

Advanced Graphic Design  
GRPH 421 – 01  
11:00 a.m. – 1:50 p.m.  
Tuesday + Thursday  
105 Woods Art Building

# *Syllabus*

Stacy Asher  
email [stacyasher@unl.edu](mailto:stacyasher@unl.edu)  
209 Woods Art Building  
Enter through Digital Arts Lab, WAB 210

Office Hours  
Tuesday + Thursday  
3:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
or by appointment

[stacyasher.com](http://stacyasher.com)

**COURSE WEB SITE**

[http://stacyasher.com/GRPH\\_421\\_UNL\\_Fall\\_2015.html](http://stacyasher.com/GRPH_421_UNL_Fall_2015.html)

**OFFICE + ADVISING HOURS:**

Office Hours:

Tuesdays + Thursdays 3 – 4 p.m.

Woods Art Building, 209A

by appointment

**SYLLABUS & EXPECTATIONS**

All students are expected to read and fully understand this syllabus and the expectations of the course. It is the student's responsibility to ask for clarification if anything is unclear or not understood.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will be an investigation of graphic design driven by research. Projects will be socially and civically engaged, will focus on the production of communication systems and require the publishing of self authored work. Collaborative exercises and activities will create an understanding of identity systems, social values and how to promote "justice for all" through visual communications.

Deliverables for the course will consist of designed artifacts that document, reflect, analyze, synthesize research. The first half of the course will integrate with the series of exhibitions, lectures and presentations relating to the topic of art/ design for social justice that will occur on campus through October. The second half will center around publication and experiential design, site / place investigation and the development of identity systems.

The course outcomes will provide opportunity for students to be innovative, culturally critical and potentially create social change.

**COURSE FORMAT**

This course uses a studio format in which information from lectures, in-class demonstrations, group projects and design research are applied to hands-on projects that develop critical and creative processes. Students apply these practices to the production of projects while receiving and providing criticism in group discussions and individual critiques.

**COURSE STRUCTURE + GENERAL POLICIES**

The course assignments, exercises and projects address the complex issues of graphic design and visual communications. Each project or problem, is carefully structured to create conditions conducive to discovering systems

of design. These conditions encourage exploration or visual communication concepts and design principles, allowing students to develop more personally expressive ways of solving communication problems. Purposes of network visualization will be discovered. As a potential visual decoder of complexity, the practice of network visualization is commonly driven by five key functions: document, clarify, reveal, expand, and abstract.

Approximately one semester will be spent in lecture and class discussion; the remainder of the class will be spent in critique of student work. All students should be prepared to spend a significant amount of time outside of the allotted class time on process and production of projects. Under this instructive approach, personal and intuitive concepts are stressed over specific technical skills. These skills and techniques needed to execute the assignments are not taught; they must be developed through involvement with the problems.

#### WORKING IN CLASS

Always be prepared to work in class. It is recommended that you keep a sketch/note book that is exclusive for this class and the projects. Always have your sketch/notebook with you along with necessary files, studies, notes. If you have a laptop, always bring it. If you have the ability to store files online, do it to assure that you always have access to your latest files.

#### SOFTWARE INSTRUCTION IN CLASS

Except for occasional review or explanations, teaching software is NOT the primary focus of the class. It is assumed that you come to this class with a basic understanding of the required software. Students can use online lessons, reference books and tutorials taught in the digital lab to further develop application knowledge.

#### PREREQUISITES

GRPH 321, 223

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

### Objectives, Criteria & General Parameters

Develop abilities in design production and problem solving while engaging in advanced design practices

Develop a methodology for a design process driven by research.

Engage in collaboration with experts and scholars from other disciplines. Consult with field experts to understand visual communication design as having the ability to provide knowledge and social capital or design for the social good.

Study the complexities of visual information as it relates to form, structure and context in order to gain a better understanding of how meanings are constructed.

Gain awareness to the variances in the way information can be “read” and understood through the visualization of form and content.

Explore innovation in technologies, problem solving strategies and questions of content through rigorous study using a variety of tools and media.

Consider the role of the graphic designer in creating social change or designing for the social good. [Design as service.]

Projects will be design-research based and will be a result of a systems-oriented approach.

