

## George Mason University Course Syllabus

<b>Course Title:</b>	Editorial Design
<b>Course Code/Section:</b>	AVT 313, Sections 1 and 2
<b>Session/Year:</b>	Spring, 2010
<b>Meeting:</b>	Monday, Wednesday, 10:30am–1:10 pm, 1:30–4:10, School of Art, Rm. 1022.
<b>Professor:</b>	Jandos Rothstein
<b>Contact Info:</b>	jrothste@gmu.edu
<b>Class information:</b>	www.jandos.com/forstudents
<b>Office Hours:</b>	TBA, and by appointment

### Course Description

This semester we will be exploring long-form graphic design. While our focus will be on magazines, the skills developed—creating continuity and variety across a range of pages, presenting information in various content-appropriate formats, and developing brand identity and continuity, is also applicable to other common design tasks—annual reports, business documents, newspapers, brochures, websites, books and other multipage documents.

### Objectives

Develop professional visual sensitivity and competency in graphic communication through discipline of the magazine design process. Continuing development of professional computer design skills in drawing, page layout, and image manipulation using appropriate software. Develop a series of professional portfolio pieces including magazine branding, feature layouts, news section layouts and information graphics.

### Content

This is a design class—not a software training class. Students will produce a series of design projects, developing them from thumbnail rough to smooths to final. While there will be technical demonstrations, students will be expected to have, or to develop, the computer skills necessary to complete their projects.

### Attendance Policy

Studio courses include substantial critique/discussion components and lab components. By their nature, studios are dynamic educational environments. During critique periods and in the interaction of instructor and student on ongoing projects, the studio provides resources and learning opportunities that cannot be “made up” by other means. In short, your attendance is just as important as mine. Therefore:

Students are required to attend all class meetings, to arrive on time, and to stay for the duration of the class.

Students arriving seven minutes or more late to class will be marked tardy. Students arriving 20 minutes or more late will be marked absent. Three tardy marks equals one absence. Students who leave before the class is dismissed will be marked absent.

Students who are having difficulty with the attendance requirement may be asked to drop the class.

Students who accumulate three or more absences will receive a reduced or failing grade.

There are no excused absences.

## TEXT AND REFERENCES

### Required:

**Rothstein, Jandos**, *Designing Magazines*, Allworth Press, New York, 2007. Students are also expected to purchase two magazines for the mash-up assignment, and **at least three copies** of the magazine they are redesigning during the course of the semester.

Additionally it is assumed that students will stay current on all new posts to the Designing Magazines blog. ([www.designingmagazines.com](http://www.designingmagazines.com))

### Suggested:

*Adobe CS4 Illustrator Classroom in a Book*, Adobe Press, Salinas, California, 2008.

*Adobe CS4 Photoshop Classroom in a Book*, Adobe Press, Salinas, California, 2008.

*The Adobe Type Reference*, Adobe Press, Salinas, California, 2005.

**Bringhurst, Robert**, *The Elements of Typographic Style*, Hartley & Marks, Point Roberts, Washington 1992.

**Hurlburt, Allen**, *Grid: A Modular System for the Design and Production of Newspapers, Magazines and Books*, John Wiley & Sons, 1982.

**Visocky O'Grady, Ken and Jenn**, *The Information Design Handbook*, How Books, Cincinnati, Ohio 2008.

**Williams, Robin**, *The Mac Is Not a Typewriter* (1st. not 2nd. ed.), Peachpit Press, 1990.

### Materials & Supplies:

You will need the following tools and materials for this course, and should have them with you at each session.

CD or DVD ROMs, thumb or hard drive recommended drawing supplies (sketch pad, eraser, etc.) ruler marked in picas—Design School Ruler or Schadler recommended: 14" × 17" tracing or marker paper masking/drafting/artist tape other material as assigned/required by project mounting board, mounting supplies—depending on how the final is presented.

