



## art297h Information Design

Section:	1
Course Number:	298973
Credits:	3
Time:	M/W 9:05-11:00am , Spring 2001
Location:	Lederle Lowrise GRC, Room 126 University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Professor:	Copper Giloth giloth@oit.umass.edu
Teaching Associate:	Ana Maria Campos amcampos@art.umass.edu
Staff Consultants:	Fred Zinn, Kate Hudson, Michelle Turre, Doris Peterson

### Course Description

This is an interdisciplinary studio seminar class based on creative learning techniques. We will explore the history, nature and methods of designing information as a practice of crafting message and meaning in the arts and sciences.

Designing information makes knowledge understandable and easy to use. This course will encourage visual thinking and collaborative studio methods as we explore various models of exchanging and presenting ideas. Topics covered include building the creative environment, individual and collaborative visual thinking, applied information design, and visualization techniques. We will brainstorm (scribble, draw, photograph, and build), research, plan, critique, prototype, implement, and test our ideas. You are encouraged to visualize your final projects as temporal and spatial experiences.

These projects will take the form of:

- (1) In-class exercises exploring the nature of content development, visual language, human perception, iconography and symbol, and
- (2) Out of class individual and collaborative projects which build on the dynamics of designing information with careful consideration of content, human perception, clarity of meaning, visual language (color, form, texture, location, time, and space), and presentation.

You will use your visual thinking skills in close observation, sketching, flow chart development, storyboarding, diagramming, mapping, and three-dimensional modeling. As the course develops you will learn information collection and presentation methods and design tools to assist you as you build and design your well-considered information. (This software includes but is not limited to Microsoft Excel, Adobe Illustrator, Macromedia Flash (optional), Macromedia Dreamweaver (optional), and any other software you would like to learn on your own time.

Final projects will draw from your created materials and ongoing lectures as you work in project teams to create prototypes and models for larger information design projects. These projects might take form as static, progressive, interactive, and/or spatial models



## Course Objectives

This course is an introduction to the breadth of historic and contemporary information design principles and practices with a focus on visual thinking and collaborative invention. With in-class exercises and demonstrations, you will evaluate your own learning and thinking habits while clarifying individual and collaborative connections between content, meaning, and representation. We will develop personal and group brainstorming skills, learn to integrate imaginative play with planning and creation, and explore the process of bringing larger-scale design projects from concept to final prototype. We will explore the notion that the design of information is meant to educate, interest, and edify, simply.

In the duration of the course we will complete 9 small projects during the first half of the semester. We will then move to one large term project that will take the remainder of the course to complete. The course will end with final presentations and project evaluations.

Projects 1 to 5 will focus on:

1. research and survey skills
2. content development
3. collaboration,
4. visual thinking and human perception, and
5. the human interface.

Projects 6-9 will focus on:

6. iconography, symbol, and sign
7. a brief introduction to data collection, development and analysis
8. tutorial: Adobe Illustrator
9. graphs, diagrams, maps, and spatial models.

The term project is a group project in which you will work in collaboration to plan, conceptualize, build, and critique static, progressive, or spatial information designs of your choice. We will hold weekly 15-minute presentation/critique sessions at each assigned step of your project development.

The final two weeks will be spent in the presentation and peer evaluation of these projects.



### Grading

- 28% Discussion, in-class activities, group participation, self evaluation, and attendance.
- 27% Assignments 1-9
- 35% Term project development and presentation
- 10 % Term project evaluations

The term project accounts for 45% of your grade. However, your success here rests heavily on the effort and consideration you will put into the first half of the course.

### Attendance/Absence

Attendance is critical, as there will be either a lecture, discussion or studio project to be completed in class. You are allowed **one unexcused absence**. Each unexcused absence beyond this will be a 5% reduction of your final grade. Absences are considered excused when accompanied by a notice from doctor, lawyer, dean, counselor, or advisor. Your knowledge of digital media is not a requirement for the first 1/3 – 1/4 of the course. However, workshop sessions during the second 1/3 of the course will cover basic spreadsheet software and Adobe Illustrator 9.0. If you miss these sessions it will be your responsibility to learn the material in your own time.

### Out of class work

Out-of-class assignments must be done in order to participate in discussion groups. A portion will be group-based and it is your responsibility to coordinate with your group outside of class-time.

You are encouraged to prototype your final projects for other digital media but it is not a requirement for the course. Learning the software and technology you would like to use for your final project is your responsibility and deadlines will not be extended.

### Lab times:

The lab will be open at least once per week in the evening for you to use. We will post these times both in the classroom and on the website during the first week of class.



