GAP I: Design & Typography
GSAPP Fall 2015, A4716
Buell 300 N
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, in minute detail, 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 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 examine the 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 more layered content, 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 we will give you 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.

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, especially for examining typography. Pin-ups will be a time to critique your work. You will have an opportunity to incorporate comments from these pin-ups before turning in the final version of each assignment.

3. Formatting: Acknowledging and responding to constraints is an important aspect of design. Students are expected to observe guidelines for presenations.
    — Unless noted otherwise, orientation of the page is always 'portrait'.
    — Keep files at a reasonable size (less than 4MB) so they can be easily emailed
    — Keep multiple pages in a single PDF (always use PDFs, not JPGs)
    — Always name files, and using the correct naming convention. *e.g. A4716_ChoiY_0912.pdf*

4. Attendence 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	1/18	Class	Course Introduction / Submit Intro Assignment
Week 2	1/25	Class	Final class list announced / Student Presentations (Intro)
Week 3	2/1	Class	Pin-up (0, 1.1), Slide Lecture
Week 4	2/8	Class	Pin-up (0, 1.2), Slide Lecture
Week 5	2/15	Class	Pin-up (0, 2.1), Presentation (3)
Week 6	2/22	(Midterms)	Presentation (3)
Week 7	3/1	(Midterms)	Pin-up (4), InDesign Demo
Week 8	3/8	Class	Pin-up (4), Slide Lecture
Week 9	3/15	(Spring Break)	
Week 10	3/22	Class	Pin-up (5, 6), Slide Lecture
Week 11	3/29	Class	Pin-up (5, 6, 7), Slide Lecture
Week 12	4/5	Class	Pin-up (6, 7), Publications Show & Tell
Week 13	4/12	Class	Pin-up (7)
Week 14	4/19	Class	Pin-up (7)
Week 15	4/26	(Finals)	Desk Crits (5, 6, 7)
Week 16	5/3	(Finals)	Final Review (5, 7)

INTRO ASSIGNMENT: Found Typography

By midnight, Sunday 1/22, email a PDF showing 3 examples of successful and beautiful use of typography with no more than a paragraph for each explaining your choice. Examples of typography can be found anywhere. Selected examples will be shown and discussed in class. (Please refer to 'Formatting' at the top of this page.)

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 demarked 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 4 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, orderly, serene*. Label each composition as instructed above.

ASSIGNMENT 2: Typographic Composition

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 1.0. Therefore where you put the words on a page makes a composition, and like all visual acts, composition has meaning in and of itself. Composition evokes certain emotions.

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).
Please work with the following two, quite different and very short stories from Franz Kafka.

A Little Fable
"Alas," said the mouse, "the whole world is growing smaller every day. At the beginning it was so big that I was afraid, I kept running and running, and I was glad when I saw walls far away to the right and left, but these long walls have narrowed so quickly that I am in the last chamber already, and there in the corner stands the trap that I must run into." "You only need to change your direction," said the cat, and ate it up.

Prometheus
There are four legends concerning Prometheus: According to the first he was clamped to a rock in the Caucasus for betraying the secrets of the gods to men, and the gods sent eagles to feed on his liver, which was perpetually renewed. According to the second Prometheus, goaded by the pain of the tearing beaks, pressed himself deeper and deeper into the rock until he became one with it. According to the third his treachery was forgotten in the course of thousands of years, forgotten by the gods, the eagles, forgotten by himself. According to the fourth everyone grew weary of the meaningless affair. The gods grew weary, the eagles grew weary, the wound closed wearily. There remains the inexplicable mass of rock. The legend tries to explain the inexplicable. As it comes out of the substratum of truth it has in turn to end in the inexplicable.

2.1

Create two compositions, one for each story, within an 8×8" frame. Please use the entire text, including title. 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 compositions as both literary (reading) and visual (looking) objects.

Ask yourself:
— How are the two stories different, structurally, and how do those differences demand different typographic treatments?
— How can you interpret the text using only position and spacing of the typography?
— How do you create emphasis and order?
— Can you manipulate your reader using typographic choices?
— How can you "activate" the white space of the page?
— Overall what qualities do your compositions 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 square?
— Can you create a sense of scale? Order? Narrative? Hierarchy?

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.

ASSIGNMENT 3: Story of a Typeface

Prepare a five-minute presentation on the history and significance of a given typeface. Who designed the font? When was it designed? What other fonts are similar to it? What are some of its defining characteristics? What artistic or cultural movements influenced the font or its designer? How is it typically used? Can you find some examples of it in use in the world (books, posters, signage, etc)? Prepare a PDF (landscape) for presentation on screen.

You will be randomly assigned one of these typefaces:
Akzidenz Grotesk, Arial, Baskerville, Bembo, Bodoni, Caslon, Century, Century Gothic, Clarendon, Courier, Franklin Gothic, Futura, Galliard, Garamond, Gill Sans, Grotesque, Helvetica, Minion, Optima, Palatino, Plantin, Sabon, Swiss, Times, Trade Gothic, and Univers.

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. Text provided on page 6.

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: Client–Designer Collaboration

Good design rarely happens in a void. A designer often assumes the role of the negotiator, dealing with a myriad of constraints that are imposed by concept, content, budget and, of course, the specificity of a client's needs. A successful designer is able to navigate the particularities of a given project while not losing sight of his own design concept and visual agenda. Designers are expected to communicate visually through the work, but the design process also requires clear and effective verbal communication.

For this assignment, you will be paired with a partner, and each of you will assume the role of both designer and client. You will design a business card for each other. Each card must contain at minimum: Name, Email, Phone number, Address. The rest is up to you and your client.

ASSIGNMENT 7: Visualizing the Abstract

Drawing on all the lesson learnt throughout the semester, we will produce a collaborative publication as a class. Each of you will create your own signature (section) that conforms to a shared set of physical restrictions. The results will then be collated into a single volume. We'll be exploring a shared theme, but the approach you take is completely up to you. Your section 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.

Our publication will share the common theme of COLOR. 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: eight 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.
> — Work from an InDesign template. To be provided.

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. We recommend you buy this book as it will serve as useful reference on typography.

> *The Elements of Typographic Style*
> Robert Bringhurst
> Vancouver: Hartley & Marks, 1996
> ISBN 0881791326

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
Fourteen 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.