Abstract and perceptual concepts will be addressed as a means of expanding the student’s critical thinking and visual communication skills.

Students will consider the role of the graphic designer in creating social change or designing for the social good. In addition they will gain a better understanding of the human condition and how graphic design can create social change.

#### FORMAT

The final compilation of your research will be combined into a printed and bound book, which will be a printed and also published as digital publication [.pdf]. We will likely be printing with UNL Printing Services and will engage in the use of available web publishing sites such as Issuu. <http://issuu.com/>

#### PREPARATION FOR CLASS

Students are to be prepared at the start of each class with assigned work and supplies. Continual lack of preparation will impact your final grade. A large percentage of class time for this course will be spent in guided discussion as lectures, project critiques and seminars. Students should therefore, expect that this course will follow a “hybrid” lecture/studio format, and that much of the individual project work will develop outside of the class. Students should plan to spend class time working on project work or research for this class. Any student found working on assigned project work for another course, or concentrating on personal, extracurricular interests, including internet use, will be asked to leave class and will be given an absence for the period. Text and e-mail messaging is not allowed during class time.

Class preparation is essential to receiving feedback on one’s work. If, at the beginning of class, you are not prepared with the required number of visual studies, number of photographs, layout studies, typographic translations, sketches, found materials, etc., do not post your work on the board for feedback.

Students who miss lectures and class discussions due to absence must obtain notes for the classes missed and assignments from a classmate prior to the next class period. I will be glad to clarify information pertaining to the course. It is not possible to repeat lectures that elaborate on project descriptions on an individual basis. Students should make every attempt to obtain general information from classmates before discussing details with faculty.

#### TEXTS

*Visual Research* (Second Edition): *An Introduction to Research Methodologies in Graphic Design*, by Ian Noble and Russell Bestley

*Just Design: Socially Conscious Design for Critical Causes*  
by Christopher Simmons

See web site for additional required + supplemental readings and links.

#### READING ASSIGNMENTS

Students in this course are expected to participate by developing a visual awareness of form and content in design, reviewing outside periodicals and design publications. From time to time readings from required and supplemental materials will be assigned. Discussion will follow these readings to clarify, pose questions and ensure understanding of the material which relate to the course contents and theories. A quiz may be given on the discussion days.

#### RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

You must declare your intention to observe holidays [include name of holiday and dates] in writing within the first two weeks of the semester.

#### LAB FEE

There is a \$35 lab fee for this course. Some may be allocated towards printing expenses applied directly towards "Paper Cut" account, but not all materials will be provided from this fee. When necessary you will need to purchase additional supplies yourself.

#### REQUIRED MATERIALS + EQUIPMENT

External hard drives for backup, archiving and file transfer.

A dedicated sketch book.

2-3" black, three-ring binder to archive process.

Laptop with Adobe Creative Suite and / or willingness to work in the digital labs available on campus.

Please see

<http://arts.unl.edu/art/computer-specifications> for the Department's Computer Laptop requirement specifications. Additional materials maybe required for specific classes.

#### ATTENDANCE

Consistent and prompt attendance develops responsible professional behavior. Students are expected to attend all sessions of courses for which they are registered. Tardiness is defined as being ten minutes late for class or departing before class has been dismissed. Three tardies count as one absence. Only two unexcused absences will be allowed. The 3rd absence will lower your final semester grade by one letter; 4th results in two letter grades; 5th results in failure.

Field trips, outside lectures, and any other special events that take place outside of the classroom during class time will also count towards attendance. Students should be informed that the allotted absences [2] are to

accommodate routine illness, weddings, car trouble, etc. Doctor appointments, advisor conferences, trips to supply stores and labs, employment, etc., should not be scheduled to conflict with class. Faculty cannot be placed in the position of determining which absences are excusable and which are not. Prolonged illness should be verified by a physician and may require the student to withdraw from class if he/she cannot complete work in a comprehensive and timely manner.

#### CRITIQUE + PARTICIPATION

Class critiques and review of work will be ongoing and are an integral part of the course. Criticism shall be of a constructive nature, with the intent of helping your classmate develop his/her skills. Critique of your classmate's work will assess both strengths and weaknesses - it is no help to simply praise work - we really only learn from our mistakes. Students **MUST** take notes when being critiqued, whether by group or one-on-one with instructor.