How to access your course web account

Public Web Site: <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~art297h>

This site gives a general overview of the course for public review. There is also a link from this site allowing you to login to the Course WebCT site.

Accessing the Course WebCT Site:

<http://webct.oit.umass.edu:8900/>

The Course WebCT site is an evolving and collaborative repository of materials developed for the class. It holds important course materials, student notes and activities as well as a place for out-of-class group planning, discussion, and contact. Please familiarize yourself with WebCT by visiting the WebCT Student Resources page:

<http://www.umass.edu/webct/student/index.html>

You must also have an OIT account so that we can add you to the Course WebCT site class roster.

If you need an OIT account:

In order to access the course WebCT site you must be a University of Massachusetts Amherst or Five-college student enrolled in the course through the Commonwealth Honors College or the Department of Art.

1. Review the new account information page at:

OIT> Account Information: <http://www.oit.umass.edu/accounts/new.html>

2. Refer to this schedule for new account services

Mon - Fri; 29 Jan. - 2 Feb 9 AM-4:45 PM A107 LGRC Lowrise - all account services  
Mon-Fri; 5 Feb.-16 May 9AM - 4:45PM A118 LGRC Lowrise - all account services

3. Once you have an account and have registered for the course it will take approximately 2 days before you will be added to the WebCT roster. If, after this point you are unable to access the course, send an email to [amcampos@art.umass.edu](mailto:amcampos@art.umass.edu) or call 577-0072.



### Materials

- Notebook: 1 3" or 4" ring binder (this is mandatory, as you will have a tremendous amount of handouts and materials to store and keep track of.)
- Pencils: 1 set Staedtler drawing pencils of variable hardness.  
3 (minimum) colored pencils. (NOTE: When buying colored pencils, avoid the hard kind.)
- Pens: 1 nylon-tip pen (black)  
3-4 Gel micro or fine tip black pens
- Markers: 5 (minimum) Prismacolor felt tip markers (assorted colors)  
1 set large dry-erase markers - these can be shared between 2 or 3 people
- Paper: 1 large newsprint pad (18" x 24")  
1 large pad of grid-rule paper.  
1 hardcover drawing notebook.  
1-2 packages index cards
- Erasers: 1 pink pearl  
1 staedtler plastic eraser.
- Tools: 1 mat knife, 1 pair scissors, 1 24" ruler  
35mm camera or digital camera (not required)
- Digital: 2-100 megabyte zip disks  
OITUNIX account.

These materials, though necessary, are not a prerequisite to taking the course.



## Course Schedule 1/5

### Week 1

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January 31

- 09:05 - 09:20 Introductions
- 09:20 - 9:45 Syllabus/Course Site/Materials/UNIX Account/The Classroom
- 10:15 - 10:30 Questionnaire
- 10:30 - 10:50 Your Creative Environment - Exercises and Discussion
- 10:50 - 11:00 **Assignment 1 Survey. Due Monday.**

### Week 2

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February 5

- 09:05 - 09:15 Your Creative Environment - where do you want to be?
- 09:40 - 09:50 **Collect Assignment 1: Survey**
- 09:50 - 10:30 [Lecture 1a Shared Meaning](#)
- 10:30 - 10:50 Discussion: Content development as a location for invention
- 10:50 - 11:00 **Assignment 2: Research and Development Due Monday.**  
**For Wednesday: Word & picture associations outline**

February 7

- 09:05 - 10:00 Discussion: Low/High Content: Info from Questionnaire/Surveys
- 10:00 - 10:50 **Studio Session:** Drawing Exercises in Visual Thinking/Brainstorming.  
Introduction to Adobe Illustrator: Lines, Shapes and Fills. ScanningDemo.
- 10:50 - 11:00 Reminders: Content Assignment/Unix Accounts

### Week 3

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February 12

- 9:00 - 9:10 **Assignment 2 R&D Materials Due Today**
- 9:10-9:40 [Lecture 1b Shared Meaning](#)  
Existing models of collaborations
- 9:40-10:50 [Lecture 2 Collaboration.Kate Hudson.](#)
- 10:50-11:00 **Assignment 3: Collaboration**

February 14

- 9:05 - 10:20 **Assignment 2 R&D Brief Presentations Today**
- 10:20-10:50 [Lecture 3. What is Information Design, Really? - AM Campos](#)
- 10:50-11:00 **Assignment 4a Preparations for Visual Thinking Lecture**



## Course Schedule 2/5

### Week 4

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February 20

9:05- 10:30 **Lecture 4 Visual Thinking 1 - Fred Zinn**

10:30- 10:50 Exercises in Visual Thinking

10:50-11:00 **Assignment 4b Visual Thinking/Human Perception Due Feb 28.**

February 21

9:05-11:00 **Lecture 5 Visual Thinking 2 - Fred Zinn**

**Studio Session** : Visual Thinking and Human Perception

**Assignment 3a Collaboration Topics DUE TODAY**

### Week 5

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February 26

9:05 - 10:40 **Lecture 6: The Human Interface**

10:40 - 11:00 **Assignment 5: The Human Interface. Due: March 5.**

February 28

9:05 - 10:00 **Assignment 4ab Brief Presentations and Critique TODAY**

10:00-10:30 Overview of next 2 weeks and assign groups for term projects.

