

GRA 4165 / graphic design history 1 / syllabus

Meets	Tu 3-4 (9:35-11:30am) in FAC 310 R 4 (10:40-11:30) in NRN 1037
Instructor	Dr Dori Griffin dgriffin@arts.ufl.edu FAC 313E Office hours H 1:00–2:30 PM and by appointment book online here
Prerequisites	ARH 2050 and ARH 2051, or graduate status, or instructor permission

I regularly check/reply to email in the early morning and late afternoon M-F. I'm happy to make an appointment to meet outside regular office hours; email to work out a time.

This course, the TL;DR:

How does visual communication evolve over time and in relation to places and social/cultural contexts? This question guides Design History I. We'll move **chronologically** and **thematically**, asking one **guiding question** each week to help us approach our large question in multiple ways. We'll examine these questions through one or more of three **critical lenses—race, class, and/or gender**—which have themselves been defined in many different ways, as our case studies demonstrate. Each week, we'll examine a **primary text** from a so-called canonical designer or movement, a **global case study** to expand that narrative through a critical lens, and a relevant example of **contemporary design practice**. History isn't neutral. The questions we ask, and the designed artifacts we examine or admire, inform the stories we tell. Throughout this course, we'll **investigate** how and why design's narratives shape our individual and shared concepts of "histories of visual communication." Our **guiding principles** will be: cultivate curiosity, demonstrate respect, listen actively, and communicate clearly. All assignments and supporting materials will be posted to Canvas.

Texts & materials:

Required: Links to all required readings and viewings will be posted to Canvas.
Suggested: [Graphic Design History: A Critical Guide](#) by Johanna Drucker and Emily McVarish, any edition
If you find it helpful to have a printed textbook for reference, you may wish to purchase this text. It's a useful overview of Western European / North American visual communication design.
- or -
[A Short Introduction to Graphic Design History](#) is useful for those who prefer reading on screens.

Catalog description:

GRA 4165: History of Graphic Design I investigates the diverse cultural functions and critical definitions of design across places and over time, until the turn of the twentieth century. The course introduces the broad stylistic movements common to western European and North American graphic design, as well as interrogating and re-writing a received definition of design history which excludes globally diverse artifacts, designers, practices, and users. Readings, viewings, discussions, and critical making activities focus on (1) how design functions in relation to specific cultures and (2) how expanded knowledge of global historical contexts might enrich contemporary design practice.

Course objectives:

This course will foster cooperative, dialogic engagement with three questions: One, what is the broad outline of graphic design history as traditionally defined, through the turn of the twentieth century? Two, how have designers and historians expanded that definition to be more global, inclusive, and participatory? Here, we focus specifically on critical explorations of race, class, and/or gender as they have been addressed (or not) in design histories. And three, how might we, as individual designers/scholars, contribute to a radically expanded notion of graphic design history?

Course outcomes:

At this end of this course, students will be able to: (1) recognize and identify the stylistic designations applied to canonical examples of western European and North American graphic design through the turn of the twentieth century; (2) demonstrate familiarity with diverse examples of expanded graphic design practice through discussion and writing; (3) articulate meaningful connections and critique unequal power structures when viewing the canon of design history in relationship to an expanded history; and (4) demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a single subject area

within this expanded field through sustained, image-based research which will be presented in written and audio-visual formats.

Course structure:

This course is organized chronologically, with a guiding thematic question for each week. Each week focuses on a specific time period and the conceptual, stylistic, and contextual ideas related to it. Brief readings and/or lectures will introduce canonical ideas, technologies, images, designers, and stylistic movements fundamental to the received history of graphic design as a professional activity, a means of production, and a tool for visual communication. While this material doesn't make up the whole of graphic design history, it does provide a shared formal and contextual vocabulary for most designers practicing in North America and Western Europe today. These introductions will be supported by primary texts and image examples. In discussion and critical-making sessions, we'll push back against this received, canonical history and expand our view of graphic design history to include designers, audiences, places, and activities that have – until very recently – been excluded from the definition of graphic design. We'll discuss ideas and view examples from an assigned reading that offers a global case study relevant to the week's guiding question. This case study will apply the critical lens(es) of race, class, and/or gender—concepts which have been defined differently over time and across place. Individual research projects will expand and de-center the history of graphic design around a theme of your choice within the three broad areas of race, class, and/or gender.

Course deliverables:

This course prioritizes (1) active engagement in scheduled meetings – demonstrated by attendance and participation and documented with in-class response activities; (2) commitment to completing weekly lecture/reading/viewing assignments – demonstrated through participation in class discussions and presentations; and (3) meaningful contributions to our shared goal of expanding and de-centering graphic design history – demonstrated through your individual, semester-long research project. Expanding and de-centering graphic design history is complex, on-going work with no quick ending point. Likewise, your individual project will develop incrementally over the semester. Steps will include weekly images which you'll locate and annotate; regular peer review sessions; a (brief) audio-visual report to the class at midterm or finals; and a finalized text collecting your revised annotated image posts into a cohesive essay with a critical introduction.

