

Fall 2015  
Interactive 2, GRAPH-228-01  
California College of the Arts  
SF Main Campus, [1] Room E1 [2] Room E2  
Monday, Wednesday [1] 12–3pm [2] 4–7pm  
Instructor: Laurel Schwulst, lschwulst@cca.edu

## 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?

*(This course has a formal emphasis, using what knowledge students have about composition, typography, and hierarchy as a basis.)*

- What is the web?
- What is code?
- What is code's relationship to the web?
- How can we best use our knowledge of both to communicate the idea?

*(Today interaction online is focused on information flow within living, social ecosystems that students already well know. We will go beyond and average user's perspective to critically examine the web through historical, political, and social lenses. This course encourages students to holistically approach to the web and its constituent code as a living kit of parts patiently waiting to be harnessed in novel and innovative ways.)*

- What are the different conditions in which this can exist?
- How does this change in each of those conditions?
- What happens to this when it expands?

*(We will explore design principles relating to dynamic media and understand how good design should take advantage of the web both formally and conceptually. This design should be conditional online, changing in response to its environment and users, so we will create accommodating, flexible systems.)*

The 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 ~15 students. No prior programming knowledge is required to take this class. Interested students with special circumstances can speak to me directly and, in addition, be sure to thoroughly fill out the intro survey I give during the first week of class.

## Class activities

In general, the 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.

## **Reading panel groups**

Reading discussions will be in panel format. For each group of readings, three or four students will assigned. On the day a group of readings is discussed, those students will sit around the center table of the classroom (on the panel) to discuss, moderated by the instructor and TA. Everyone else will quietly listen until the end of 20 minutes time allotted. A short Q&A will follow.

## **Themes**

Throughout the duration of the course, groups of content (readings and videos) will be given around these specific themes:

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

## **Projects**

Project 1 ... Republish a Text

Project 2 ... 25 Variations

Project 3 ... CSS Typeface

Project 4 ... Hoax

## **Evaluation**

In this class, students will strive to make memorable, functional online experiences. Projects should both take a stance (be poetic, critical, and clear) and also be functional (achieve their goals and not break). The invention of useful products is not the focus of this class, but the invention of useful, surprising techniques and approaches might be. Craft (in both code and design) and overall presentation are also important. Taking risks and having fun are encouraged.

## **Grading**

20% ... Project 1

20% ... Project 2

20% ... Project 3

20% ... Project 4

20% ... Reading panel participation

Letter grades represent the following: A = excellent; B = good; C = satisfactory; D = unsatisfactory; F = failure. A grade of C- or less is considered a failing grade for required courses within the major, and you will need to retake this course if you achieve a grade lower than a C.

### **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 required. Students are expected to be on time and remain in class for the entire period scheduled. Work missed due to any type of absence is the student's responsibility. Three or more absences will result in a failing grade. Three late arrivals equals an absence. If you absolutely must miss class, email me in advance.

### **Materials**

Students should bring their own personal laptops to class. They should also be responsible for their own files, making sure to back them up in some way. For editing and updating code, we will use the code editor Sublime Text. For website hosting, we will use Github Pages. For code learning, we will use Codecademy. For image-making and sketching, Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign are standard tools that all students should have. Other good digital-image making tools include a phone, digital camera, scanner, screen capture, etc.

Spring 2014  
Art 369b, Interactive Design  
210 Green Hall; Tuesday/Thursday 1:30–3:20pm  
Laurel Schwulst, instructor, laurel@linkedbyair.net  
Grace Robinson-Leo, TA, grace.robinson-leo@yale.edu

### **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?

*(This course has a formal emphasis, using what knowledge students have about composition, typography, and hierarchy as a basis.)*

- What is the prompt?
- What is the corresponding feedback?
- Do the prompt and feedback make sense together?

*(We will look at an 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 an important role.)*

- Where is the navigation?
- Is this worth a click?
- Is this worth scrolling?
- What are the different conditions in which this can exist?
- How does this change in each of those conditions?
- What happens to this when it expands?

*(We will examine web-specific design problems, focusing on navigating a website and the pacing throughout. Design should be conditional online, changing in response to its users and environment, so we will create accommodating, flexible systems.)*

The 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 ~6 graduate students in the Preliminary year of the Graphic Design track. The other ~6 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.

### **Weekly activities**

Usually, Tuesday will be the more structured day of class.

Tuesday's class will include any combination of:

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

Thursday's class will include any combination of skill-based workshop with working lab time and/or individual consultation.

### **Weekly interview findings**

Each week (starting Week 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. 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 an HTML page with embedded assets (images, video, and/or sound files) included.

### **Projects**

P1 ... Visual Tweets

P2 ... 25 Variations

P3 ... Tutorial as Form

P4 ... Weather Presentation

## **Evaluation**

In this class, students will strive to make memorable, functional online experiences. Projects should both take a stance (be poetic, critical, and clear) and also be functional (achieve their goals and not break). The invention of useful products is not the focus of this class, but the invention of useful, surprising techniques and approaches might be. Craft (in both code and design) and overall presentation are also important. Taking risks and having fun are encouraged.

## **Grading**

20% ... P1

20% ... P2

20% ... P3

20% ... P4

20% ... Homework

At the end of the term, you will be required to send me an archival .zip file of all project materials divided into folders P1, P2, P3, P4, and Homework. Please keep this in mind as you organize your materials throughout the semester.

## **Academic integrity**

In the context of the web, we will discuss maintaining integrity by finding the right balance of original and appropriated content. In creating websites, we will learn what technologies are good (and necessary) to appropriate, how to credit, and the implications of being open source. We will also look at the difference between good and bad sources online, and the morality of “stealing” from the internet.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory. This is a physical class even though its projects are based online. Three or more absences or excessive tardiness will result in a failing grade. If you must miss class, please email me in advance.

## **Materials**

Since the class takes place in a lab with computers, personal laptops are not required. However, students should be responsible for their files, making sure to back up their files in some way. For editing and updating code, a simple text editor and FTP software are needed. (See class website for specific resource links.) For image-making and sketching, Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign are standard tools that are available on most Yale computers. Other good digital-image making tools include a phone, digital camera, scanner, screen capture, etc.