10:30-11:00 Initial Group Meetings for Term Projects

### Week 6

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March 5

9:05 – 9:40 **Assignment 5 Humane Interface Critique TODAY**

9:40-10:20 **Lecture 7: Iconography**

10:20-11:00 **Assignment 6: Iconography. Due March 12.**

March 7

9:05 – 11:00 **Lecture 8: Data Analysis and Collection. Exercises.**

Trina Hosmer and Eva Goldwater.

**Assignment 7: Data. Due: March 14.**



## Course Schedule 3/5

### Week 7

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March 12

9:05-11:00 [Lecture 9: Tools -Adobe Illustrator Workshop. Michelle Turre](#)  
[Assignment 8: Diagrams, Map, and Charts. Due March 28.](#)  
**Assignment 6: Iconography. DUE TODAY.**

March 14

9:05 – 11:00 **Studio:** Data  
**Assignment 7 Data. DUE TODAY.**  
Use these materials to begin to develop Assignment 8.

### Week 8

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March 17-23 SPRING BREAK

### Week 9

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March 26

9:05 – 9:15 Course Evaluations  
9:15- 10:00 [Lecture 10a 2-dimensional images](#)  
10:00–11:00 **Studio:** Group Meetings for Term Projects  
Phase 1: Content Development

March 28

9:05 – 10:00 **Studio:** Diagrams, Maps and Charts.  
10:20-11:00 [Lecture 10b: 2-dimensional images](#)

### Week 10

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April 2

9:05 – 11:00 **Assignment 8 Presentations:**  
**Diagrams Maps and Charts Critique TODAY**

April 4

9:05 – 9:30 [Lecture 11: Narrative](#)  
9:30-11:00 **Studio:** Group Sessions  
Phase 2: Analysis



## Course Schedule 4/5

### Week 11

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April 9

9:05 – 10:00 **Short Group Presentations: Phase 1 Content Development**  
10:00 – 11:00 **Peer Critique.**

April 11

9:05 – 9:40 **Lecture 12: 2-dimensional movement**  
9:40-11:00 **Studio:** Group Sessions  
Phase 3: Design

### Week 12

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April 16      No Class      Continue working on Phase 3: Design

April 18

9:05 – 10:00 **Short Group Presentations: Phase 2 Analysis**  
10:00 – 10:30 **Peer Critique**  
10:30 – 11:00 **Studio:** Phase 4: Development

### Week 13

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April 23

9:05 – 10:00 **Lecture 13: Interactivity**  
10:00 – 11:00 **Studio:** - Group Sessions Phases 3 and 4

April 25

9:05 – 10:00 **Short Group Presentations: Phase 3 Design**  
10:00 – 11:00 **Peer Critique**

### Week 14

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April 30

9:05 -9:40 **Lecture 14: 3-D Still: Sculpture, Installations, Modelling.**  
9:40-11:00 **Studio:** Phase 4 Development  
Phase 5: Prototypes



## Course Schedule 5/5

### Week 14

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May 2

9:05 – 10:15 **Short Group Presentations: Phase 4 Development**  
10:15- 10:45 **Peer Critique**  
10:45-11:00 **Studio:** Begin Phase 5: Prototypes and Presentation.

### Week 15

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May 7

9:05 – 9:30 **Lecture 15: 3D Kinetic/Progressive Space**  
9:30 – 11:00 **Studio:** Phase 5 Prototypes

May 9

9:05 – 9:30 **Lecture 16a: Architecture/Interior Design**  
9:30-11:00 **Studio:** Phase 5 Prototypes.

### Week 16

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May 14

9:05 – 9:40 **Lectures 16b Landscapes & 16c: Ways**  
10:00-11:00 **Studio:** Phase 5 Prototypes  
Prepare for Final Presentation

May 16

9:05 – 9:30 **Lecture 17 Visualizing Invisible and Imaginary Environments**  
9:30-11:00 **Studio:** Prepare for Final Presentations  
**Assignment 3B Collaboration Topics DUE TODAY**

### Week 17

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May 21 **Final Presentations and Critiques**  
May 23 **Final Presentations and Critiques**



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