GAP I: Design & Typography
GSAPP Fall 2019, A4716
Wednesdays 9am–12pm
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DESCRIPTION

Architecture starts and ends as graphic design.

The Graphic Architecture Project (GAP) is a way of thinking about the intersection of the flat and the deep. In this class we examine the visual rhetoric employed to convey design concepts. Typography is fundamentally the procedure of arranging type, but it can also be the particular art of traversing meaning with form. In addition to developing a general typographic fluency, we will consider the visual tone of how messages are conveyed, and explore ways to appropriately control and manipulate that tone through typography.

We will also investigate conceptual issues through a series of extremely practical assignments drawing on historical standards as well as contemporary examples of graphic design. Our ultimate goal is to establish a shared verbal and visual lexicon with which we can create, and critique, graphic work and to align conceptual intent with visual results.

Initially, we will focus on basic composition and classical typography. We will study the minute details of letterforms and investigate type design and typesetting from a historical and visual perspective. We will look at the composition of graphic space using both typography and basic forms. This part will consist mainly of shorter assignments. As the problems are iterative and designed to build from one week to the next, it is essential that you complete each in the given time period.

In the second part of the semester, we will begin with a lesson in simple but considered and refined typesetting, followed by assignments that deal with layered content – combining multiple hierarchies of text and images – therefore working with more sophisticated design systems. We will continue to explore the use of grids for managing complex information and for the graphic articulation of two dimensional space.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Access to and basic knowledge of Adobe InDesign: While you will be given tips and help along the way, this is not a software class. In order to successfully complete the assignments, a working knowledge of InDesign is required. Adobe Illustrator is not an adequate substitute for dealing with typography.

2. Access to printer: Pin-ups will take up almost half of our class time, and students must bring print-outs. Laser printers are recommended for examining fine typography. Pin-ups will be a time to critique your work.

3. Formatting: Acknowledging and responding to constraints is an important aspect of design. Students are expected to observe guidelines for presentations.
   – Keep multiple pages in a single PDF (always use PDFs, not JPGs)
   – Always name files using the correct naming convention. e.g. GAP1_YoonjaiChoi_190131.pdf
   – Keep files at a reasonable size

4. Attendance and participation: Final grades will be largely determined by class participation.
   – You will receive a failing grade if you have more than 3 unexcused absences (non-negotiable)
   – 3 unexcused tardies will count as an absence (1 hour late or more is considered an absence)
   – On/off-campus office hours will take place intermittently on a sign-up basis

SCHEDULE   (Subject to change)

Week 1	9/4	Class	Course Introduction
Week 2	9/11	Class	Presentations (Intro Assignment)
Week 3	9/18	Class	Crit (0, 1.1, 1.2)
Week 4	9/25	Class	Crit (0, 2.1)
Week 5	10/2	Class	Crit (0, 2.2), Presentation (3)
Week 6	10/9	Class	Presentation (3), Crit (4)
Week 7	10/16	Class	Crit (4, 5)
Week 8	10/23	(Midterms)	Crit (5)
Week 9	10/30	Class	Crit (5, 6)
Week 10	11/6	Class	Crit (5, 6)
Week 11	11/13	Class	Crit (6)
Week 12	11/20	Class	Crit (6)
Week 13	11/26	Small groups	Sign-ups TBD (6)
	11/27	No Class	(Thanksgiving break)
Week 14	12/4	(Finals)	Final Review (5, 6) — TBD

INTRO ASSIGNMENT: Found Typography

By midnight, Saturday 9/7, email me a 1-page PDF (landscape format) showing 3 examples of successful and beautiful use of typography with a paragraph for each explaining your choice. Examples of typography can be found anywhere. Selected examples will be shown and discussed in class.

ASSIGNMENT 0: Kerning

Typeset your first and last name using a *classical* serif typeface, in all caps. Manually adjust the letterspacing in between the letters. The objective is to make the words appear balanced and evenly spaced. Center your name on a letter size sheet, landscape format. We will repeat this assignment over the course of several weeks, in tandem with other assignments.