#### GRADING POLICY

Approximately 75% of the course grade is based on assigned projects and presentation of final portfolio. There will be a minimum of 4 major projects during the semester with project details outlined on the course web site that include more specific requirements and objectives.

Approximately 10% of the course grade is based on assigned exercises. Approximately 10% of the course grade is based on final process books.

Roughly 5% of the course grade is based on active participation in group discussion, doing the assigned reading and completing assignments on time. Please see the course schedule posted on the course web site for specific reading assignments and activities for each day.

Grades will be determined based upon several evaluation criteria. These include your successful and timely completion of class assignments, the ability displayed by you to address the conceptual and design issues imposed by the assignments, your workmanship and your participation in class critiques and discussion.

#### DEADLINES

All projects and exercises are due on the day and time given, always at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted. Projects that are late will not be accepted.

#### PROCESS BOOK

Students are required to keep a process book [3 ring binder] of all phases of work for each project. The process book is a comprehensive record of your research and investigations. It is organized and easy to follow and represents how students think about each projects and how the strategically create solutions for each design challenge.

#### PLAGIARISM

Cheating is the actual or attempted practice of fraudulent or deceptive acts for the purpose of improving one's grade or obtaining course credit; such acts also include assisting another to do so. Typically such acts occur in relation to examinations. However, it is the intent of this definition that the term "cheating" not be limited to examination situations only, but that it include any and all actions by a student that are intended to gain an unearned academic advantage by fraudulent or deceptive means.

Students will observe and respect the university's policy regarding plagiarism as noted in the college's Academic Honesty Policy. As this policy stipulates, all writing submitted for this course, whether in "draft" form or final form, must not represent the words or ideas of another person without reference or citation. Any student who violates plagiarism standards or any other Academic Integrity standards can expect to receive a failing grade for the project and the course. Failure to abide by this rule will result in failing the course and could result in expulsion from the college.

Students are also required to provide formal citations for all images and references used. is a specific form of cheating which consists of the misuse of the published and/or unpublished works of others by misrepresenting the materials (i.e. their intellectual property) so used as one's own work. Penalties for cheating and plagiarism range from a zero or "F" on a particular assignment, through an "F" for the course, to expulsion from the university. For more information on the University's policy regarding cheating and plagiarism, refer to the University Catalog (Policies and Regulations).



#### FILES + MATERIALS

All students will have access UNL Drop Box server to store class files during the semester. Files can be accessed from anywhere (the classroom, dorm room, home) so there will be no excuse for not being prepared for working in class. All files (machine & server) must be backed up regularly on an external hard drive. All class files will be deleted two weeks after the final class. Students must follow course guidelines for file naming & organization.

#### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

You must be registered with Services for Student with Disabilities on Campus in order to receive accommodation. Their phone number is: 402-472-3787. You must identify yourself to the instructor in a timely manner as an individual with a disability when seeking an accommodation.

#### EVALUATION

Final Grades are the result of many areas of evaluation. Semester grades will incorporate a variety of factors, notably conceptual development, engagement with design process, quality of presentation, attendance, effort, level of interest and participation in class.

While attendance and class preparation appear to relate most directly to professionalism [attendance, deadlines, verbal articulation, participation], they also affect other areas of evaluation. Faculty rely on classroom observation and discussion in evaluating a student's process [in addition to the process notebook]. Students who attend class and are prepared for the scheduled activities/discussions, reveal valuable information about their performance that may not be evident in the final comprehensive. In the absence of such information, faculty must resort to an unsatisfactory rating in evaluating the student's process.

The final evaluation of work [realization] involves more than totaling the grades on individual projects and/or determining that all assignments have been completed. Faculty assess students' abilities in realizing concepts and controlling the visual elements of communication throughout the semester. Improvement and the mastery of increasingly complex material are evaluated.

Students who miss lectures, project explanations, and class discussions may be able to complete projects within deadlines but rarely demonstrate the understanding of students who attends on a regular basis. Since faculty organize courses of study so that projects build one upon another, students who miss information or fail to understand projects early on are at a disadvantage throughout the semester.