Point distribution – 1000 points total:

Presentations – 200 points maximum

Audio-visual report on your project, at midterm or final = 100 points

Presentation re: assigned weekly content (sign up for a week) = 100 points

Individual project – 500 points maximum

Annotated image post: 10 posts x 25 points each = 250 points

Finalized text collecting and contextualizing your revised images/writing = 250 points

In-class activities – 250 points maximum

Small-group activities based on assigned readings and/or peer critique, as noted on syllabus.

20 points each x 12 TH meetings, with completed documentation posted to Canvas:

In-class critical making activity, completed documentation posted to Canvas *after* class

- or -

Participation in peer critique of drafts, drafts must be posted to Canvas *before* class

+10 bonus for completing all 12 assignments

Beta testing feedback session – 50 points – choose 10/13 or 11/22, period 4

This semester, we're beta-testing the course structure for the new Design History sequence, GD History I and II, required for future GD BFA majors. Instead of a Google form, we'll use these sessions to discuss what you've learned, what's been more vs less useful or user-friendly, and how the course might evolve to benefit future students. If you attend in October, your contributions can help shape the second half of this semester.

Grading scale:

The grading scale for this course is consistent with the current UF policy for assigning grade points which can be viewed at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

Letter	GPA	Percent	Course points	Letter	GPA	Percent	Course points
A	4.00	100-94%	1000-950 points	C	2.00	76-73%	769-730 points
A-	3.67	93-90%	949-900 points	C-	1.67	72-70%	729-700 points
B+	3.33	89-87%	899-870 points	D+	1.33	69-67%	699-670 points
B	3.00	86-83%	869-830 points	D	1.00	66-63%	669-630 points
B-	2.67	82-80%	829-800 points	D-	0.67	62-60%	629-600 points
C+	2.33	79-77%	799-770 points	F	0.00	59% or below	599 points or fewer

Course policies:

Attendance: Being present for class allows you to participate in credit-earning, in-class activities and complete required assignments; more importantly, your contributions to discussions and peer review sessions facilitate an engaged learning community. After the first two absences, each additional unexcused absence will reduce the final course grade by 50/1000 points, or half a letter grade. Unless you check in via email ahead of time to make specific and mutually agreeable arrangements, official documentation of university-approved circumstances (illness, military service, university travel, religious observances, etc.) is required for absences to be excused. Two late arrivals or early departures equal one absence. More than six absences results in automatic failure of the course, unless we've made arrangements ahead of time to accommodate ongoing, documented situations.

Students Requiring Accommodation: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It's important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester. If there's something I/we can do that you know to be helpful and functional for you, feel free to let me know informally.

Make-up work: Presentations and in-class activities can only be made up in the case of documented emergencies or for university approved reasons such as military/university travel, illness, or religious observances; contact me ahead of time to make arrangements. Read the full university policies regarding attendance, excused absences, and make-up exams at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Academic integrity: If you use words, images, or ideas that are not your own, 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. View the Honor Code online: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

Course evaluations: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last 2-3 weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

UF in-class recording policy: Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor. A class lecture does not include lab/studio sessions, student presentations, academic exercises involving solely student participation, or private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

UF HB7 guidance: People learn best when encouraged to ask questions and express their diverse insights on course content which may include images, texts, data, or theories from many fields. This class addresses concepts of race,

color, sex, and/or national origin as related to design. We study these important issues because understanding them is essential for anyone who seeks to make economic, cultural, and societal contributions to today's complex world. With this in mind, we do not limit access to, or classroom discussion of, ideas and opinions—including those that some may find uncomfortable or even offensive. In response to challenging material, students and instructors are encouraged to ask honest questions and thoughtfully engage one another's ideas. But hostility and disruptive or disrespectful behavior have no place in a classroom, and we will respect one another's full humanity throughout this course.

Campus resources:

Emergency Contacts

UF Police: Emergency 911, non-emergency 352-392-1111 or <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

UF Counseling and Wellness Center: 352-392-1575 or <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>

UF 24/7 Crisis Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Emergency-Services>

Student Healthcare Center

Dial 911 for medical emergencies

Dial 352-392-1161 for urgent after-hours medical questions

Dial 352-392-1171 for after-hours mental health assistance, <http://shcc.ufl.edu>

General University Policies

Most policies and procedures important to students recorded here: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/>

Academic Services

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138; <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

GRA 4165 / course schedule

WEEK 1 How is history an act of curation and editing?

