

# Communicating with **Type 315**

Binghamton University

## Arts 315 Communicating with Type

Instructor, Mike Wesko

**Tuesday & Thursday: Science 3 Computer Lab** 11:40 am – 2:40 pm

Office Hours: By appointment only

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### Required Text Book:

Designing with type A Basic Course in Typography

by James Craig

Fifth Edition

### Class Description:

In this class we will study and learn about all aspects of typography.

The field of information/visual communication is taking its place as one of the major present day industries and the most significant part of that industry involves typography (its style and arrangement). There are many specifications within our field, but all require a knowledge of typography. In fact, most assignments will utilize typography, many consist entirely of type.

You will be the graphic designers of the future and your success will depend on how well you are educated to work with letterforms. As a graphic designer you will be called upon to perform many tasks – from designing logos, ads, brochures, catalogs, magazines, packaging, publications, exhibits, presentations, websites etc., etc. Digital typography provides freedom never before experienced – the ability to create and manipulate design elements with speed and ease, limited only by your imagination. Results can be created in seconds, **but the computer is only a tool**, for without design knowledge and typographic skills, you will certainly fail.

Although typography can be taught in a number of ways, we will approach learning about typography as follows in this class:

#### 1) Knowledge of metal type

It is the source of our typographic vocabulary

#### 2) Comping

It trains the eye through tracing letterforms

#### 3) Copyfitting

It teaches the special relationship between typewritten copy and typeset copy

#### 4) Fundamentals of typography

Combined with computer technology

You will be introduced to five classic typefaces, as well as many others:

- Garamond
- Baskerville
- Bodoni
- Century
- Helvetica

Each will be representing a distinct stage in the evolution of type. Although many were designed centuries ago, these remain among the most popular used today.

There will be a multitude of assignments from learning definitions to hands on comping and copyfitting to working with digital typography on the computer.

## Arts 315 Communicating with Type

### Procedures and Requirements:

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**1. Projects:** A variety of projects are planned for this class to meet specific objectives throughout the semester. We will advance to projects as time allows.

**2. Portfolio:** This is an accumulation of all the projects and instruction sheets given during the semester and will be reviewed one-on-one with the instructor at the end of the semester. Included in the portfolio should be thumbnails and all the projects for this class; and your binder with each assignment sheet. The portfolio must be completed within the given semester to receive a final grade.

**3. Evaluation:** Work will be evaluated after each assignment and at the end of the semester. Classroom critiques will be given on most projects as well as a written critique by the instructor. Projects will be submitted to the instructor on assigned dates and times, otherwise the project will be considered late. The instructor will make every effort to grade projects and return them to the student during the class following the due date.

- **Projects submitted late will be dropped one letter grade for each week they are late, at no time will a grade of A be given for a late project.**
- **The student is allowed to redo up to three projects during the semester in efforts to obtain a better grade for those projects and/or the final portfolio review.**
- **Redone projects will only be accepted one week after the graded project is returned.**
- **Redone projects are not guaranteed an improved letter grade!**
- **The project must be significantly better than the original.**

The final grade will be based on **project grades, the portfolio presentation**, and additional consideration will be given for **effort, attitude, participation, and attendance**. This is very similar to a rating process that employers will use in evaluating you as an employee.

**4. Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all classes for Arts 315. Students may miss up to 3 classes for the semester. Any absences above this, can result in a significant lowering of the final grade or failure. If you have a valid excuse to be absent, contact the Art Department office (Rm. 223) 777-2667. The administrator will file a note for university tracking.

**NOTE:** Class should be considered **valuable** work time. Yes, you may be comfortable working in your room or home, but use this time to start understanding the work place.

**5. Outside work:** The time outside of class will vary for each student depending on their skills. It is the student's responsibility to create their best work. The classroom is available at any time other than when another class is in session.

**6. Critiques:** Discussions will be scheduled on a regular basis upon completion of projects when each student is expected to exhibit their work whether finished or not.

- **Unfinished work should be shown in critiques as you are then participating in the critique.**
- **A project not in the critique is considered late.**

Emphasis will be on individual verbal reasoning of work accomplished, as well as a discussion and analysis of all student work shown during the critique. The objective is to develop verbal communication skills as well as gain new understandings in typography and design. All students are expected to participate in this discussion of work.

## Arts 315 Communicating with Type

### Procedures and Requirements (continued):

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**Materials and Tools:** The following is a list of the minimum required materials, tools, and supplies for the class. It is a minimum requirement, but essential for the student to satisfy the needs of the assigned projects. The student may find that more supplies or higher quality materials may be needed.