Project work assumes that each student will devote an equivalent amount of time to homework assignments each week (six hours) as to time spent in class. Each project must be turned in for grading following the critique, and projects cannot be returned until grading is completed. Students will be expected to save the beginning and intermediate stages of their work for each project in comprehensive fashion, and to submit these stages as an organized body of work (process book) for project grading. Any project that receives a grade below D must be reworked; no student will be able to pass the course with a F grade for any project.

#### Course Deliverables

4 Exercises [25 pts. each] - 100 pts.  
4 Assignments [50 pts. each] - 200 pts.  
3 Projects [100 pts. each] - 300 pts.  
1 Process Book Binder [100 pts. each] - 100 pts.  
Participation - 200 pts.  
Course Total = 900 pts.

100 – 94% A, 93 – 90% A-, 89 – 87% B+, 86 – 84% B, 83 – 80% B-, 79 – 77% C+, 76 – 74% C, 73 – 70% C-, 69% and below D. With regard to letter grades: The grade of “C” is satisfactory. It is not poor performance. If a student receives this grade they have put forth a reasonable amount of effort and attained acceptable [average] results.

A “B” grade shows the student has pushed beyond the average; they have understood the needs of the project and addressed them; they have employed their learning and have crafted successful resolutions to the design problems assigned. Students receiving a “B” have reached a level which clearly exceeds “competency”

The “A” is reserved for students who have attained excellence. They have, in fact, exceeded the expectations of the project’s tasks put before them. Additionally, interest, enthusiasm, energy, and passion for design and the learning process have been displayed.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION  
DOCUMENTATION OF EXPECTATIONS

Observe copyright laws. Create your own pictures and make your own art whenever possible. Never use low-res photographs in print pieces. If you use stock photography, be sure that you buy the rights to the pictures. Always make a note of the artist so you can credit him/her later. There is plenty of good quality, inexpensive stuff out there. Get in the habit of observing the same copyright restrictions that professional designers must abide by. By submitting your files, you agree that your work may be published in a future UNL publication. If reproduced, your work will be credited to you.

PROJECTS & GRADES

All projects must:  
Follow directions and specifications  
Be handed in on time  
Display professionalism and quality

A student's final grade is based on the following:  
Projects, which break down to approximately 50% process work and 50% final solutions or presentations.  
Participation in class discussions and critiques.  
Attend all class sessions for full class time.  
Comprehension and understanding of concepts covered in class.  
Ability to verbalize about work.  
Contact with instructor and interaction with classmates.  
Level of engagement, enthusiasm and interest in your research.

Projects and exercises are graded on the following criteria:

DESIGN / IMAGERY  
Organization, format, continuity  
Image quality, resolution  
Execution of artwork  
Effectiveness of image message

CONCEPT  
Originality and clarity of idea

TYPOGRAPHY  
Typesetting  
Legibility, readability, clarity  
Organization, hierarchy, clarity  
Appropriate message, style  
Spelling, grammar, proofreading

#### PRODUCTION QUALITY

Precision and attention to detail. Fine presentation of work is a hallmark of graphic design, and as such you will be expected to present your work in a clean, neat and professional manner. Basic production techniques will be covered and demonstrated in class.

#### ABILITY TO FOLLOW PROJECT DIRECTIONS, QUALITY OF FINAL OUTPUT

Sketches, Process Work Demonstration and documentation of a thoughtful and rigorous process and development of concept and form. Observed and evaluated informally over the course of the project documented in process book (see below)

#### THESIS

With each project, you will be expected to turn in a printed one page thesis (min 250 words) in which you will:

- Present your problem,
- State what the project represented to you,
- Explain your design decisions,
- Explain your solution
- Present a conclusion in which you determine whether you were successful or not.

#### PROJECT PROCESS BOOK

Students are required to keep a process book [3 ring binder] of all phases of work for each project. At times I may request that I access your course projects and process books for documentation. The process book is a comprehensive record of your research and investigations. It is organized and easy to follow and represents how you thought about your projects and how you created solutions to the design problems.

#### DEADLINES

All projects and exercises are due on the day and time given, always at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted. Projects that are late will not be accepted.

#### DOCUMENTATION

Students are also required to turn in a DVD of all work produced for the class, including process, and final presentation results. Photographic documentation of students in process throughout the semester will be produced for future presentations.

