

# AVT 498-001 Senior Design Project

## SYLLABUS: Spring Semester 2017

### Room 1022

**Instructor** James B. Hicks III  
email: jhicks8@gmu.edu

**Course Description** This is an advanced design course that will focus on the basics of large scale projects, publication design and production. Students will learn the techniques, concepts and processes essential to understanding how to solve design problems and publishing books.

Students will participate in all aspects of the development and presentation of a cohesive and mature body of work. This will include concept development, research, writing, production and presentation. Thesis exhibition work will be formally presented to a faculty committee for critique of both the work itself and the designer's oral presentation.

This course satisfies a General Education Foundation Requirement for Synthesis. The purpose of the synthesis course is to provide students with the opportunity to synthesize the knowledge, skills and values gained from the general education curriculum. Synthesis courses strive to expand students' ability to master new content, think critically, and develop life-long learning skills across the disciplines. While it is not feasible to design courses that cover "all" areas of general education, synthesis courses should function as a careful alignment of disciplinary goals with a range of general education learning outcomes.

#### Objectives

- To create a body of work which synthesizes the student's general education experience within the context of large scale project and/or book design
- To gain greater understanding of publication design
- To become familiar with the history of publication design and the printing process
- To collaborate with writers, photographers, illustrators and editors
- To learn and demonstrate proper professional pre-press practices
- To demonstrate advanced proficiency in page layout program(s)

#### Content

Students will begin by designing and producing a 12-page booklet. Then they will have the choice of completing a large scale project, the content of which will be pre-approved by the faculty or design and produce a 56-page book. For all projects, students will write (1) a detailed design objective proposal and (2) a process statement which will express the student's ideas about the work being created. The student's statement should also embody the synthesis of practice within a specific discipline with broader theories and ideas taken from the student's general education experience.

In developing a manuscript, editorial collaboration is not only permitted but also strongly encouraged to enable the student to understand more fully how the designer interacts with the author, editor, illustrator and/or photographer in the professional publication environment.

The manuscript idea and written design statement must be approved before proceeding with the design of the pages. Frequent editorial and design review/critiques will be mandatory for progressive book development. Editorial proofreading, by an outside source, will be required before final printing. Please note: the instructor will review but will not proofread manuscripts.

## Performance Requirements

Due to the dynamics of the course your attendance, participation and punctuality are critical to your successful completion of the class. You must be on time and prepared—with no exceptions. Not being properly prepared with required assignments is considered an absence from the class. There will be a sign in sheet each day that students are required to sign at the beginning of class. Final projects are due at the beginning of class. Projects turned after the start of class are automatically reduced 1/2 letter grade. Late projects (after the end of that class) will not be accepted.

If compelled to miss a required class, you must contact the instructor via email with an acceptable explanation within 12 hours to be excused. Two unexcused absences will gravely effect successful completion of the course and will drop you a full letter grade. Excessive tardiness also will affect your final grade (3 unexcused late arrivals equals an unexcused absence).

**Senior Show**—Active participation in the Senior show is mandatory for all students. You will be placed into a committee to support the show and your performance in that committee will be evaluated by the instructor. This evaluation will be factored into your final grade.

## Evaluation

There will be a in-class review of projects at mid-term where students will present their project statements and work-in-progress in a formal environment.

Final grade will be determined by the on-time completion of all required assignments, as well as the creativity, presentation and quality of the assignments and by your final projects, printed booklet and bound book.

Maintaining a journal throughout the semester is not required but is recommended. The journal should include all assignments, notes, sketches and exercises. It should outline your process during book development and also serve as the philosophical statement of intent in synthesizing your educational experience in your topical area. If you choose to produce a journal it should be available at the final faculty presentation, along with your formal topic statement.

## Optional Text & Materials

- Optional: *Bookmaking, 3rd ED*, by Marshall Lee
- Optional: Journal (3 ring binder)
- Optional: A sketchbook (min. size 8" x 10"); A design notebook
- Project-dependent material that will vary per student
- USB flash memory

# University and School of Art Policies

In accordance with George Mason University policy, turn off all beepers, cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class. The instructor of the class will keep his/her cell phone active to assure receipt of any Mason Alerts in a timely fashion; or in the event that the instructor does not have a cell phone, he/she will designate one student to keep a cell phone active to receive such alerts.

## Commitment to Diversity

This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran's status, or physical ability.

## Statement on Ethics in Teaching and Practicing Art and Design

As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the School of Art adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

## Open Studio Hours

SOA teaching studios are open to students for extended periods of time mornings, evenings and weekends whenever classes are not in progress. Policies, procedures and schedules for studio use are established by the SOA studio faculty and are posted in the studios.

