AVT 498  
Senior Design Project  
SYLLABUS:  
Spring Semester 2018  
Room 1022

Instructor  
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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 using InDesign or QuarkXpress. 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. 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. 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. 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
This course fulfills a Mason Core 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 Mason Core 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 Mason Core learning outcomes.

A general education synthesis course must address outcomes 1 and 2, and at least one outcome under 3. Upon completing a synthesis course, students will be able to:

1. Communicate effectively in both oral and written forms, applying appropriate rhetorical standards (e.g., audience adaptation, language, argument, organization, evidence, etc.)

2. Using perspectives from two or more disciplines, connect issues in a given field to wider intellectual, community or societal concerns

3. Apply critical thinking skills to:
   1. Evaluate the quality, credibility and limitations of an argument or a solution using appropriate evidence or resources, OR,
   2. Judge the quality or value of an idea, work, or principle based on appropriate analytics and standards

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 your instructor 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.

Cell Phones: 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).
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, and are responsible knowing the rules, as stated on the George Mason University website’s Academic Integrity page (http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/).

“...To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, trust, and fairness among all members of the Mason community, and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code:

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

Mason’s Commitment: To create an environment that is innovative, diverse, entrepreneurial, and accessible-helping you avoid accidental or intentional violations of the Honor Code.”

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 to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.