Aug 25 (Th) Welcome, introductions, course philosophy and logistics

Critical lens(es): race, class, gender

Case study: Dori Tunstall and Black design history at the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum

WEEK 2 How do alphabets and writing systems shape what we mean by "design"?

Critical lens(es): gender, race

Case study: Noto Sans Nüshu in China vs "oriental" fonts in Western Europe and North America

Aug 30 (Tu) Quiz must be completed before class begins; discussion of readings/viewings (see Canvas)

Sept 1 (Th) In-class critical making activity

WEEK 3 How do manuscript books shape cultures of visual and linguistic literacy?

Critical lens(es): race

Case study: Transcultural exchange among Asia, the Arab Middle East, and Western Europe
in the early middle ages

Sept 6 (Tu) Quiz must be completed before class begins; discussion of readings/viewings (see Canvas)

Sept 8 (Th) In-class critical making activity

WEEK 4 How do early printed books inform how we conceptualize "publishing industries"?

Critical lens(es): class, race

Case study: Mass-printing block books for everyday readers in Japan

Sept 13 (Tu) Quiz must be completed before class begins; discussion of readings/viewings (see Canvas)

Sept 15 (Th) In-class critical making activity

WEEK 5 How do Modern printed books demonstrate shifts in global printing practices?

Critical lens(es): gender, race

Case study: Sara Maria van der Wilp and cultural branding in the Early Modern period
-or-
16c Jewish Makers of Printed Books and Late Renaissance Jewish Literacy

Sept 20 (Tu) Quiz must be completed before class begins; discussion of readings/viewings (see Canvas)

Sept 22 (Th) In-class peer critique of drafts

WEEK 6 How can visual information design transform the ways we understand data?

Critical lens(es): gender, class

Case study: Florence Nightingale and data visualization

Sept 27 (Tu) Quiz must be completed before class begins; discussion of readings/viewings (see Canvas)
Sept 29 (Th) In-class critical making activity

WEEK 7 How does a culture's definition of design inform its understanding of the public sphere?

Critical lens(es): race; class, gender

Case study: Māori-language newspapers in 19c New Zealand

Oct 4 (Tu) Quiz must be completed before class begins; discussion of readings/viewings (see Canvas)
Oct 6 (Th) In-class critical making activity

WEEK 8

Oct 11 (Tu) Individual Presentations, Group A
Everyone will attend periods 3 and 4, plan for this now
Oct 13 (Th) Beta testing feedback session 1

WEEK 9 How does design shape our concept of modern nation-states?

Critical lens(es): race, gender

Case study: Ignacio Cumplido & Mexican national identity in nineteenth c. typography

Oct 18 (Tu) Quiz must be completed before class begins; discussion of readings/viewings (see Canvas)
Oct 20 (Th) In-class critical making activity

WEEK 10 How does industrialization impact the design industry in terms of professional technology?

Critical lens(es): race

Case study: Lithography and the Packaging of Race in the USA

- or -

Persian Printing and the Stanhope [Press] Revolution in Early Qajar Iran

Oct 25 (Tu) Quiz must be completed before class begins; discussion of readings/viewings (see Canvas)
Oct 27 (Th) In-class critical making activity

WEEK 11 How does industrialization impact the design industry in terms of social/cultural systems?

Critical lens(es): gender

Case study: Womens' roles in mechanical typesetting and typesetting in the USA and England

Nov 1 (Tu) Quiz must be completed before class begins; discussion of readings/viewings (see Canvas)
Nov 3 (Th) In-class peer critique of drafts

WEEK 12 How does the introduction of mass mediation shape social and personal identities?

Critical lens(es): race, class, gender

Case study: Advertising femininity through popular print media in China

Nov 8 (Tu) Quiz must be completed before class begins; discussion of readings/viewings (see Canvas)
Nov 10 (Th) In-class critical making activity

WEEK 13 How does historical revivalism impact design practice and popular ideas about aesthetics?

Critical lens(es): gender, class

Case study: TBD

Nov 15 (Tu) Quiz must be completed before class begins; discussion of readings/viewings (see Canvas)

Nov 17 (Th) In-class critical making activity

WEEK 14

Nov 22 (Tu) Beta testing feedback session 2

Nov 24 (Th) No class; university holiday

WEEK 15 What do designers usually mean by proto-Modernism, and how was it understood as it emerged?

Critical lens(es): gender, race

Case study: Angel de Cora and the Native American Arts & Crafts movement

Nov 29 (Tu) Quiz must be completed before class begins; discussion of readings/viewings (see Canvas)

Dec 1 (Th) In-class peer critique of drafts

WEEK 16

Dec 6 (Tu) Individual presentations—Group B

Everyone will attend periods 3 and 4, plan for this now