

Directed Studies in Design  
GRD 8500 (CRN 87081)  
11:00 – 1:50 Monday, Wednesday  
Fall 2016

Liz Throop  
Office hours Wed 2:00 - 3:00  
Office ART 358  
Phone 404-413-5239  
lthroop@gsu.edu

## SYLLABUS

GRD 8500: Prerequisites: Consent of instructor. For the MFA graphic design major. Individual projects for the development of professional skills in advertising strategies and other selected design problems. May be repeated for a maximum of 24 credit hours.

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

Chapters and articles, as well as important handouts, are available via the class blog

**80008500.BLOGSPOT.COM**

You are expected to formulate comments and questions for class discussions based on assigned readings. You will be asked to write reflection pieces on most readings.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

Become familiar with professional practices of design and related fields.

Gain hands-on experience with design research

Assess and evaluate your design projects to identify niche strengths.

Practice communicating with communication professionals.

### METHODOLOGIES

Recognize, interpret, and articulate graphic design research methods via readings, discussions, and research.

Assess user comprehension of existing websites; document your findings; and develop recommendations. You will develop an additional visual resource based on this activity.

### SKETCHBOOK

Make daily entries by drawing and writing in this book. Sketches should include all thumbnails for projects. This book is my best evidence of your thinking this semester, and should reflect serious engagement.

### GRADING FORMULA

Discussions and participation	20%
Reflections and sketches	10
Research subject	10
Grid research	40
Self-directed project	20

## **POLICIES**

Food and drink are not permitted in the classroom. Violations of this policy may result in your being asked to leave class for the day, your semester grade being decreased, or your being reported to the university for disruptive behavior.

Attendance at every class is expected, and the roll is taken at the beginning of each class. If you are enrolled in a course and do not attend the first and second class meetings, you will be asked to drop the course. Classes begin and end at stated times, and you should be in class during the entire class period. Leaving early or arriving late is counted as 1/3 of an absence, so, for example, arriving late to class three times will count as one absence. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to notify me that you were late, rather than absent – or your attendance record remains as an absence. Final grades will be reduced by one letter grade for each absence after the third. It is recommended you save your allowable absences for emergencies.

With proper written documentation, absences may be excused for university-sponsored events, legal obligations, and religious observances. Refer to the Undergrad/Grad Catalog for details. With written documentation, absences may also be excused due to death or major illness in student's immediate family, illness of a dependent family member, and illness that is too severe or contagious for students to attend class. Students with legitimate reasons for absence may still need to take hardship withdrawal or repeat the class. You will be held responsible for the material covered in missed classes and must consult with your fellow students to receive all necessary instruction and information.

Students who wish to request accommodation for disability should do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the ODS of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for showing that plan to instructors of all classes in which accommodation is sought.

**Disruptive Behavior:** Students should consult the General Catalog for the university's policy on disruptive behavior. Disrespect towards the professor or towards other students will not be tolerated.

**Security:** GSU has installed punch code locks to make buildings safer. Treat labs and studios as secure spaces: Always have your GSU ID card with you when on campus and never allow anyone to use your card. Report suspicious people or activity to faculty, or to campus police at 404-413-2100. Never allow someone else to enter a security-code door with you: make them enter the code themselves.

Failure to follow security procedures can result in lower grades or expulsion from the class.

Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing this course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation.

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

## READINGS AND WORKSHEETS

by August 29, complete the worksheet and be prepared to discuss

Design Research Manual from *A Designer's Research Manual*, by Jennifer Visocky O'Grady and Ken O'Grady, 2009.

Design Research Worksheet

by September 7, complete the worksheet and be prepared to discuss

Bringing Clarity to the 'Fuzzy Front End' by Darrel Rhea from *Design Research*, 2003.

Bringing Clarity Worksheet

## OTHER READINGS, SCHEDULE TBA

"The A/B Test: Inside The Technology That's Changing the Rules of Business" by Brian Christian, *WIRED Magazine*, 2012.

Recording the User During a User-Testing Session

The A/B Test by Brad Christian

Anderson: The End of Theory

Feedback Tools for Your Designs

Anthropology, Inc. in The Atlantic Magazine

## RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROJECT

You will participate in some form of marketing research before October 1. Contact several marketing research agencies and tell them to invite you to participate in focus groups, surveys, shop-alongs, or other studies. The more involving, the better (online surveys, for instance, are minimally involving)

Only agree to a study if you can make the appointment. Do not participate in any study that compromises your health or beliefs. (For example, don't participate in a study in which you might be expected to drink wine if you don't drink). Participate as a regular research subject (for example don't ask the researcher about his or her job or how the study will be used).

Take extensive notes about all phases of your participation. Write reflections including

1. How were you identified as an appropriate subject? Are the researchers likely to attract subjects who are representative of the presumed target market?
2. Did you feel at any time during the study that you should give one kind of response instead of another? Did the researchers seem biased? Did they seem truthful?
3. At some point you or your responses were observed and analyzed. How did that factor into your behavior?
4. How did the behavior of other participants affect your behavior?
5. Describe three or more guesses as to the purpose of the research. For instance, what if the research were being done while the product was still being designed? What if it were being done to help determine an approach for an ad campaign for the product?
6. Did participating in the study make you feel empowered or disempowered? Did your experience change how you feel about shopping or other kinds of consumption? Did it affect how you would conduct a design project?