Objectives:**
Students will experience a wide and contrasting range of ideas and experiences by:
- Pursuing an attitude of ideological openness.
- Encountering the creativity and imagination that accompanies the translation of ideas into artforms;
- producing new exploratory work incorporating ideas and processes;
- having opportunity for, and expressing, informed aesthetic and critical judgements;
- expanding knowledge of materials, techniques/process and structures;
- gaining understanding and awareness of historical context of the art of the book/book-as-art (interrelationship of art and design).

**Course Overview/Goals:**
The primary goal of this course is to investigate and re-examine traditional notions of presenting ideas in book form, re-energizing and re-defining ideas of what makes a book, both in terms of narrative structure and physical form. To achieve this goal participants will develop understanding — through demonstrations, experiential exercises, assignments, and discussion — of essential vagaries of book arts and their relation to design process (and the field of "artists’ books"). The student will attain basic skill in technical process (including understanding of materials and equipment; bookbinding techniques [traditional Eastern hand scroll, accordion w/variants, Eastern and Western codices]); will pursue continued awareness of communicative/design efficacy and coherence; and will expand fundamental knowledge of history and artistic context.

Hopefully the methods of looking at something as familiar as the ubiquitous codex book in totally new ways (combined with technical know-how and acumen) will assist students in approaching all publications and design projects from fresh, new angles. While craft is important, creative derring-do, determination and general “finding the extraordinary in the prosaic ordinary” is highly encouraged.

**Helpful Text:** *Making Handmade Books* by Alisa Golden; see appended list for other useful materials.

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**Meeting Schedule**

Attendance is essential. If you are not present within the first 30 minutes of class, you will be counted as absent. If you find you cannot avoid missing a class due to illness or emergency, please contact the instructor by phone (612-281-6358) or e-mail prior to class. Your absence diminishes the learning potential of the entire class, so please do not underestimate the significance of your presence! If you are absent it is your responsibility to find out what was missed and what to do in advance of the next class.

Have assignments prepared for class; you will be counted 1/2 present if you come to class unprepared (i.e. sans materials, completed projects/reading/etc.); late assignments, missed critiques and non-participation will lower your grade. **Class participation, in addition to attendance, is defined as active engagement in class activity—including adequate preparation (bring suitable supplies!), completion of directed activities (work on binding exemplars, timely “next-step” preparation, etc.) and independent class-time projects, thoughtful contribution to critiques and class discussion (in class and online), and otherwise meaningful connections/inquiries and conceptual AH-HAs.**

The instructor may change the following outline in order to take advantage of additional experiences supporting class objectives.

**Class One**  

**Assignment:** A Device for Transmitting Ideas  

This project addresses the vagaries of conveying a story, specific data, family history, etc. to others, requiring you to consider materiality, permanence, and cultural presumptions as well as symbolology. Examples you might think about include American Indian “winter count” hides and iconic representations of Christian saints on Gothic cathedrals.
January 27

**In class:** Small group discussion and critique of previous assignment

**Intro discussion:** What constitutes “a book”? Defining “book arts” and “artists' books” and their relation to design process, form and function

**Workshop activities:** western hand-papermaking

**Assignment:**

**Wild and Woolly Combinations**

Due Friday, February 3

Fabricate as many structural samples—incorporating/combing any and/or all of the structures introduced in this class period (scroll; concertina; single-signature three- [or five-] hole pamphlet stitch)—as you can. Make at least five different books. You do not have to use every binding technique in each book—for example, you might make one example that incorporates one 8-page accordion and several sewn-in signatures; another that is just made up of multiple accordions; etc. Use your imagination! Try origami folds, non-rectangular pages, diagonal folds, etc. Remember that emphasis is on form and structure rather than surface design.

Books needn’t have covers, but should be well made. Be particularly watchful of grain direction!

February 3

**In class:**

Small group discussion and critique of previous assignment

**Intro discussion:** What constitutes ‘a book’? Defining “book arts” and “artists’ books” and their relation to design process, form and function

**Workshop activities:** western hand-papermaking

“bind-o-rama” (building sample books)

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February 10

**In class:**

Brief show-and-tell; online discussion/critique

**Material and "structural narrativity": examples and discussion**

**Formal and structural considerations that make a “successful” book**

**Workshop activities:** bound sample books

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**Using materials of your choice, create a communication tool that conveys some sort of information.** The object must be portable and should not use computer technology (i.e. specifically scanned/printed/downloaded images, illustrations, symbols) in its creation; while it may be fabricated of any found materials it shouldn’t involve any electronic legerdemain in its making. Think about material availability, portability and overall cultural context. Additionally, it should not presume knowledge of any alpha/numeric system.

