AVT 104 – Studio Fundamentals 1
Syllabus

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Techniques and Concepts:

The focus of 104 is to explore and discuss the fundamental aspects of 2D design. 2D design is the discipline underlying all forms of visual expression. It involves the placement of visual elements in order to create a whole composition, and helps to define the artist’s vision. This course introduces students to the formal elements of design: line, shape, form, color, texture, and space as well as independent research. Working through a variety of exercises, students use these elements to solve problems of visual organization. The skills acquired by doing so are invaluable to anyone working in two-dimensional media.

Independent Research:

Research is a foundational process which artists engage in to make meaningful work. Effective visual communication depends on the assimilation of complex knowledge of subject matter. Formal composition and technical mastery are essential, but are the mechanics of the equation of visual communication. The most successful artists and designers are the ones who have investigated the breadth and depth of their subject.

Therefore, as students enrolled in AVT 104 this semester, you will be united by the consideration of time as a research topic. Over the course of the semester you will conduct research that centers on time as idea and form. The conducted research will coincide with each topic learned in class.

AVT 104 GOALS:

1. Learn, understand, and demonstrate competency with 2D design techniques and concepts. Merge the listed formal, visual elements with the content of your research.
   a. Line
   b. Shape
   c. Form
d. Color
e. Texture
f. Space

2. Learn, understand, and demonstrate competency in the creation of overall compositions that concern:

   a. Proportion/Scale
   b. Rhythm
   c. Balance
   d. Unity/Variety
   e. Repetition/Pattern
   f. Perspective

3. Enlarge your understanding of the history of 2D design and how it relates to broader, contemporary concepts.

4. Understand relationship between form and content – art and its expressive, social, political, and cultural implications.

5. Expand your ability to evaluate your own work and that of your peers.

6. Enhance work ethic and creative expression outside of class through independent research that parallels in-class activities.

7. Discover, understand, and explore various materials and media.

8. Maintain good work habits and a professional demeanor in studio.

**STUDENT OBJECTIVES:**

1. Use (and show competence in) 2D design concepts and techniques to create compositions, including: line, shape, value, color, texture, and space.

2. Use (and show competence in) the elements of 2D compositions, including: proportion/scale, rhythm, balance, unity/variety, and repetition/pattern.

3. Understand the conventions, traditions, and history of 2D Design Fundamentals.

4. Demonstrate understanding of form and content in art through in-class activities, independent research, homework assignments, and group discussions.

5. Actively engage in individual and group critiques, thereby gaining and providing feedback and stimulating peer discussion.
6. Demonstrate a strong work ethic outside of class evident through independent research, sketchbook activities and homework assignments.

7. Use, understand, and combine various materials and media in finished compositions.

8. Continue to maintain a professional demeanor and good work habits in the studio.

**CLASS REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Solid work ethic and concentration in class.

2. Attendance.

3. Work outside of class.

4. Completion of assignments on time.

5. Consistent participation in class.

**GRADING POLICY:**

**Letter grades that will be assigned:**

- “A” work is considered outstanding within the context of the course. This includes actively participating in class every day, writing thorough, well-researched and thoughtful papers, and executing assignments on time with special attention to learned formal skills, content, craftsmanship, and presentation. An “A” letter grade will not be given if you have more than one unexplained absence from class.

- “B” work exceeds the basic requirements of the course, above average participation. A “B” letter grade will not be given if you have more than two absences from class.

- “C” work meets the basic requirements of each assignment. Completes work with uneven results. A “C” letter grade will not be given if you have more than three absences from class.

- “D” minimal effort. “F” no effort.

- + or - will be assigned to letter grades according to letter scale.

**Grade Layout:**

45% Assignments (includes: In Studio Assignments)
30% Participation (includes: attendance, participation, effort)
10% Research Project
5% Sketchbook
5% Written
5% ArtsBus

When questioning your grade, ask yourself these questions throughout the semester:

• Have I done the assignments, fulfilling the requirements of each?
• Do I participate in class discussions and critiques?
• Do I pursue learning outside of lecture/studio time?
• Is this the best I can do? Are my efforts outstanding?
• Is my work unique and creative?
• Have I been present, prompt, prepared and resourceful?

CLASS PARTICIPATION/ ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory!!! Evaluation is strongly based on work done in class. If you are not in class, it is impossible to evaluate progress. More than three “unexcused” absences are problematic and will result in a full letter grade reduction.

The following are considered excused absences:

1. Family emergency
2. University established religious holiday
3. Illness with a dated doctor's note
4. University sponsored events, documented

** If you are going to miss class for any reason, it is important that you contact me.

**If you miss or are late to a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed from one of your classmates. The work will have to be made up outside of class.

DON’T BE LATE, DON’T LEAVE EARLY, DON’T MISS CLASS!

• A student not coming to class within the first 15 minutes will be counted as late. Three lates are counted as one absence.
• Missing the first 15 minutes of class counts as an absence.

• Students are expected to remain in class for the entire period. Leaving before class is dismissed or leaving for long periods during class are also considered poor attendance and will result in an absence.

