

Spring 2017  
Art 369h, Interactive Design  
210 Green Hall; Mondays 1:30–5:20pm  
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## Course description

This course focuses on interaction design with projects that are based online. Questions asked during the course include:

- Is it specific?
- Is it memorable?
- Does it communicate the idea through its form?
- Does it benefit the user?
- Is the interface designed for its purpose?
- Does it understand its audience?
- What is the prompt?
- What is the corresponding feedback?
- Do the prompt and feedback make sense together?
- Where is the navigation?
- What happens to the navigation on mobile?
- What are the different conditions in which this can exist?
- How does this change in each of those conditions?
- How does this change in rain and snow?
- What happens to this when it expands?
- Is randomization interesting?
- What is its essence?
- What applications will best highlight its essence?
- Does it achieve its goals without breaking?
- How long or short should it last?
- What happens when it is over?

This course has a formal emphasis, using what knowledge students have about composition, typography, and hierarchy as a basis. We will understand interaction as a prompt and feedback, an input and output, a call and response. We will examine their relation but also not limit an interaction to a closed, hermetic environment, but view the web as a very social ecosystem in which time and performance play important roles.

Students will encounter web-specific design problems, focusing on navigating a website and pacing throughout. Design should be conditional online, changing in response to its users and environment, so we will create accommodating yet surprising, flexible systems.

This course will heavily employ real-world, contemporary examples of design, art, and presences online. These thematic groupings of artwork, portfolios, archives, exhibition platforms, blogs, web apps, etc. will be examined with a critical eye and mind. Additionally, we will discuss what makes a design practice and the importance of discovering each student's unique approach and methodology.

This course is open to ~12 students. It is required for the ~7 graduate students in the Preliminary year of the Graphic Design track. The other ~5 spaces are open to undergraduate students who have taken Intro to Graphic Design or Typography courses (Art 132 and Art 264). Preference is given first to those undergraduates who have these two courses, then to art majors, then to seniors of other majors. Interested students with special circumstances can speak to me directly. *(I will be in touch via email on Sunday, January 20 about the final class roster.)*

### **Class activities**

In general, the four hour class will be broken into two halves. One half will include any combination of:

- example-based lecture/discussion
- project critique/discussion
- reading discussion
- group activity to identify design elements in selected websites or books
- short, ten-minute student presentation on interview findings

The other half will include any combination of skill-based workshop with working lab time and/or individual consultation.

## **Weekly interview findings**

Each class (starting Class 3), one student will give a ~10 minute presentation on a living designer, artist, or online presence. This person/presence should be contactable via the internet, and this should be someone you haven't communicated with before. This should be someone without many interviews of them out there already. Conduct an interview (via email, chat, Skype, etc.) with this person and then present your findings. For the class website, email me documentation of the interview that takes the form of a PDF presentation. *It is important that you start contacting your interviewee as soon as possible in the semester.*

## **Themes**

Throughout this course, groups of content (readings and videos) will be given around specific themed groups such as:

- Performance is Change Over Time
- Laws and Constraints
- Typography re: Technology
- Design is ...
- Multiplicity and the Internet

## **Projects**

P1 ... Visual Tweets

P2 ... 25 Variations

P3 ... CSS Typeface

P4 ... Artist Website

## **Evaluation**

In this class, students will strive to make memorable, functional online experiences. Projects need not be hypertechnical but must be of high quality — that is, they should both take a stance (be poetic, critical, and clear) and also be functional (achieve their goals and not break). Please note the invention of useful products is not the focus of this class, but the invention of useful techniques and approaches might be. Taking risks is not only encouraged but essential to worthwhile exploration. Craft (in both design, code, and presentation) is important.

## **Grading**

20% ... P1

20% ... P2

20% ... P3

20% ... P4

20% ... Class participation, diligence, and attitude

At the end of the term, you will be required to send me an archival .zip file of all project materials and documentation (video screen recording and at least 5 screenshots for each project) divided into folders P1, P2, P3, and P4. Keep this in mind as you organize your materials throughout the semester.

## **Academic integrity**

Students will become familiar with using pre-existing language, images, and software as raw material while creating entirely new works. While making websites, we will learn what technologies are good (and necessary) to appropriate and how to properly credit their inclusion.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is essential. Three or more absences will result in a failing grade. If you absolutely must miss class, email me in advance.

## **Materials**

Students must bring their personal laptops to class. They should be responsible for their own files, making sure to back them up in some way. For editing and updating code, a code editor such as Sublime Text is needed. For image-making and sketching, Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign are standard tools available on most Yale computers. Other good digital-image making tools include a phone, digital camera, scanner, screen capture, etc.

## **Calendar**

Class 1 ... Friday, January 20  
Class 2 ... Monday, January 23  
Class 3 ... Monday, January 30  
Class 4 ... Monday, February 6  
Class 5 ... Monday, February 13  
Class 6 ... Monday, February 20  
Class 7 ... Monday, February 27  
Class 8 ... Monday, March 6

### *Spring Recess*

Class 9 ... Monday, March 20  
Class 10 ... Monday, March 27  
Class 11 ... Monday, April 3  
Class 12 ... Monday, April 10  
Class 13 ... Monday, April 17  
Class 14 ... Monday, April 24  
Class 15 ... Monday, May 1