ARTZ 108A.01: Visual Language - 3D Foundations

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ARTZ 108A Visual Language: 3-D Design
Sec. 01 3Hrs Credit
CRN: 70895
Fall 2023

Instructor: Brad Allen, Professor of Art
Course Hours: M,W: 10-11:50 am
Office Hours: M, 1-2 pm, Th Zoom 1-2 pm
Shop Hours: More info within the next week
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School of Visual and Media Art
The University of Montana
Readings will be class supplements from the Recommended Text:
Launching the Imagination, by Mary Stewart, ISBN: 0-07-287873-8
And, the design way, by Nelson and Stolterman, ISBN: 9780262526708

Course Outline

Three-Dimensional Design will introduce students to the fundamental dialogs that are ongoing in the conception, production and assessment of three-dimensional design. To design in space, we must first have an awareness of the possibilities within different types of space. We must be aware of basic design strategies, including how to prototype and choose materials. We will look at how these design concerns effect communication, aesthetics and function. Another primary goal of the class is to increase everyone’s awareness of their own opinions and attitudes towards design, art, creativity and process. We will practice 3D design and discuss/critique these designs. We will cultivate the ability to concisely deliver these opinions in both written and spoken form. The importance of a daily dialog with both faculty and peers cannot be stressed enough and will be one of your most vital learning tools this semester. In addition to direct practice above we will learn about design traditions and explore parallel fields that have similar processes and strategies. Also at its core, the course is about problem-solving, critical thinking, prioritization and systematic risk taking.

Outcomes:

Outcome #1:

Students will have a functional awareness of different design fields and explore 3D design strategies within each of (3) distinct types of space.
Outcome #2:
Students will have practiced 3D design strategies and gained skills in manipulating materials, construction, aesthetics, some 3d modeling, and some AI prompting.

Outcome #3:
Students will practice and hone skills in problem-solving and critical thinking, bolstered by identifying these skills applications while in use.

Outcome #4:
Students will be able to articulate the intent of their designs, what content is present, what design elements are present, and if context is important to the function or experience of their work.

Outcome #5:
Students will exit the class ready to:
1. Go into Sculpture or Ceramics courses and further develop skills/content
2. Apply 3D design strategies in digital and immersive coursework in Media Arts tracks
3. Break problems down with prioritization and inquiry
4. Execute strategies of action to iterate and formulate solutions
5. Receive and give feedback to others
6. Discuss ideas, visual elements, and convergent/divergent thought

Means:
This course will use a combination of means to explore the above content:
Videos and Readings,
(two) Quizzes,
(two) Unevaluated Exercises,
(12) Evaluated Projects, most with formal critiques, and daily informal guidance.

What we’re up against
It is true that three-dimensional objects can be hard to make. Its challenging because it involves designing objects from every perceivable angle, all at once. This is different than designing a 2-D work like a painting, which utilizes its picture plane as a frontal device. It is challenging because in most cases the materials you will work with are more demanding physically than pixels, paint, pencil or camera, in that they bear the same compositional malleability with the added element of spatial physicality and inherent material structures. The tools you will be instructed to use are potentially dangerous if mishandled and require attention and practice.

We will begin by building terminology and models to share on this topic. It will include many of the definitions in Mary Stewart’s “Launching the Imagination”. I will post all of the relevant definitions on Moodle. You will be quizzed on these terms in the Module on Objects and Form. Think of these elements not as hard rules to be followed, but instead as reference points to be considered when iterating around an idea. Volume, Mass, Line, Contour, Plane, Balance, Void, Surface, Contrast, Scale, and Proportion are my favorites and you will hear them used weekly in class, so know them! Beyond this, we will constantly be probing how each of you conceives ideas before any material is altered. We will work to clear away all the “bias and baggage” from your ideas to make sure they are as concise and potent as possible. We will gauge how each piece communicates your ideas in the form of critiques and exhibition.

Regarding color: We all have the responsibility of choosing the right color for our 3D designs, regardless of surface, scale, or material. Color should aid your design goals, not be indifferent to them.

Regarding material: We will work in different processes this semester, using many materials to carry out these processes. These include wood, glues, abrasives, fasteners, fabric, found objects, wire, clays, etc. It is very important that you pay attention to the literature that will precede each project in that week’s project prompt. This will contain instructions on how to use all the materials and tools involved safely, as any hazards will be well documented. The Moodle supplement should be consulted regularly.

In turn we will go over all of this information prior to beginning each project. Each project will be logged online at the ARTZ 108A.01 Moodle site. Next week please mail me if you are having difficulty accessing Moodle and I will send you the correct links.
1. Attendance is mandatory. Three unexcused absences are allowed; every absence thereafter results in the lowering of one letter grade per absence. In online coursework, attendance is clicking into links, fields and posting on forums. I can see all this activity in Moodle.