• Class will be dismissed with ample time provided for packing materials and cleaning up. Please do not prepare to depart before class is dismissed. It is disruptive and unfair to your classmates.

Preparation:
If you arrive without materials and are unable to work, you will be counted as absent for that day.

Clean-up:
Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves so that the room is ready for the next class. At the end of the semester, please thoroughly clean out your locker/file. Do not leave anything behind.

Critiques:
We will hold periodic informal critiques after each project. The critiques are designed to help students improve their work and develop a vocabulary to discuss their own work as well as the work of their classmates. Participating in the critiques is mandatory.

ASSIGNMENTS:

In/Out of Class Work (Independent research and Visual projects):

In general, design projects can be introduced, demonstrated, and assigned each week. Studio hours will be used to develop designs while additional work will be required outside of class to develop ideas, practice techniques, complete the assignments, and ultimately deepen your understanding of the information presented in class. Success of studio projects requires additional hours on their completion, therefore, expect to spend at least 4 hours outside of class each week on assignments as well as conducting your research water. Like any skill, 2D design requires practice and research.

Sketchbooks:

Students are required to purchase a sketchbook and sketchbook activities will be assigned throughout the semester. It should be brought to every class and used to explore creative ideas, practice techniques, problem solve, experiment with media, and take notes on relevant readings, lectures etc. I strongly
recommend that you work in your sketchbook on a daily basis. Include anything and everything that relates to processes, techniques, readings, and ideas that arise from practicing and thinking about art making. Use the sketchbook for your own personal exploration of concepts and media – experiment, try new things, and make mistakes. Ultimately, your sketchbook provides a place to document visual as well as verbal development but most importantly as a place that allows ideas to grow.

Final Evaluation/ Portfolio Review:

The final evaluation will be based on the sum of work done in class, homework, research and sketchbook assignments. A portfolio of the semester’s work may be required. The portfolio should be arranged in chronological order containing all in and out-side of class work. Portfolios are used to evaluate your effort, productivity, and progress. **Keep all of your work throughout the semester. Keep it dry and store it in a flat place.

COURSE OUTLINE:

This is a tentative schedule of the topics that will be covered. It is subject to change as deemed necessary. Works are due at the beginning of class on due/critique dates. An explanation of my expectations for each project will accompany each assignment.

Monday Class: Slide and technique lecture  
Class projects due from previous week  
Critique of completed work  
New Assignments  

Wednesday Class: Technical instruction  
Experimentation  
Project discussion and studio work  
Discuss individual research  

Week 2
Syllabus, Introduction  
Topic: VISUAL ELEMENTS  
Studio Assignment: Metaphor Collage  
Independent Assignment: Lettering, Image Collection  
Written Assignment: Brag a Little  
Written Assignment: Artist Analysis  
Written Assignment: Research Project  

Week 3
Topic: PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN  
Studio Assignment: Continue Metaphor Collage  
Independent Assignment: Art Hunt
Week 4
Topic: LINE
Studio Assignment: Lines & Marks
Independent Assignment: Value Scales

Week 5 & 6
Topic: SHAPE
Studio Assignment: Shape
Independent Assignment: Image Collection
Written Assignment: Artist Paragraph

Week 7 & 8
Topic: BALANCE
Studio Assignment: Balance Studies
Independent Assignment: Color Wheel
Written Assignment: Artist Paragraph

Week 9
Topic: EMPHASIS
Studio Assignment: Jim Saw Collage
Independent Assignment: Surreal Figure
Written Assignment: Artist Paragraph

Week 10
Topic: SPACE
Studio Assignment: Imaginary Landscape
Independent Assignment: 1-pt, 2-pt, Bird’s, Worm’s
Written Assignment: Artist Presentation

Week 12 & 13
Topic: APPROPRIATION, HISTORY
Studio Assignment: Heist
Independent Assignment: Color Harmonies
Written Assignment: Artist Paragraph

Week 14 & 15
Topic: Your FINAL: CONTENT, CONTEXT
Studio Assignment: Prepare final portfolio and Research assistance
Independent Assignment: Turn in Portfolio
Written Assignment: Work on Final

Week 15
Final Critique,
Independent Assignment: 5 min. Presentation of Research
Written Assignment: Research Paper Due

As stated on the first page of the syllabus, students enrolled in AVT 104 are required to conduct individual research in relation to the topics learned in class. To begin the research, you will consider (Art Department Theme). Over the course of the semester you will conduct research that centers on (Art Department Theme) as idea and form.
The theme selected by the Foundations Program in the School of Art for spring semester is *time*.

**Presentation/Paper/Final Project (due the final week of class):**

As part of a requirement for the Studio Fundamentals 104 class you are required to write a **3 to 5 page summary paper** explaining your research and methods with an accompanying visual project/composition. The final project (*paper, visual, and presentation*) is all-inclusive. The paper and presentation addresses the content, context, material, and research that went in to creating the final piece. The paper and presentation will be part of your end of term evaluation for a grade.