ASSIGNMENT 1: Abstract Composition

Part of learning about graphic composition is teaching your eye to see both background and foreground at the same time. In addition, it is imperative to learn to see seemingly immaterial difference, edges, approximations, etc. This first set of assignments will help us establish a basic language with which to discuss composition.

— Letter-sized, portrait orientation. Center 8×8" square on the page demarcated by a 30% grey frame.
— Place name and UNI on the upper left corner on every page.
— If you are labeling the composition center the label 1" below the square using 12pt type.

1.1
Using the 8×8"square make 3 compositions using a number of 1×1" black squares. Without creating a regular pattern create a composition in which both black and white have equal strength, i.e. where foreground and background have equal prominence. You should avoid creating recognizable shapes or forms.

1.2
Using the same 8×8" square make 3 compositions just using a number of 1×1" black squares. The goal is to create different visual qualities using minimal means and to compose using the white space as much as the black. Please work with, and try to evoke abstractly, the following qualities, one for each composition: *chaotic, powerful, serene.* Label each composition as instructed above.

Typography has two basic functions, one hierarchical, the other expressive. Through the manipulation of typography a designer organizes a text and gives it voice. In addition, the arrangement of letters and words on a page has an aesthetic, compositional quality as did the shapes in assignment 1. Therefore where you put the words on a page makes a composition, and like all visual acts, composition has meaning in and of itself.

Write two pieces of text about yourself, each between 50 and 250 words. You can write it as a condensed autobiography, a resume, a poem, a riddle, an obituary, etc. You must include your name, but the format is completely up to you.

This exercise is very basic. It is meant to make you look carefully at two phenomena: 1) how does the arrangement of words on a page color and shade a reader's understanding of a text (expression), and 2) how can you make abstract, aesthetically interesting arrangements using typography (composition).

2.1
Create a composition on letter-sized sheets. You must limit your compositions to a single typeface (Arial) in a single size and weight: i.e. no bold, no italic, black and white only. The point is to subtly interpret the text, not illustrate it. Think of your composition as both a literary (reading) and a visual (looking) object.

— How is your text structured, and what kind of typographic treatment does it demand?
— How can you interpret the text using only position and spacing of the typography?
— How do you create emphasis and order?
— How can you "activate" the white space of the page?
— Overall what qualities does your composition have?
— Can you assign certain adjectives to them? Are they quiet, dynamic, balanced, irregular, etc.?
— How does your typographic composition relate to the edges of the page?

2.2
Repeat the two compositions described in 2.1 but use three typographic differences. Stay within one type family but explore other ways order, structure and meaning can be implied through typography. Differences to consider: size, color, weight, italic, underlined, all caps, letterspaced, etc.

— Can you manipulate your reader using typographic choices?
— Can you create a sense of scale? Order? Narrative? Hierarchy?

ASSIGNMENT 3: Story of a Typeface

Prepare a five-minute presentation on the history and significance of a given typeface. Prepare a PDF (landscape) for presentation on screen. You will be randomly assigned one of these typefaces:

Akzidenz Grotesk, Baskerville, Bell Centennial, Bembo, Bodoni, Caslon, Century, Century Gothic, Clarendon, Courier, Franklin Gothic, Futura, Galliard, Garamond, Gill Sans, Gotham, Grotesque, Minion, Optima, Palatino, Plantin, Sabon, Swiss, Times, Trade Gothic, and Univers.

— Who designed the font, and when?
— What other fonts are similar to it?
— What are some of its defining characteristics?
— Which artistic or cultural movements influenced the design/designer?
— How is it typically used?
— Can you find examples of it in use in the world (books, posters, signage, etc)?

ASSIGNMENT 4: Typographic Hierarchy and Seriality

Make three small compositions in a rectangle 5.5×3.5" (landscape). Create a typographic system for three art labels for a gallery/museum setting. Try to create a clear hierarchy of information and a parallel relationship between like kinds of information. Also, consider the context in which these labels will be seen and read.