2. Excused absences have two forms: Death in the immediate family, and, Ill to the point of visiting a doctor’s office, where you will need a note documenting that on prescription paper.

3. Your projects are due on the due date given. Attendance at critique is mandatory. Not speaking in critique is much like not attending (from the perspective of making each other better). Participation in these discussions is required, however, let me know if there are any anxiety or other medical issues that make talking in a group difficult.

4. When we are discussing your ideas for a project it is mandatory that you have done preliminary sketches or models of the idea to aid in this dialogue. This will help you articulate the main characteristics of your project and will allow me to foresee any construction problems not highlighted in a verbal discussion.

5. Consider that you have shared studio space. The tools used here, are shared as well. Return them in the same condition, or better. Clean up your work area thoroughly before leaving. Stewardship of the space this semester will be a shared priority.

6. You will be required to solve problems in the form of 3D projects throughout the course of the semester to earn your grade. Iterating through different design options will become our norm. Nobody gets the design perfect the first time. Iteration is more valuable that inherent skill.

7. For each assignment there is a project prompt that outlines the objectives and parameters, located in your Moodle supplement. Additional research should be undertaken to gather insight into possible solutions for the assigned problems.
8. Each student must keep some form of a sketchbook to chronicle their many solutions to the problems given as well as day-to-day interests and outside of class projects.

**Assessment & Grades**

At the beginning of each project, you are given a problem to solve using the design tools that have been identified. Your solution to the problem should embody the basic principles of three-dimensional design and will be assessed based on your understanding and implementation of those elements. A schedule for the semester’s modules and due dates is in Moodle.

**Additional Health and Safety Concerns:**

Pick-up of artwork must take place prior to the final scheduled exam day or the last class period. Projects remaining after this time will be discarded. If I have to throw your artwork away because you didn’t like it well enough to take it, how should that effect your grade? Before students use any power tools or equipment, they must complete the safety demo for those tools, which will be given at the beginning of each applicable project. Access to specialized equipment and tools will be addressed on an individual basis.

Should anyone have special considerations or needs that require my support or attention, please do not hesitate to inform me at the beginning of the course, or as soon as these needs arise. In addition to the safety seminar, we are producing a tool safety and usage summary sheet, and a general Open IF rules list that will be posted by the door, front desk, and prototyping area.

**Required “studio time” outside of class time per week:**

You will need to put in some (1-5) design hours as “homework time” in addition to the scheduled class time for every 3-credit studio art course. We will have some “work” time in class for each project, but solid iteration takes time. Students seeking an high letter grade in the course, and/or, seeking the most possible growth should prepare to be in Open IF at least 1-5 hours per week additional.
Academic Misconduct and the 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 www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/Index.cfm/page/1321.

3D Design, 108A.01 Course Calendar

September
4M Labor Day, no classes
6W Access Intro Mod, questions about syllabus, Intros, work on Intro project
11M Deadline to finish Intro Mod, start Mod 1 lecture
13W Working through Mod 1 in class
18M Deadline to present Mod 1 projects, and Take Quiz
20W Start Mod 2: Space lecture, readings and online quiz when ready
25M Finish Quiz Mod 2, start Mod 3: Modeling/Prototypes, lecture
27W Continue Mod 3, work on Mod 3 projects

October
2M Critique Mod 3 projects,
4W start Mod 4: Physical Space lecture
9M Critique Mod 4 project, start Mod 5: Digital Space
11W start Mod 5: Digital Space, lecture, demo
16M Critique project Mod 5,
18W Start Mod 6: Theoretical Space, lecture, contribute to Forum for Mod 6
23M Critique Mod 6 project,
25W Start Mod 7: Form/Objects, lecture, elements workshop
30M Critique Mod 7 prototype series

November
1W Start Mod 8: Material, lecture
6M Critique finished Mod 8 project
8W Start Mod 9: Content/Context lecture
13M Critique Mod 9 project
15W Start Mod 10: Experiences lecture, demonstration
20M Critique Mod 10 project, start Mod 11: Fashion online video and readings
22W-26 No Classes, Thanksgiving Holiday
27M  Critique Mod 11 project
29W  Start Mod 12: Utility, lecture

December
4M  Critique Mod 12 projects
6W  Upload images of your 4 best designs of the semester to Moodle forum
8F  Last day of regular classes

8-10Am, Tuesday 12th:
During our final, we’ll generate written feedback for everyone’s 4 best.

15W  Finish Course Evaluations by this date in the Moodle platform.

Activity Summary:
-12 total evaluated projects, 10 pts each
-2 Quizzes, 10 points
-12 critiques of peer work/forums, 2 points each
-Faculty feedback on each project