

SYLLABUS

GRA1113C: Design Studies

3 credits | Fall 2023 | Aug 23- Dec 6, 2023

INSTRUCTOR(S) INFO

Victoria Gerson vgerson@ufl.edu

I use she/her/hers pronouns and go by Victoria or Professor Gerson

Office Hours: Fridays 12pm-2pm + by appointment

Office Location: on zoom <https://ufl.zoom.us/my/vgerson>

Schedule Meetings Here: <https://calendly.com/vgerson/office-hours-meeting>

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Cassie Urbenz – curbenz@ufl.edu

Lucia Londono – londono.lucia@ufl.edu

COURSE INFO

Hybrid: Asynchronous online instruction + F2F synchronous meetings in person on Tuesdays & Thursdays.

Tuesdays - Discussion Sections

Thursdays- Making Sections

Sections & Locations: **Make sure to check which section & location you are registered for, you must go to your assigned section.*

LOCATION: FAC 116A (ALL SECTIONS)

Section 28625 & 29335 (10:40am-11:30am)

Section 28623 & 29332 (8:30am-9:20am)

Section 28624 & 29333 (9:35am-10:25am)

Prerequisite: Graphic Design Major

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Individual and socio-cultural perceptions of design shape human experiences. As such, design is never neutral. Three guiding questions shape critical discussions, collaborative design thinking activities, and investigative studio making in this course. What is design? How does design work? Who is design for? With a global range of designs and designers as case studies, this course investigates how 21c. design might re-imagine itself as a powerful force in shaping equitable, sustainable futures.

This course asks: How does design work as a tool for shaping, understanding, and communicating identity—"the fact of being who or what a person is"—in everyday life? Designed environments, objects, and interfaces allow us to shape the "facts" of how we see ourselves and others. Today, design organizes how we navigate public spaces and digital environments, impacts the way we understand everything from our political positions to our brand preferences, and positions us within both our local communities and the global commodities marketplace. Specific places, times, and cultures influence how humans understand and use design, and knowledge of these environmental contexts allows us to recognize our own context(s) as particular rather than universal. With a diverse and global range of design artifacts as our case studies, we'll interrogate issues related to form (the visual and physical qualities of design), function (what design is used for, and how), and philosophy (the underlying conceptual and ethical frameworks that inform the design process). Readings, viewings, discussions, critical making activities, and design-thinking exercises provide a shared framework for investigation. Through these, we'll seek to understand the interactions between design and identity in order to become more informed and empowered makers and users of design.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Attendance is taken promptly at the start of class for F2F meetings and recorded in the Canvas gradebook. You're allowed two "personal days" for the semester, after which each absence that does not meet university criteria for "excused" will result in a 20-point (2%) deduction from your final grade. Keep in mind: many credit-earning activities happen in class, and you can't make these up unless your absence is officially excused; you'll miss points offered if you take a personal day.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Participation that's consistent, informed, thoughtful, and considerate is expected through collaborative, in-class design thinking activities. See Canvas for the rubric attached to these in-class design thinking sessions. If you have personal issues that prohibit you from joining freely in class discussion, e.g., shyness, language barriers, etc., see the instructor as soon as possible to discuss alternative modes of participation.