#### **Materials:**

- Paper cement, thinner and large dispenser with brush (Bestine cement/thinner is the recommended brand)\*
- Tracing paper (11" x 14" pad) or 100% Rag Translucent Marker Paper
- Sketch book or pad (approximately 11" x 14")
- Suitable paper as needed for computer output (laser compatible paper)
- Drafting tape (not masking tape)

#### **Tools:**

- Portable drawing board
- T-square (metal recommended)
- Triangles; 45/90 and 30/60 degree (metal recommended)
- Scale 24" (metal recommended)
- Pica ruler (see-through with fine markings is recommended)
- Board brush
- Utility knife (mat knife)
- X-acto knife and box of no. 11 blades
- Erasers (soft white)
- Sanding pad
- Portfolio case
- Pencils (soft lead & hard lead)
- Black markers: fine and broad nibs

#### **Storage Devices:**

- Flash Drive – 1-2 GB (minimum)
- CD's (rewritable)

**Absolutely no cutting** directly on the work surfaces. Use plastic cutting mats.

**\* These materials can be hazardous to your health, use in a well ventilated area.**

## Arts 315 Communicating with Type

### Review of Design Process:

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A designer must **understand the needs of the audience** in relation to the message that is to be communicated. Therefore, **information gathering** is the first logical step. If you are working for an agency or corporation, often the information about the project, audience (demographics), and competition is supplied by a marketing group. By putting your found information and message to be communicated into a concisely written **concept statement**, you verbalize and outline the needs of the project. Your concept statement includes the needs of the audience and matches visuals with the message to be communicated. Specify the style and character of the images that need to be used to communicate that message. Generally, the final written statement should be typed and accompany your solution for presentation.

The message to be communicated should be perceived as a benefit to the target audience. The images, colors, text, characteristics of the font to be used should all reflect how the company and their product meet the needs of the target audience.

The next step in the design process is **creating thumbnail sketches**. When creating your thumbnail sketches, work freely. Thumbnail sketches put your thoughts into visual terms that **the audience can understand**. Without knowledge of the audience and how that audience benefits from the product, you cannot begin.

Working quickly provides you with the most creative solutions. Your mind works quickly and jumps to unusual, and therefore, more creative ideas. If you are sketching quickly, not precisely, you will get those ideas on paper. After creating many pages of thumbnail sketches, relate those sketches to the information you gathered. Match the look and feel of the images and characteristics of the typeface, to the message.

After creating the thumbnail sketches, you will choose between one or two thumbnails to create the next step in the design process, the **enhancement drawings**. You must enlarge the thumbnails to the finished size to determine exactly which visual is best and also to determine the exact placement and size of each element. The grid for that solution will be created for placement of elements in this stage. The exact typeface will also be chosen based on character and size that is most suitable. This step is needed so that no time or money is wasted further in the process.

After all design decisions are made in the enhancement drawings, the **comprehensive layout** is created from the best solution chosen from the enhancement drawings. This is the layout that will be presented to the client. In this case, making all of the design decisions in the enhancement phase is most obvious. In the comprehensive stage all elements should look as close to the intended final piece as possible. Most clients do not want to or cannot visualize something verbally described.

After the clients approval, the final phase for print production is preparation of the **digital mechanical art**. Today, most often soft files generate the plates for offset lithography. Therefore, files must be exact. The graphic designer must have knowledge of the printing process to be used so that the production of files and hardcopy is done correctly. Many times a person working in the field of **print production** is called a **graphic artist**.

## **Arts 315 Communicating with Type**

### **How to Apply Yourself in ARTS 315:**

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- 1)** Come to every class, on time, alert, ready to absorb and learn, with your work and readings complete. Only then will you be prepared to receive new information and get fresh ideas that will improve your work.
- 2)** Be attentive in class. Participate. Squeeze as much as you can in the way of new information and inspiration out of every class. During every critique and presentation think about how does this apply to what I'm doing? How can this discussion help me to see my work in a new light? What can I learn from this presentation that will help me? Question your classmates more in depth. How or why did you do that? What did you learn from trying that? You should be learning from each other all the time.
- 3)** Do more research on your own to find good examples of well-designed projects that are similar to our assignment. Find the most creative examples. Where do the ideas come from? Examine the style; look carefully at the typography. Collect examples; start a file for each assignment. Pay attention to the research shown in class. Ask questions. Get as much out of the in-class research as you can. Don't tune out. Pay attention, aggressively.
- 4)** Do all the required reading on time so the discussions and presentations are meaningful. The outside readings are all selected to complement the creative work but you must do the reading to get anything out of them. Be ready with questions.
- 5)** Start every assignment off on the right foot by working extra hard on the concept development and thumbnail sketches at the beginning. Don't wait to see what everyone else is doing before you get going. Sit down and get excited about your work right away and do many, many concept sketches to open up your mind and see what's possible.
- 6)** Work consistently and stay on schedule in order to pace yourself throughout an assignment. Take advantage of all holidays and breaks by doing extra work. You'll thank yourself later.
- 7)** Experiment with different styles and subject matter. Try different typefaces and analyze the different results. Don't get in a rut doing all your work with the same look or mood.
- 8)** Enjoy the semester. Have fun with your work. Be optimistic. This should be enjoyable even though you are working very, very hard. Your work will accurately reflect the amount of time and effort you invested. Think of this semester as an investment, not only, in your education, but also your future.