Label 1   Joseph Cornell
           A Swan Lake for Tamara Toumanova
           (Homage to the Romantic Ballet)
           1946
           Box construction: painted wood, glass pane, photostats on wood, blue glass, mirrors,
           painted paperboard, feathers, velvet, and rhinestones
           9 1/2 x 13 x 4" (24.1 x 33 x 10.1cm)
           The Menil Collection, Houston
           Gift of Alexander Iolas
           Audioguide #32

Label 2   Left:
           Christian Milovanoff
           Le Louvre Revisité (Jacques-Louis David, Le Serment des Horaces)
           (The Louvre Revisited [Jacques-Louis David, The Oath of the Horatii])
           1986
           Black-and-white photograph,
           19 1/2 x 14 3/16" (49.5 x 36cm)
           Collection of the artist

Label 3   Hans Haacke
           Seurat's "Les Poseuses" (Small Version), 1888-1975
           1975
           Forteen wall panels and one color reproduction of Georges Seurat's
           Les Poseuses, all in thin black frames, under glass, each panel 30 x 20" (76 x 50 cm);
           color reproduction (by Dia Blauel, Munich) 23 3/8 x 27 1/4" (59 x 69cm)
           Collection Gilbert and Lila Silverman, Detroit, Michigan
           Installation view, John Weber Gallery, New York, 1975
           This object has been removed for conservation purposes.

ASSIGNMENT 5: Transparent Typography

While some typography is meant to be performative, and some diagrammatic in terms of imposing hierarchy on text, some typography is meant to be an efficient vehicle for transmitting content. It is useful to understand what makes *good* typography by training your eyes to see minute but critical differences.

Choose a short passage from a favorite book, and design a small, hand-held size booklet using this text. Pay particular attention to type size, style, margins, column width, and page apparatus such as page number, running heads, titling, etc. The final book must be:

- portrait orientation (no square or landscape books)
- printed on paper (your material choices must feel intentional but not forced)
- bound (consider different types of binding, e.g. saddle stitch, perfect binding, sewn etc.)
- completely or mostly typographic

ASSIGNMENT 6: Visualizing the Abstract

Drawing on all the lesson learnt throughout the semester, each of you will create a booklet. We'll be exploring a shared theme of COLOR, but the approach you take is completely up to you. Your booklet could be an academic paper, a photo essay, a visual analysis or diagram, a comprehensive history or timeline, a collection of examples, a biography or interview, a list of detailed technical attributes, or something else entirely.

Each of you will be assigned a single color at random (red, blue, yellow, etc). You will gather pre-existing source material and quickly determine a design strategy based on an aspect(s) of that color. Don't get mired down by the multitude of possibilities presented by the internet. Your interpretation of the assigned color is what's important!

- Physical restrictions: 16 pages, letter size, saddle-stitched
- Book must include both text and images in some combination
- The text must have at least 4 levels of hierarchy
  e.g. titles, sub-heads, body text, captions, folio, footnotes, etc.
- Layout must be produced in InDesign

You will consider the relationship between the images and text on a given page, but also the relationship between the pages. You should attempt to apply a functional grid scheme and learn to work within a tight system to create both consistency and variation.

Remember that while typography and layout are an essential part of any good design, there are other techniques to consider — such as the selection and editing of content, the use of informational hierarchy, the sequencing of narrative, the material qualities of your object, and so on. Allow yourself to experiment visually, structurally, and editorially.

REFERENCE

The class will focus primarily on direct experience through the assignments. While there are many books published on graphic design, typography and publishing, most are not particularly useful. These books will serve as useful reference on typography and designing books.

The Elements of Typographic Style
Robert Bringhurst
Vancouver: Hartley & Marks, 1996

Designing Books: Practice and Theory
Jost Hochuli, Robin Kinross
London: Hyphen Press, 1996