### Student Evaluation/Methods of Assessment:

The **final project grade** will be determined using the following criteria:

Final project concept and aesthetics: Originality, creativity and effectiveness of the solution, visual impact and appropriateness of design towards chosen topic. (45%)

Final project digital craft skills: Including appropriate use of style sheets, grids and templates, logical and spare document construction using typographically conventional spacing and software features. Consistent body text, reduced use of extraneous text boxes and manual space adjustments (Text that flows down a single column is in a single box). Are your files easy to edit, are they set up as a professional would expect to see them? (25%)

Final project analog craft skills: Including quality of printed artifact—appropriate image resolution, correct aspect ratio and color quality, accurate trimming and assembly (and/or when required) mounting. Logical and clear organization and presentation. No, or few text errors. (20%) Submitted in correct order. Is the file appealing and neat? Is it suitable for a client presentation?

The **class grade** will also take the mashup project (10%), attendance, participation, and "professionalism" during the semester into account. In other words, missing incremental deadlines or turning in sloppy or incomplete work during the semester will reduce your final grade.

As we work towards a completed final project, students will receive preliminary grades throughout the semester. **However these grades are intended as a rough guide for students to gauge their progress on isolated components of the main project, and do not factor in the final grade.** As with any large project, later design decisions often make it necessary to rethink earlier decisions. The 21 pages turned in at the end

of the semester must be “of a piece.” Even though pages will be designed over time, all finals must make editorial and graphic sense when viewed together. Additionally, provisional grades are given for design only and do not factor the craft and presentation aspects of the final. The final project grade may be adjusted up or down to reflect how well it works as a complete solution as well as craft competency.

### **Class, Department and University Policies:**

All projects are due at the **beginning** of class on the date assigned. Late projects will be reduced one letter grade for each week late or portion thereof. After two weeks, projects will not be accepted. The final project is due on the last day of class. No extensions will be given.

This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran’s status, or physical ability.

As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the Department of Art and Visual Technology adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

Students in this class are bound by the Honor Code, as stated in the George Mason University Catalog. The honor code requires that the work you do as an individual be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas. (This does not prohibit collaborative work when it is approved by the instructor.) Violations must be reported to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously. Using someone else’s words or ideas without attribution is plagiarism, a very serious Honor Code offense. Plagiarism will also result in a failing grade.

Students must be completely prepared for class to be considered present, ie. they must have all necessary supplies and computer files and all ongoing (ungraded) projects with them. Working on the design portion of projects on platforms and software other than Macintosh QuarkXpress or Adobe InDesign is by permission of instructor only.

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

Students who are in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). The services of the Writing Center are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis.

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Students are responsible for the content of university and class communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly. Students are responsible for the content of messages that bounce due to “over limit” errors.

Cell phones and pagers must be turned off during class. The use of headphones is permitted during work periods.

Students may redo work for a higher grade if the piece was originally turned in on time. Revisions must be a substantial reconsideration of the original—not merely a correction of errors. The deadline for revised work is the last day of class.

## Useful Information:

**Open Studio Hours** AVT teaching studios are open to students for extended periods of time mornings, evenings and weekends whenever classes are not in progress. Policies, procedures and schedules for studio use are established by the AVT studio faculty and are posted in the studios.

**ArtsBus** If you need ArtsBus credit for this semester, you MUST enroll in AVT 300. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment. There will be NO exceptions. If you plan to go on multiple ArtsBus trips this term and wish to count them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300. Please go to the ArtsBus website: <http://arts-bus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy.

## Important Deadlines

Last Day to Add (Full-Semester Course) **February 2**

Last Day to Drop (Full-Semester Course) **February 9**

Elective Withdrawal Period (Full-Semester) **February 22–March 26**

Incomplete work from Fall due to instructor **March 26**

Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for late adds (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the AVT office (or the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid processing). Requests for non-elective withdrawals and retroactive adds (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student's major is located. For AVT majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, Performing Arts Building A407.