**Considered starting points:**

- How does the concept, “TIME” relate to your major, hobby, or interest?
- How does “TIME” relate to your major in a broader sense and how does it affect you on a personal level? (Micro/Macro)

**Your research, should be both “vertical” and “lateral.”**

**Vertical** research connects to the theme directly, the physical properties of the theme, where it is found, its shape and its regulation. For example, if you Google the theme a list will appear. The list includes definitions, organizations that regulate or study it, websites for it, etc. Any direction you choose to explore expands your understanding of the theme.

Pursuing your interest into tangential issues is considered **lateral research.** This kind of sideways exploration will add context to your vertical questions. Lateral research will lead you to a fuller and more personal understanding of the theme in context.

**Getting it Done:**

- Compile the results of your research in a 3 ring binder.
- Your binder should be filled with articles, images, notations and sketches.
- Your research should come from the Internet, magazines, journals and books.
- You will be required to organize the binder by creating a table of contents that reflects the content of your findings.
- You will also need to write a 3 to 5 page, reflective, summative statement.
This is a creative project that begins with a thematic center, but your interest and initiative will direct your inquiry outward. There is no exact, or set result that you are expected to end up with. However, it is expected that your research will be extensive, evidenced by thoughtful organization and supported by a reflective summative statement. As such, it represents 10% of your final grade. This project will carry you as far as you take it.

This class fulfills a General Education Core requirement for Arts.

Core requirements help ensure that students become acquainted with the broad range of intellectual domains that contribute to a liberal education. By experiencing the subject matter and ways of knowing in a variety of fields, students will be better able to synthesize new knowledge, respond to fresh challenges, and meet the demands of a complex world.

Arts Goal:

Mason courses in the filmmaking, visual and performing arts stress generative, inquiry based learning through direct aesthetic and creative experience in the studio environment. Courses aim to achieve a majority of the following learning outcomes: students will be able to identify and analyze the formal elements of a particular art form using vocabulary appropriate to that form; demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic technique and the expression of a work’s underlying concept; analyze cultural productions using standards appropriate to the form and cultural context; analyze and interpret material or performance culture in its social, historical, and personal contexts; and engage in the artistic process, including conception, creation, and ongoing critical analysis.

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 Fall 2014:**

September 20<sup>st</sup>  
October 18<sup>th</sup>  
November 15<sup>th</sup>

**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 Fall 2014:

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.

August 28  Anne Smith, Jay Hendrick, Sarah Irvin, Patrick Sargent  “Here and Now: Praxis in the Mason Studios”
September 4  Rob Graziani  “E(ART)H History
September 18  Dale Culleton  “Improvising a Living Beyond the Studio”
October 16  Carmon Coangeloo  “Psychogeographies: Jack Kerouac, Sputnik & Disneyland”
October 23  Ann Fesler  “A Girl Like Her”

Important Deadlines:

Last Day to Add  Tuesday, September 2
Last Day to Drop (No Tuition Penalty) Tuesday, September 2
Selective Withdrawal Period – September 29- October 24
Incomplete work from Spring 2014 due to instructor

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 to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.

**University Libraries “Ask a Librarian”:**

http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html

**Counseling and Psychological Services:**

(703) 993-2380; http://caps.gmu.edu

**University Policies:**

The University Catalog, http://catalog.gmu.edu, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.
LIST OF MATERIALS

1 white vinyl eraser
1 assortment of drawing pencils (hard and soft)(minimum 3H, 2B)
1 small pencil sharpener (try in shop before buying)
1 Faber-Castell Pitt Artist Pens, set of 4 (brush, medium, fine, superfine)
1 black Sharpie broad
6 pack basic set of acrylic paint, 2 ounce, suggested brand Liquitex
   (minimum red, blue, yellow, black, white)
   OR similar set of gouache paints, can be shared
1 small assortment of acrylic brushes, small-med-large, (minimum: #1 round, #8
   round, #12 flat) or a small package including rounds, flats and brights (Invest in
   better brushes if you are able to.)
+ water containers for brushes (yogurt cups, plastic drink cups, . . . )
+ disposable palette (bring if you have it)
1 scissors
1 X-acto #1 Knife, may need extra blades
1 roll masking tape, can be shared
1 glue stick or rubber cement, can be shared
1 9 x 12” spiral bound sketchbook, 50 sheets
3-5 sheets Black construction paper
1 18-inch or 24-inch metal ruler OR t-square, can be shared
12 sheets 14” x 17” 2-ply Bristol, minimum
1 art bin container to transport your supplies
1 portfolio to store your work, plastic or paper, water resistant recommended, optional

OPTIONAL (Optional materials will be discussed on the first day.)

1 small jar of waterproof black ink, optional
1 metal tip ink pen or bamboo pen (you may want more than one size), optional
1 set of Prismacolor Color Pencils, 12 count, optional

Also needed; access to a camera, photo processing software, web based photo
display site, tracing paper, old cheap coloring books, old magazines, additional
materials as needed

Art Supply Stores:
• Utrecht: 1250 I St., NW, WDC, 202-898-0555
• Plaza: 3045 Nutley St., Fairfax: 703-288-4500
• AC Moore: 9650 Main St., Fairfax: 703-764-2004