

I561 Spring 2018 Sections 32306 & 32307 | M & W 6:15-8:45 | Informatics I2 122

# Visual Thinking, Meaning & Form

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### Welcome.

I reserve the right to amend this syllabus over the course of the semester. Please be sure you have the latest version.

### Studio Class

This is a studio class. This means that most of the time you will work on projects and meet for critique. You will not receive detailed project briefs as you may be used to receiving in some other classes which may be studio-inspired but which are not strictly studio classes. You will receive themes for the projects. Themes are not the same things as problems—I will explain more in class. Knowing how to set the specific focus of how your project team addresses the theme is an important learning objective for this class.

### Definitions

The *visual* in *visual thinking, meaning & form* (VTMF) refers to things you can see—that is, we are interested in this class primarily in forms that are not text, but rather photographs (especially) as well as video and diagrams. The *thinking* in VTMF refers to the designerly practice of exploring spaces of possibility—that includes critical thinking and strategic thinking. The *meaning* in VTMF refers to actual content of design—that is, understanding and making things that matter. The *form* in VTMF refers to the way things exist—that is as physical forms or plans. The core focus of the class is strategic design thinking, visual design thinking, and values-orientation as a foundation for design.

### Group Project Themes

The group project themes are

1. Design for respect
2. Design for things that make you think
3. Design for things that truly matter

### Individual Projects

This year, there are three individual projects. Each involves creating a precis (300-800 words) and diagrams (1-5 diagrams) to represent an assigned research paper germane to the topics above. The assigned papers are:

(1) Eli Blevins. 2018. Seeing What Is and What Can Be: On Sustainability, Respect for Work, and Design for Respect. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '18)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, (to appear).

(2) Shaowen Bardzell and Jeffrey Bardzell. 2011. Towards a feminist HCI methodology: social science, feminism, and HCI. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '11)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 675-684.

(3) Select one of:

Seyram Ayle and Silvia Lindtner. 2016. Design(ing) 'Here' and 'There': Tech Entrepreneurs, Global Markets, and Reflexivity in Design Processes. In *Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '16)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 2233-2245.

-or-

Hamid Ekbia and Bonnie Nardi. 2016. Social Inequality and HCI: The View from Political Economy. In *Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '16)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 4997-5002.



### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this class, you should know or have refined your abilities to:

- How to write your own project briefs or other forms of strategic and tactical design planning, and how to be comfortable in an environment in which you are not provided with a detailed project brief by someone else.
- Use important designerly tools such as Adobe inDesign, Lightroom, and Photoshop, and even how to use tools like MS Word and PowerPoint in more designerly ways.
- Understand rudiments and some advanced principles of photography and both digital and traditional photographic tools for the context of HCI and interaction design. This includes some basic knowledge of the physics of optics and sensors, as well as some basic knowledge of photographic aesthetics.
- Understand how to be thoughtful in your use of images and video in interaction design.
- Develop a sense of values-oriented design, particularly in relation to the project themes.
- Understand transdisciplinary design and its utility in bringing value to design processes and frameworks.

### Form of Deliverables

For each group project you will deliver

1. a pictorial in ACM pictorial format, which you must make in Adobe inDesign:  
<http://cc.acm.org/2017/files/Pictorals2017.zip>
2. a video (minimum length 3:20 minutes, maximum length 6:40 minutes), which you may make in PowerPoint or another software tool of your choosing.

This year, there are three individual projects, due in W2, W7, and W12. Each involves creating a precis (300-800 words) and diagrams (1-5 diagrams) to represent an assigned research paper germane to the topics above.

### Important note about third party materials

From project 2 forward, your use of third party materials must conform to ACM policy:

[Third party material](#)

[Fair use](#)

[Sample permission request letter](#)

The reason for this policy is to underscore the goal of producing professional quality, publishable work, as you will be expected to produce in real-world practice. It is also a matter of ethics and respect for the work of others.