## Course Outline (Subject to change)

**Workup Material** With each incremental deadline, students will turn in color proofs—full-sized and cut neatly (razor or Xacto and metal straight edge—no scissors!) to trim (and taped into spreads as appropriate), in an envelope that also contains adequate documentation of creative preparatory work. You should include several distinct concepts (I recommend eight), pencil or computer refinements of the chosen idea (I suggest four iterations), and at least one preliminary full color proof, trimmed and taped as the final (but clearly marked as preliminary). Missing components will result in a mark down that will effect your class grade (1/3 grade for each missing item).

**Week 1–3 Magazine Content Analysis.** Students will be randomly assigned two magazines which they are required to purchase. While magazines vary in look, purpose and style, almost all share structural similarities. You will note, for example, that nearly every magazine divides articles into sections. Generally, shorter items appear in the front and sometimes the back, (FOB, BOB) and longer pieces appear in the center "feature well." Consider how both magazines use typography, design and imagery, and how those choices appeal to each magazine's readers. The rich visual and editorial choices the magazine's staffs make form the personality or "brand" of each magazine. Come to the next class prepared to discuss specific features of each design and how the design relates to content. To make an effective presentation, you will have to both read and look at the magazines to understand how the personality and intent of the content is reflected in the design.

01/20

Monday: introduction to class and first assignment, *Read: Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2.*

**Magazine Content Part II: Mash-Up.** Using the same two magazines as for the first assignment, design a feature story for one in the style of a feature from the other. You should not imitate an existing feature, but seek to simulate how magazine “A” might handle “B’s” content. Text and headlines should be real (you may find text and images on the internet, but be sure that any images you choose are adequate resolution for print), Length: minimum 5pp, but be guided by how your magazine “packages” its features. Strive for a similar density of text and ratio of text and images across pages. Note that this project has two principle purposes: to give you experience with a well-defined and effective magazine design and to help improve your design craft skills by forcing you to imitate subtleties of typography and to learn how to get the software to produce results that you might not otherwise attempt—as always with design details matter! Accomplishing both goals will require careful attention and imitation of your source material’s format. While you may not find exact typographical matches, you are expected to build your design with reasonably close alternatives. You will be downgraded for errors in page size, margin, leading, grid, text size, and fit of text.

01/25, 26

Monday: Presentation of research results. Intro to Lexus-Nexus and other library and internet text and image sources. Wednesday: Lecture on long-form documents, defining colors in Quark. Work time. *Read: Chapters 27, 28, 33.*

02/1, 3

Monday: studio time, introduction of redesign assignment. Wednesday: critique of Mashup. *Read: Chapters 4, 5, 8, 9.*

**Week 4–11 Editorial Redesign.** Our major project this semester will be a complete overhaul of a magazine, or an “editorial redesign.” While this may seem like a lot of time to accomplish a small goal, as you have already seen, a magazine format is a complex, carefully balanced machine with lots of components. A vast number of decisions go into a magazine format, which relate to obvious design decisions—type, color, grid, budget—but also the less obvious, how information is distributed and presented within sections. Many redesigns go farther—considering what sections might be enhanced, reduced, eliminated, or added, as well as the overall tone or voice of the magazine. A redesign can be done with an eye towards making the magazine appeal to a younger or wealthier audience, it may be intended to make the magazine seem more serious, or more approachable, it may attempt to use art or photography more effectively. You will start this project with a magazine that you believe is “broken”—severely in need of improvement or updating. For this reason, it is recommended that you do **not** choose a major “supermarket” newsstand magazine (like *People*, *Vogue* or *Esquire*). Once you have a magazine that should function better, your first step will be the creation of a list of at least 20 substantive bullet points that point to why the magazine is not working and how it might be repaired and updated so as to better serve its users—the readers and advertisers. (Some redesigns also take budget, production efficiency and staff into account.) While the choice of magazine is yours (subject to approval), before settling on a project, it’s recommended that you research the availability of imagery and text for your topic. Pick a topic that lends itself to a variety of stories and images. (While there are magazines about cell phones and guns, these objects look identical to one another except to enthusiasts. The resulting magazine will likely be visually tedious.) Your final project will include a revised version of your proposal, three separate unique covers, a front news section (six pages) which includes at least two information/ASF components, a column (or POV) format (1 page), a second front section or back section with a different name, format and purpose (two pages min.), a two-page table of contents (two single pages or a spread), one long feature (five pages or more) and one short feature (two or three pages) (Both features must open with a spread.) for a total of 21 designed pages minimum. You must also turn in a copy of the published magazine. You are responsible for purchasing and reading the real magazine during the duration of this project. All pages must be printed in full size, full-color, trimmed neatly to bleed, and mounted on black mounting boards, which are logically organized and stacked in the order the pages would appear in the magazine.