## ArtsBus

Dates for Spring 2017:

February 18 | March 25 | April 18

## ArtsBus Credit:

- \* Each student must have up to 5 AVT 300/Artsbus credits before graduation. For credit to appear on your transcript you must enroll in AVT 300. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment.
- \* If you plan/need to go on multiple ArtsBus trips during a semester and need them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300. Please go to the ArtsBus website: <http://artsbus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy.
- \* Non-AVT majors taking art classes do not need Artsbus credit BUT may need to go on the Artsbus for a class assignment. You can either sign up for AVT 300 or buy a ticket for the bus trip at the Center of the Arts. Alternate trips must be approved by the instructor of the course that is requiring an ArtsBus trip.

## Visual Voices Lecture Series

Dates for Spring 2017:

January 26 | February 9 | March 9  
March 23 | March 30

Visual Voices is a year-long series of lectures by artists, art historians and others about contemporary art and art practice. Visual Voices lectures are held on Thursday evenings from 7:20- 9:00 p.m. in Harris Theater: <http://soa.gmu.edu/visualvoices/>

## Important Deadlines

January 1 Day of Week	Sunday
Martin Luther King Day (no classes)	Mon Jan 16
First day of classes; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date; full semester waitlists removed	Mon Jan 23
Last day to add classes—all individualized section forms due Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	Mon Jan 30
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	Mon Feb 13
Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)	Fri Feb 24
Immunization Record Deadline	Wed Mar 1
Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via Patriot Web	Mon Feb 20 – Fri Mar 24
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	Mon Feb 27 – Fri Mar 31
Spring Break	Mon Mar 13 – Sun Mar 19
Incomplete work from Fall 2016 due to Instructor	Fri March 31
Incomplete grade changes from Fall 2016 due to Registrar	Fri April 7
Dissertation/Thesis Deadline	Fri May 5
Last day of classes	Sat May 6
Reading Days Reading days provide students with additional study time for final examinations. Faculty may schedule optional study sessions, but regular classes or exams may not be held.	Mon May 8 – Tue May 9
Exam Period (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)	Wed May 10 – Wed May 17
Commencement and Degree Conferral Date	May 20

Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for late adds (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the SOA office (or the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid being processed) , LATE ADD fee will apply. Requests for non-selective withdrawals and retroactive adds (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student's major is located. For AVT majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, Performing Arts Building A407.

## Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences

If you have a diagnosed disability or learning difference and you need academic accommodations, please inform me at the beginning of the semester and contact the Disabilities Resource Center (SUB I room 234, 703-993-2474). You must provide me with a faculty contact sheet from that office outlining the accommodations needed for your disability or learning difference. All academic accommodations must be arranged in advance through the DRC.

## Official Communications via GMU E-Mail

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

### **Attendance Policies**

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

### **Honor Code**

Students in this class are bound by the Honor Code, as stated in the George Mason University Catalog. The honor code requires that the work you do as an individual be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas. (This does not prohibit collaborative work when it is approved by your instructor.) As a faculty member, I have an obligation to refer the names of students who may have violated the Honor Code to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously. No grade is important enough to justify cheating, for which there are serious consequences that will follow you for the rest of your life. If you feel unusual pressure about your grade in this or any other course, please talk to me or to a member of the GMU Counseling Center staff.

Using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is plagiarism, a very serious Honor Code offense. It is very important to understand how to prevent committing plagiarism when using material from a source. If you wish to quote verbatim, you must use the exact words and punctuation just as the passage appears in the original and must use quotation marks and page numbers in your citation. If you want to paraphrase or summarize ideas from a source, you must put the ideas into your own words, and you must cite the source, using the APA or MLA format. (For assistance with documentation, I recommend Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*.) The exception to this rule is information termed general knowledge—information that is widely known and stated in a number of sources. Determining what is general knowledge can be complicated, so the wise course is, "When in doubt, cite."

Be especially careful when using the Internet for research. Not all Internet sources are equally reliable; some are just plain wrong. Also, since you can download text, it becomes very easy to inadvertently plagiarize. If you use an Internet source, you must cite the exact URL in your paper and include with it the last date that you successfully accessed the site.

### **Writing Center**

Students who are in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). The services of the Writing Center are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis.

The Collaborative Learning Hub Located in Johnson Center 311 (703-993-3141), the lab offers in-person one-on-one support for the Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, Blackboard, and a variety of other software. Dual monitor PCs make the lab ideal for collaborating on group projects, Macs are also available; as well as a digital recording space, collaborative tables, and a SMART Board. Free workshops are also available (Adobe and Microsoft) through Training and Certification; visit [ittraining.gmu.edu](http://ittraining.gmu.edu) to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.