**Written component:** Complete an explanation of how your mnemonic device works, including:

—a verbal “translation” of the message it conveys
—an explanation of how it works (including information about materials), describing specific symbolism, emblematic representations, etc.
—cultural or contextual presumptions made

**Alterative/-ation Sculptural Bookwork**

Due (bring in book) Friday, March 2

You will be creating an altered sculptural bookwork based on—and evolving from—an existing hardcover book. Though books will be provided, you might wish to find and bring in a volume with which you are familiar; this should be a book toward which you have particular feelings—loved it, hated it, thought the author (or his/her “message”) is (a) an incredibly insightful wonder; or (b) full of rancid bologna.

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<tr>
<th>January 27</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is a book?</td>
<td>Studio protocol</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Material characteristics related to design process exigency, and conceptual intent; historical binding structures</td>
<td>Materials: introduction to paper basics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Paper characteristics and nomenclature</td>
<td>(proto-papers, Western papermaking demo)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Basic binding structures (scroll, accordion, codex)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dimensionality and content (structural and sculptural physicality, significance of display, dimension, and tactile qualities)</td>
<td>Terminology: structures, parts of a book</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Craft and/or content?</td>
<td>Structural variations: accordion variants (“flag” and “meandering” books, piano hinge)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Narrative structure/structural narrative: travelling the physical book</td>
<td>Tradition, continued: pamphlet variants</td>
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<td>Functionality: What makes a book “work”?</td>
<td>Covering boards (conventional wrapping and non-adhesive)</td>
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February 17
In class:
- Group critique
- Randomness, series and sequence
- Introduction to final "sustained effort" project

Workshop activities:
- Structural samples

Assignment:
- Picturing Music
  Create a book that "translates" an instrumental piece of music into abstract visual compositions, designing a series/sequence interpreting various aspects of the piece. The resultant grouping—a visual vocabulary with specific subject/conceptual focus and sequential/rhythmic relativity—should be put together into an appropriate book format.

Final project book selection
Examine and consider options offered for the final project; though background, context and text sample(s) are provided, you are encouraged to do independent online research to assist decision-making.

February 24
In class:
- Movement
- In-progress project-related questions and quandaries
- Final project/editioned book ("sustained effort") project; "blind" collaborations

Workshop activities:
- Sequence/series/movement exercises
- Structural samples

Assignment:
- Individual text selection
  Read/skim designated text (chosen by class) for "sustained effort" book design/fabrication project. Select one piece from the work for inclusion in a small-scale editioned book, produced in ample quantity for class sharing. (It's generally a good idea to consider two or three possible choices.)

March 2
In class:
- Critique and discussion of previous project assignment
- Book as sculptural object: varying perspectives on the altered book

Workshop activity:
- Constructing a new case

Assignment:
- Reading and research (Keith Smith handout, Minsky website)
  Continue to embellish/extrapolate/meaningfully engage content of the book you have re-covered, physically altering its form to in some way echo, augment, contrast, complement, summarize or devise content. You may incorporate any materials you consider appropriate or necessary: old photos, other visual images, random text, quotes, Boy Scout badges, raccoon tail(s), resistors, screws and nails, plastic gewgaws, etc. You may also draw, paint, etc. as needed. The book in its new incarnation may function as sculptural form or as readable text.

Consider the following:
- How important is it that the book actually open?
- How can its de- and re-construction transcend the obvious?
- What do you want to say about the "book" as cultural icon? About literacy and multiple intelligences, or alternate ways or "reading"?
- How do materials contribute to overall sculptural and tactile effect?
- How effective is the book as a dimensional object to be viewed from multiple perspectives?
- Is the final object well-crafted?
**In class:**

Critique and review of structural sample/dummy book assignment. What comes next?

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**Thinking about making an edition**

**Analytical discussion of artworks**

**Workshop activity:**
- Wrappers, folios and simple boxes

**Assignment:** Editioned Book II: Text Block Development

*(ADRIAN WILSON OR NOT, HERE I COME!)*

"How does a contemporary master go about designing a page and seeing it through production?"