As with any large project, it is anticipated that later design decisions will make it necessary to rethink ear-

lier decisions. Therefore, grades given over the course of the semester will be considered provisional. The 21 pages turned in at the end of the semester must be “of a piece.” Even though pages will be designed over time, all finals must make editorial and graphic sense when viewed together. The final grade may be adjusted up or down to reflect how well the final magazine works as a complete solution. Your final must be turned in with supporting files (all page files, art (including native Illustrator files when applicable), and typefaces) You may use Quark’s or InDesign’s “gather for output” feature to collect these in a single place. Your disk(s) must also include PDFs of every page, as reader (not printer) spreads.

**Your disk will not be returned to you. Retain all files separately for your records.**

- 02/8, 11                    Monday: Final mashup critique, Turn in: Mashup trimmed and taped into spreads, at least one preliminary print, disk, and your magazines. Wednesday: magazine branding, color, type, pacing. Field trip to library periodical room. *Read: Chapters 11, 12 and 14 (14 will give you ideas for your bullet points) and the Writing for Designers* handout from [jandos.com/forstudents](http://jandos.com/forstudents).
- 02/15, 17                    Monday: Magazine choice due, inclass assignment  
*Read: Chapters 13 and 20.*
- 02/22, 24                    Monday: Studio time, prelim. critique of body and color. Wednesday: Lecture: Magazine Newsbriefs—structure: Briefs: signage, grids, points of entry. *Read: Chapters 25 and 29.*
- 03/01, 02                    Monday: Lecture on covers. Color and body due, work time, Wednesday: small group critique of progress on NEWSBRIEFS Wednesday. *Read: Chapters 3, 6 and 7.*
- 03/08, 09                    SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS
- 03/15, 17                    Monday: lecture on ASFs, Studio time. Wednesday: preliminary NEWSBRIEFS due. *Read: Chapters 18 and 30.*
- 03/22, 25                    Monday: studio time. Wednesday: small-group critiques of covers in progress. *Read: Chapters 22 and 23.*
- 03/29, 31                    Monday: lecture on feature design, studio time. Wednesday: preliminary cover finals due. *Read: Chapter 31.*
- 04/05, 07                    Monday: lecture on the art budget, studio time. Wednesday: small-group critiques of features and ASFs in progress. *Read: Chapters 17, 21 and 26.*
- 04/12, 15                    Monday: lecture on columns, work day. Wednesday, Final critique of preliminary features. *Read: Chapters 18 and 30.*

**Week 13–16:** Create missing sections, final tightening and reconciliation of design. While that may seem like a lot to get done in two weeks (and you may start earlier) if you have laid your groundwork, you will have a good feel for your magazine, and the last sections will go quickly.

- 04/19, 21                    Monday: Preliminary feature due, Wednesday: work day.
- 04/26, 28                    Monday: lecture on options for final presentation, studio time. Wednesday: optional studio time, small-group critiques of column and/or second feature.
- 05/03                         **Final due, final critique, NO EXTENSIONS.** Have a great summer!