COURSEWORK & EVALUATION

ASSIGNMENT	DESCRIPTION	REQUIREMENTS	POINTS	DUE
Quizzes <i>weekly, online</i>	During each unit, you'll take four online, multiple choice quizzes reviewing the week's assigned viewing, listening, and/or reading assignments.	10-12 multiple choice and short answer questions; two chances to take the quiz, highest score automatically kept.	211 12 quizzes, between 16-25 pts each	Mondays @ 11:59pm
Discussion <i>in class participation</i>	During each discussion section (in class on Tuesdays), the materials and topics of that week will be discussed. Earn credit through engaged, active participation in class conversations around material relevant to the course and the weeks topic.	Engaged participation in face to face discussion sessions.	120 12 sessions, 10 pts each	Tuesdays, during your assigned session time.
Blog Post <i>weekly blog contribution</i>	For each entry, locate and critically analyze one example of design that shows the relationship between the week's topic (e.g., color) and your individual research theme from the approved themes list (e.g., gender).	1 image of your creation and a brief caption: what we're seeing and why it's important + relevant, from your point of view.	300 12 entries, 25 pts each	Wednesday @ 11:59pm
Think & Make <i>weekly, synchronous, in person, collaborative activities</i>	Each week, you'll participate in a classroom making session. Your collaborative small group will engage design thinking and studio making. Earn credit through engaged, active participation that's consistently informed, thoughtful, and considerate; there aren't right or wrong answers, no design skills needed.	Active engagement as described in each session's design thinking & making prompt (rubric attached to prompts).	120 12 sessions, 10 pts each	Thursdays, during your assigned session time
Gestalt <i>synchronous reflection sessions about critique wall contributions</i>	At the end of each unit, we'll discuss the results of your personal critique wall contributions. Before we meet, you'll prepare your summary. In class, you'll reflect on how your observations and analysis connect to your experience of design as a student and how they might inform your experiences of design and identity after you complete your degree.	Self and peer evaluation (rubric attached to assignment).	30 3 sessions, 10 pts each	Thursdays, during your assigned session time
Presentation <i>share-out of experiential learning results (during final)</i>	Present and evaluate the results of your experiential learning analysis to peers. Occurs during each section's assigned final exam period.	Self and peer evaluation (rubric attached to assignment).	50	During your section's final exam period

GRADING & EVALUATION

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Scale:

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A | 100-94 A- | 93-90 B+ | 89-87 B | 86-84 B- | 83-80 C+ | 79-77
C | 76-74 C- | 73-70 D+ | 69-67 D | 66-64 D- | 63-60 E | 60 and lower

(EMBODIED) LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Bring all of the themes and concepts we explored this semester together in an **embodied learning experience**, best completed about halfway through Unit 3.

Visit a cultural institution of your choice (e.g. museum, gallery, performing arts venue, public park, library, archive—this can be online, or in person following CDC Covid-19 guidelines). Experience that institution's content: an exhibit or live performance, a live public lecture, a self-guided tour of the permanent collection, a physical activity—like checking out a book at a library or using Gainesville's city government website to locate and visit a park's hiking trail, take an outdoor yoga class, or go to a public swimming pool.

Analyze how the design of that experience addresses identity—in general as it relates to your semester's theme, and your personal identity in particular.

Record (notes! photos! anything!) how you, as a person with an identity, experienced the location/site and its content through design. Also ask yourself: how might diverse people relate to this institution through the lens of my semester-long topic (race, class, gender, etc)? In your analytical self-reflection essay, you'll need to address each of the course's three units, so think about them during your visit:

Form – how are typography, color, shape, size, materials, and/or the organization of space impacting your experience? What kind of personal, social, and cultural identities are included or excluded through these formal choices? How and why are you making these evaluations?

Function – what is the design communicating, and what is the function of that message? At a museum, for instance, is the function to reveal beauty in the world around us, teach us about a new language or culture, critique our reliance on fossil fuels? How do you know or infer this? How does your own identity shape your experience of the information being communicated? What tools are the designers using to set up a conversation between the content and the viewer? How successful are these tools at doing their job?

Philosophy – what is the underlying goal or message, beyond immediate content? What design elements reflect the designers' and the institution's intended take home message or aha! moment?

6B – SELF-REFLECTION COMPONENT

Create a visual presentation responding to your Experiential Learning activity (assignment details and rubric on Canvas). How was your experience of a cultural institution impacted by your identity? How did design play a role in this?

Share with 3-5 peers during finals week. They'll respond using an online evaluation tool.

You'll also evaluate your own work with the same rubric (see Canvas). Self- and peer evaluation account for 25% of the assignment grade; the visual presentations accounts for 75% of the assignment grade (essay rubric on Canvas).

Small print about the analytical self-reflection presentation & share-out:

To prepare for the presentation and peer sharing session, identify "bullet points" that communicate the main ideas you want to communicate.

Briefly describe the venue you chose for the Experiential Learning Component:

What was the location, what was the physical/digital space like?

What did you identify as its overall purpose?

What did you observe when you visited?

By reflecting on and analyzing your own experience, address how your own identity was reflected, or not, in the design you encountered. Using empathy, imagination, and research as appropriate, reflect on how visitors with identities relevant to your semester-long topic (gender, race, class, etc) might experience these same design elements.

Some example questions:

Are there gender-neutral restrooms?

Is there screen-reader capability?

Are texts in multiple languages, or is there translation available?

How expensive is it to attend?

Can you get there via public transit?