#### SOFTWARE

Except for occasional review or explanations, software will NOT be taught in this class. It is assumed that you come to this class with a basic understanding of the required software (Adobe, Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign and Acrobat). If you have questions or problems pertaining to the software being used consult in this order: Software tutorials, support, etc. Books: There are lots of books and resources out there.

[Campus licenses Adobe software for students](#)

#### SUPPLY LIST

Students should have the following items available for use on a daily basis:

Rulers / Straight Edge

Scissors

Glue Sticks

Elmer's glue

X-Acto Knife and #11 blades

Cutting mat

Drafting Tape or artist's tape

Artist's tool box from your foundations courses.

[activate your analog abilities! get off the computer occasionally and make form]

Recordable DVD's and external jump drive for storage, transfer and backing up files.

Digital Camera\*

Sketchbook

Various drawing tools

Black, 3-ring binders for process books [3 total]

PUSH PINS

A digital camera is required. You can use your smart phone or hand held device as long as the image quality is adequate. If you don't have one, you may check one out through the Digital Lab in Woods Art Building.

This course is comprised of three major projects, 4 exercises, 4 assignments. For each, I will present a project brief and describe the objectives and parameters. It is your responsibility to take adequate notes and ask appropriate questions until you have a full understanding of the project. The ability to adequately define problems is an essential design skill and the first stage in a successful design process.

In addition to any requirements described, you are required to turn in the following with each major assignment:

1. A process book of all sketches, research, relevant notes, inspiration, etc. and a 250 word written thesis for each project.
2. All projects / deliverables are to be completed and on time. Any missing or late work will result in you NOT being able to present your final work and a reduced grade. NO late work will be accepted.

#### WORKING IN CLASS

Always be prepared to work in class. It is recommended that you keep a sketch/note book that is exclusive for this class and the projects. Always have your sketch/notebook with you. Bring necessary files as well as sketches, studies, notes. If you have a laptop, always bring it. If you have the ability to store files online, do it to assure that you always have access to your latest files.

#### CRITIQUE

Class critiques and review of work will be ongoing and are an integral part of the course. Criticism shall be of a constructive nature, with the intent of helping your classmate develop his/her skills. Critique of your classmate's work will assess both strengths and weaknesses - it is no help to simply praise work - we really only learn from our mistakes. Students MUST take notes when being critiqued, whether by group or one-on-one with instructor.

#### LABELING WORK

Printouts of final pieces must be labeled on the back, or included on back cover of Process Book unless otherwise noted. Handwritten is NOT acceptable and will result in a grade reduction for the work.

GRPH: Asher  
Your Name  
Project Name  
Date

Digital files MUST be labeled as follows:

first initial last name \_project name\_ deliverable number.pdf  
- example: Smith\_project\_01.pdf

Failure to do so will result in a grade reduction for the work.

There will be no cell phone usage (including texting) during class time. Use of any of these during class time will result in you being marked absent for the class session.

STUDENT COMMITMENT  
Course Structure + General Policies

Having read the Course Syllabus, you are now aware of the importance of responsible attendance, class preparation, policies and procedures. Please complete the information below and sign, acknowledging that you fully understand what you have read.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 2015

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

What do you enjoy most about graphic design?

What do you expect to achieve from this course?

What are your artistic strengths?

What are your personal strengths?

What would you like to improve on during this course?

What are your strengths is knowledge of the design tools?  
ie. Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, html, CSS, Video  
or audio production, etc.

## Course Attendance

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

GRPH 421

Taylor Bogle \_\_\_\_\_

Joshua Chavez \_\_\_\_\_

Ally Frame \_\_\_\_\_

Jordan Geisert \_\_\_\_\_

Jacob Headid \_\_\_\_\_

James Lindsay III \_\_\_\_\_

Spencer Miller \_\_\_\_\_

Collin Rasmussen \_\_\_\_\_

Kelsie Rotert \_\_\_\_\_

Aubrey Samson \_\_\_\_\_

Anna Sousek \_\_\_\_\_

Samantha Stephan \_\_\_\_\_

Adam Suedmeier \_\_\_\_\_

Huy Tran \_\_\_\_\_

Carlos Velasco \_\_\_\_\_

Stephanie Whitsett \_\_\_\_\_

Chujia Wu \_\_\_\_\_



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