## FAQ's and section criteria

*A magazine can seem overwhelming if you think about it all once. Don't worry, we will be taking the project on one piece at a time in a systematic and organized way. This section is intended to act as a reference for some of the most common questions that come up outside of class, and to provide guidance as you plan your sections:*

- 1. How big is the canvas?** Magazines are composed of both single pages (generally printed opposite a full page advertisement) and spreads. The unit of design changes accordingly. Two pages of editorial content that publish opposite each other should be designed to look good and function well together. The staffs of magazines also think carefully about how editorial pages look next to advertisements and the pacing and order of stories. Some students, at their option, create magazines with gate folds.
- 2. Can I use ads? Do I have to design the ads?** You need not include ads, but may wish to, both to control the pacing of your content or to avoid designing extra pages for sections with an odd page count). The ad is almost always placed on the right-hand page. The exception to this rule is when a single page starts a new section or feature. Generally section starts are (like covers) right-hand pages. While you may incorporate ads you should not design them yourself, and no extra credit is given for ad design. In any event, you need not think about ads at all until you are preparing the final. We will discuss where to get ads (if you need them) at the end of the semester. The use of "fractional" or partial-page ads is not permitted for this project.
- 3. How do I layout a feature?** Usually feature stories are given a "splashy" start—a two page spread with little or no body text on either page. Both of your features must start with a two page spread. Typically, there are more pictures at the beginning of a feature story, more text at the end. Texts of 1800–8000 words are appropriate for features, but don't go by word count alone. A good guide for feature design is the ratio of text to space. Without images, headlines, or other display type, your text should fill no more than half (or a little less) of your usable space.
- 4. What are the criteria for the briefs section?** The briefs or news section in a modern magazine presents a variety of small, often witty and usually entertaining items. Briefs pages most often resemble newspaper pages, but because magazine pages are small, the writing must be very tight and to-the-point. Your brief section must have at least 14 articles however, one page must have only a single article. No single brief item may be longer than 150 words.
- 5. Can I edit my text, and does it have to really be from my magazine?** You may edit—prune, write more, combine articles, etc. to help make editorial content fit your needs. However, your text must read well—indiscriminate cutting, duplicating or repeating text, or using random text or "greeking" will result in a reduced or failing grade. Text must be appropriate for your magazine, but need not be from it. It is critical to find good, engaging articles—Good writing inspires good design. FOR THIS REASON, YOU ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE READ ALL YOUR ARTICLES. All art must illustrate the actual story on the page. Look at Lexus-Nexus, editorial (not Wikipedia) and other library text sources for content.
- 6. How can I make a two-page TOC—my magazine is only 20 pages long.** Most magazines have between 60 and several hundred editorial pages per month—far more than you will be designing during this class. However, because a magazine redesign is meant to show a client what the issue would look like once in production, your table of contents must reflect the full content of a complete issue—*not just the pages you have designed*. Likewise, your three covers should have completely different images and text from one another—your goal is to demonstrate the range of graphic possibilities for the magazine.
- 7. Why do I have to create infographics?** The "alternative story forms" or "information graphics" are an important part of your magazine, and the ability to create these is an increasingly important skill for designers to have. Therefore, it pays to pay attention to how graphics are used to tell stories in print and on line sooner rather than later. Your infographic must be fully authored by you, and you must include source files

for it to be counted towards your final grade. All text labels should be set in InDesign, Quark or Illustrator. Note that your infographic should tell a compelling story on its own—a reader should understand it without having to read other text on the page. It may be included to support a story, but magazines are increasingly using infographics as stand-alone pieces. Note that your infographics must actually be informational. vague, dataless, or allegorical iconography does not count.

**8. Do I have to use templates and style sheets?** We will spend a lot of time in class discussing style sheets and templates—reflective of their importance in design and production environments like magazines, newspapers and design firms. Use of style sheets and templates (along with the elimination of extraneous text frames) enforces consistency and thoughtful, disciplined design, all of which makes the final more professional and polished. Many student who receive reduced grades in craft categories could avoid those mark-downs with more attention to grid consistency, style consistency and text frame management.