### Class Format

6:15-8:45 : per schedule and as discussed in class

### Office Hours

By appointment

### Schedule

W1 (1.8,10) Project 1:

*design for respect*

W2 (1.15,17) Individual project presentations

W3 (1.22,24) Critique: design analysis for project 1

W4 (1.29,31) Critique: design synthesis for project 1

W5 (2.5,7) Presentations for project 1

W6 (2.12,14) Project 2:

*design for things that make you think*

W7 (2.19,21) Individual project presentations

W8 (2.26,28) Critique: design analysis for project 2

W9 (3.5,7) Critique: design synthesis for project 2

Spring Break

W10 (3.19,21) Extra Critique: project 2 (extended)

W11 (3.26,28) Presentations for project 2 (extended)

& Project 3 assignment discussion:

*design for things that truly matter*

W12: (4.2,4) Individual project presentations

W13: (4.9,11) Critique: design analysis for project 3

W14: (4.16,18) Critique: design synthesis for project 3

CHI Week

W15: (4.30,5.2) Presentations for project 3

### Semester Important Dates

Begins Mon, Jan 8

MLK Jr. Day Mon, Jan 15

Auto W Sun, Mar 11

Spring Break Mar 11 - Mar 18

Final Exams Apr 30 - May 4

Ends Fri, May 4

### Grading

G: Group projects: 40%

I: Individual projects: 40%

C: Attendance & contribution: 20%

### Very important notes

Your grade for individual projects limits your maximum grade for group projects. That is

Final grade = (min(G,I) \* .4) + (I \* .4) + (C \* .2)

Unexcused absences are not allowed. Excused absences require documentation.

The contribution grade is based on the thoughtfulness of your comments and your support for the quality of the class as a whole. It is possible to receive a low grade for contribution if you try to dominate the discussions or otherwise demand undue attention.

### **Additional Important Information**

#### **Absences and Disengagement**

The use of digital devices to look up references or work on projects in class is encouraged. The use of digital devices to engage in social media or similar forms of disengagement may result in an unexcused absence at the discretion of the associate instructors.

#### **Accommodations & Feedback**

We welcome your feedback. We will do our best to accommodate specific requests if they are reasonable and have merit.

#### **Academic Misconduct**

The class is morally and procedurally bound by IU's policies on academic misconduct, the details of which you can read about at the following website: [www.indiana.edu/~code/code/index.shtml](http://www.indiana.edu/~code/code/index.shtml)

#### **Religious Observance**

In accordance with the Office of the Dean of Faculties, any student who wishes to receive an excused absence from class must submit a request form available from the Dean of Faculties for each day to be absent. This form must be presented to the course professor by the end of the second

week of the semester. A separate form must be submitted for each day. The form must be signed by the instructor, with a copy retained by instructor, and the original returned to the student. Information about the policy on religious observance can be found here: [www.indiana.edu/~vpfaa/holidays.shtml](http://www.indiana.edu/~vpfaa/holidays.shtml)

#### **English**

If English is not your native language or you are otherwise shy about speaking in class, please do not worry. You will not be penalized in any way for making contributions to the class in less than perfect English or for taking time to compose your answers. You are welcome to say what you want to say in your language of choice first and then ask for help from others to translate to English. I will frequently emphasize to the class the need for all of us to be supportive of each other when it comes to contributing to the discussions. There is no need to feel rushed when responding to questions in class—an important part of the class is the construction of a feeling of community with the faculty and your peers.

#### **Important Notice**

As your instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. Title IX and our own Sexual Misconduct policy prohibit sexual

misconduct. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help. I encourage you to visit <http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/> to learn more. If you are seeking help and would like to speak to someone confidentially, you can make an appointment with a Mental Health Counselor on campus (contact information available at <http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/employee/confidential.html>).

It is also important that you know that federal regulations and University policy require me to promptly convey any information about potential sexual misconduct known to me to our Deputy Title IX Coordinator or IU's Title IX Coordinator. In that event, they will work with a small number of others on campus to ensure that appropriate measures are taken and resources are made available to the student who may have been harmed. Protecting a student's privacy is of utmost concern, and all involved will only share information with those that need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist.