Who's shown in the brochures, ads, or other publicity media?

What kind of language is used to describe and contextualize—who does it include/exclude?

Is this a friendly environment for kids? seniors? people who are deaf? color-blind?

What if you use a wheelchair or stroller?

Is there someplace to sit down? Change a diaper? Drink free water?

Using direct observation and imagination, what do these design choices say about the philosophy of the makers?

What does the design of the space say?

What does the selection of items/etc on display say?

What does the design of explanatory texts (walls texts, maps ,way finding signs, digital apps) say?

Refer back to the observational notes you took during your visit as needed. Make sure you analyze the form, function, and philosophy of the design choices you observed. Choose photos (or other documentation) that you can share with your peers and include to illustrate your essay. If they're not your images, be sure to provide maker/date/URL for each.

Example:

At the Florida Museum, you might visit the butterfly pavilion. While you're there, ask yourself how the design of this experience is making assumptions and/or communicating ideas about identity. What is the identity of the intended audience – school children or nature-loving adults, groups or individuals, members of a certain economic class or cultural identity? How do you know or infer this through the design strategies being used – the design of directional and informational signs, the way visitors are guided through the space, the people shown on the website or in the brochure? What do these design choices communicate about the educational philosophy of the Florida Museum? Is your own identity (and that of others, too) being included or excluded? How and why are you, as an individual with a specific identity, making this determination? How does the design of this experience impact your future encounters with – or avoidance of – similar places? Your analytical essay should address these kinds of questions, and others like them as you see fit. You can include up to 3 photos to illustrate your analysis.

7. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

Identify, describe, explain, and critique how form, function, and philosophy play a role in the design process as it shapes intersectional personal, socio-cultural, and political identities. We'll evaluate these skills through Design Thinking activities (in class) and Observation Logs (blog posts).

Identify and describe key concepts, themes, and disciplinary vocabulary connected to specific case study examples of the design process and its role in the cultural construction of identity. We'll evaluate these skills through online quizzes and in-class dialogues.

Identify, Analyze, and Evaluate how the form, function, and philosophy of designed artifacts and design practices change relative to place and time. We'll evaluate these skills through Observation Logs, guided peer and self analysis, and Design Thinking activity outcomes.

Identify, Analyze, and Evaluate how design plays a role in constructing identity relative to an individually selected theme: economic class, race/ethnicity/nationality, gender/sexuality, ability/disability, political power, or religion/spirituality. We'll evaluate these skills through the Design Thinking responses, Observation Logs, Experiential Learning Components, and Self-Reflective Written Responses.

Develop and present critical, personal responses to the diverse examples of design practice encountered in class, in reading/viewing assignments, and in students' ongoing observation logs and dialogues. We'll evaluate these skills through Observation Logs and Self-Reflective Written Responses.

8. POLICIES

SYLLABUS CHANGES

Please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email & Canvas.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here](#) for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](#).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity means that if you use words, images, or ideas that are not your own, you must cite them. Claiming the work of others as your own is a serious breach of professional ethics and will result in a failing grade in this class. The UF Honor Code specifies a number of other behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

HONESTY POLICY

An academic honesty offense is defined as the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage. As a University of Florida student, you are expected to neither commit nor assist another in committing an academic honesty violation. Additionally, it is the student's duty to report observed academic honesty violations. These can include: cheating, copying ideas, plagiarism, bribery, misrepresentation, conspiracy, or fabrication. You can find UF's Student Conduct Code, [here](#).

HARASSMENT

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students,

staff, and faculty (<http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eeo/sexharassment.html>).

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

All member(s) of the University who intentionally act to impair, interfere with, or obstruct the mission, purposes, order, operations, processes, and functions of the University shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action by University authorities for misconduct, as set forth in the applicable rules of the Board of Regents and the University and state law governing such actions. Be advised that you can and will be dismissed from class if you engage in disruptive behavior. For more information, visit: <http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1008.pdf>.

TWELVE-DAY RULE

Students who participate in official athletic or scholastic extracurricular activities are permitted twelve (12) scholastic day absences per semester without penalty. In any case, it is the student's responsibility to maintain satisfactory academic performance and attendance.

COUNSELING AND WELLNESS CENTER

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu>, 352-392-1575.
Call the University Police Department at 352-392-1111 or 911 for emergencies.

THE WRITING STUDIO

The Writing Studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.