

Autumn 2008

The University of Montana, Department of Art

## **ART 102A, section 02, Color and Design, 3 Credits**

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Prereq. or Co req., ART 101A/123A

Instructor: Kevin Bell

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00am-4:00pm

Meeting times: 8:10-10:00am, Tuesdays and Thursdays, FA 102

**Textbook:** Mary Stewart. Launching the Imagination: a Comprehensive Guide to Basic Design, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: McGraw Hill, 2008. Second edition may also be used.

**Course Description:** An introduction to the formal elements and principles of design, color theory, and predominant western and non-western historical styles. Emphasis on solving specific design problems.

**Course Objectives:** This course explores the fundamentals of two-dimensional visual communication. We will work through a series of assignments, exercises, critiques and readings that examine ideas central to all visually-based disciplines, from fine art to architecture to design (graphic, fashion, etc). No matter which career path or art major you choose, you will regularly draw on ideas of this course in your future artistic studies.

Two major themes will be repeatedly addressed throughout the term:

1. **Formal Elements and Principles of Design.** What is often called “Formalism” is a vocabulary that seeks to make sense and organize visual stimuli around us. In short, design **elements** include shape, value and color. Design **principles** guide how these elements are manipulated and organized, such as unity, emphasis, balance and rhythm (i.e., composition). If this was cooking, design elements might be considered ingredients, and design principles are the recipes for specific dishes.
2. **Materials and Process.** Every material and process has a different perspective and unique voice. Artists and designers often select a medium because of it can articulate an idea in a very particular way. Throughout the term we will also explore many different ways of working, including drawing, printing, painting, photography and collage, to begin to become familiar with each. Some assignments will ask you to select and combine several different ways of working.

**Format:** This is a studio course, and the majority of our time will involve working on projects. In your sketchbook, we will work through a variety of short exercises that reinforce important concepts. Periodically we will also work on larger culminating projects that pull many ideas together to address a larger idea or conceptual concern. During in-class studio time, I will work one-on-one with you to provide suggestions and help refine your solutions. In addition to class time, expect to spend five hours a week working outside of class. Your openness to taking chances, following unexpected new directions and engage seriously and creatively with each assignment is essential for your success. Do not be satisfied with your first idea or the easiest solution.

In addition to exercises and assignments, we will use other way to understand concepts: Class critiques will be held at the end of major assignments to give you feedback and allow you to see other student’s solutions. In periodic lectures, I will highlight major features of subject to be

explored in subsequent class exercises. Regular required readings will further flesh-out important ideas and concepts.

**Grading and Assessment:**

**Exercises (30% of grade).** Exercises are short explorations to help you become familiar with a concept, and will be completed in class. If you wish to spend extra time to complete, by all means do so, but exercises must be turned in on the subsequent class.

**Projects (50% of Grade)** Projects are longer, more sustained pieces that bring together several concepts, and require additional time outside of class. Because each assignment builds on the previous one, it is essential that you complete each on time. During regular critiques (held after each project is due, and occasionally after some exercises) we will discuss your work. It is important to have your solution ready to be considered to aid discussion. Late work (turned in AFTER the subsequent class) will be marked down a full grade. Work turned in any later than the next week will not count towards your grade.

**Reading Assignments (each quiz worth 5% of grade).** There are weekly reading assignments, which should be completed usually before the Monday of each class. These readings are deceptive, as they seem fairly short with lots of illustrations. You must read them carefully and completely, however, to fully understand the subtleties and nuance of each concept. Do not try to read them quickly on the way to class as you will miss important ideas, and do not be afraid to make notes, arrows, underlines in your text! There will be three quizzes throughout the term on this material.

**Class Participation (10% of grade).** For critiques to be interesting and helpful, your participation is vital. Come with completed assignments and be ready to ask questions, make comments and give responses. An honest discussion is very important, but care must also be taken to respect difference of opinion.

Each assignment will have general and specific grading criteria. General criteria include:

- Did you understand the point of the assignment and worked towards exploring all aspects of it?
- Does your work represent a significant amount of effort, thought and time on your part? Although a simple solution is sometimes the most effective, it is easy to tell if your work was well considered or just quickly created.
- Did you push yourself to find an original, unique or surprising solution or were you satisfied with something more predictable and obvious?
- Is your final product neat and carefully presented free of unwanted folds and smudges. When you turn in a piece for review, you are asking us to consider everything you put before us. If an unintentional fingerprint is on your work I will consider it part of what you wish to convey. I am by nature a messy person, and sympathize with others of a similar disposition. If I can create work that is neat and professional, so can you.
- Does your work consider all applicable design concepts explored so far? Keep in mind all that we explore during the term and try to use what you know to help strengthen the impact of your designs.

**Attendance:** Success in this class is based on your active engagement, either by completing explorations in class or participating in critiques and discussions. It is almost impossible to replicate much of the content outside of class. Although it is important to attend all classes, I will allow up to three absences without penalty. Each absence over three will result in a grade

lowered by half a point (example: from B to B-). Leaving early or arriving last will also affect your grade. It is your responsibility to find out what was missed and if any assignments are due.

**Student Conduct Code:** “All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://life.umt.edu/VPSA/name/StudentConductCode>.”

**Disabling Condition:** If you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to successfully complete this course, please confer with the instructor.

**Withdrawal Policy:** Specifics available at this web address:  
<http://www2.umt.edu/catalog/acpolpro.htm>

**Health and Safety:** The UM Art Department uses environmentally sound methods. Required materials from your supply list are in compliance, with the exception of spray fixative. Spray fixative is **not** to be used in the building at any time. Please use fixative outdoors and sparingly. You are individually responsible for clean up at the end of each session in this classroom (either in or out of class time). No creatures or children will be allowed in the studios during class time or open studio times. No food or beverage containers will be allowed in the Art Department facilities when art-making is in progress. All art work must be picked up by the Monday after finals week or it will be discarded.

**Building Access:** The use of studio space requires current enrollment in a specific studio course, as course fees are used to purchase supplies. Those not currently enrolled will be asked to leave. Building hours are 7:00am to 11:00pm daily. Fridays are open studio day in the art building—no classes are scheduled.

**Art Student Collective:** The collective is a student –organized and student-led group that sponsors art-related workshops, events, and the Annual Juried Student Art Show. Members meet in FA 304 Mondays at 12:15pm. Everyone is invited to bring a sack lunch and join in!

**Events in the Department:** <http://umartdepartment.wordpress>