Adrian Wilson writes in *The Design of Books*. Begin the process by creating a number of sequential layout sketches (or "roughs") for your book. Though your design renderings need not clarify every exacting detail, they should indicate:

- accurate placement of graphic elements on the page
- typographic ideas: letterforms/fonts, size, spacing/leading
- color

**Concepts**

- Graphic layout
  - Text/word/letterform: levels of composition
  - Further devolved
  - "Anatomy of the book"

**Demonstrations / workshop hoopla**

- Simple boxes and portfolios
<table>
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<td>Simple portfolios, continued</td>
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In class: Individual meetings viz. final project development  
Work time  

**Workshop activity:** Trays for drop-spine box  

**Assignment:**  
Prepare materials for clamshell box  
Editioned Book III: SAMPLE BOOK  
Generate a fairly tight mock-up of your book project: exact size, materials, number of pages, etc.; include unbound pages showing imposition/planning. While type and graphics need not be in finished form, the completed comp must reflect final structure and overall visual tenor; this is to be a well-crafted presentation of your final idea (that leaves minimal room for conjecture and technical surprises in production).  
Editioned Book: **Final** (all copies printed and bound)  

Due Friday, May 4

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In class: Critique and discussion  
Work time  

**Workshop activity:** Covering trays  

**Assignment:**  
Presentation Possibilities: Judging a Book By Its Cover  
**PRELIMINARY SKETCHES**  
Final Presentation Piece  
Think about how the editioned series of class books might be presented as a boxed set. How can materials/graphics/structural legerdemain be used to suggest content? To conceptually unify? To practically organize and collate? Collect appropriate materials, make sketches and devise experimental structures before deciding on a final format. (You may create or modify any sort of folio or container—of your own devising— or you may use your clamshell box [adapted to suit function and content].) Equal consideration must be given to functionality, craft and contextual coherence.  
Exemplar Folio (tentative)  

Due Saturday, May 14

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In class: Workshop activities (drop-spine box) with review of presentation ideas  
Work period, in-progress questions/quandaries/assessments  

**Assignment:**  
Reading  

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In class: Brief discussion and observations on the art and craft of bookmaking  
Distribution of books  

**Workday** w/letterpress hands-on demonstration (optional)  

**Assignment:**  
Completed final project/presentation piece  

Due Saturday, May 12

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Grading will be based on my evaluation of your understanding of the course material, assignments, critiques, and class participation and will be calculated as follows:

- **Participation.** Includes attendance; preparedness (having necessary materials for in-class activities); attentiveness (please, no texting, Twittering, or web browsing); completion of reading and written assignments; oral participation in discussion and critiques; and satisfactory completion of structural exemplars. 20%
- **A Device for Transmitting Ideas** 5%
- **Wild and Woolly Combinations** 5%
- **Building your Book Brain** 10%
- **Re-design Project** 10%
- **Picturing Music** 15%
- **Alterative/-ation Sculptural Bookwork** 10%
- **Editioned Book** 20%
- **Presentation Piece** 5%

Grades will be assigned in accordance with University of Minnesota definitions:
- **A** Achievement outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
- **B** Achievement significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
- **C** Achievement that meets the basic course requirements in every respect
- **D** Achievement worthy of credit even though it does not fully meet basic course requirements
- **F** Performance that fails to meet basic course requirements and is unworthy of credit

**Grading Scale:**
- 100-94% A
- 93-90% A-
- 89-87% B+
- 86-83% B
- 82-80% B-
- 79-77% C+
- 76-73% C
- 72-70% C-
- 69-65% D+
- 64-60% D

Integrity and equitability are essential to a positive learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to act and complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty.

**Academic Misconduct** “Academic misconduct” is defined as any act that violates the rights of another student with respect to an academic work or involves misrepresentation of a student’s own work. Infractions include but are not limited to cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; willfully “borrowing” (plagiarizing); depriving classmates of necessary coursework or materials, and sabotaging another’s work. Discovery of academic misconduct constitutes grounds for awarding a grade of “F” or “N” for the entire course.

**Disability Accommodation** Reasonable accommodation will be provided for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the instructor to work out details for any necessary accommodation; the Office of Disabilities Services, 12 Johnston Hall, will also provide assistance.

**Inclusivity** 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, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, public assistance status, veteran status, or national origin. Reports of harassment are taken seriously; assistance in dealing with discriminatory action is available.