ARTH 4842 – History of Communication Design
Spring 2023, 3 credits
Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:00–3:20 PM, ART 223

Professor Contact Information
Carey Gibbons
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Teaching Assistants
Abigail Meyer: abigailmeyer@my.unt.edu
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(TA for Akram – Heath)
Susan Stringfellow: susanstringfellow@my.unt.edu
Office hours: Mondays 12:30–1:30 PM, Art Building 221
(TA for Hernandez – Zantua)

Course description
This course presents an overview of visual communications, focusing on designs from the late-19th century through the 21st century and emphasizing their relevance to the design world of today and contemporary society. Key movements, designers, their visual languages, and changing technologies will be considered within the broader social, political, and economic contexts. Significance will be placed on the decision-making processes that have informed and influenced the discipline in theory and practice around the world since the 19th century, and on the impact that past developments are having on current trends and might have in the future.
Prerequisite(s): ART 2350, ART 2360, and ART 2370; or consent of instructor.

Course structure & content
This class meets in person. Make sure you do your readings and required work before our class days. Readings will be supplemented by lectures, student presentations, discussions (primarily on Canvas discussion boards), and occasional activities (in class and on Canvas) throughout the semester. I have included a course schedule of topics
and readings in this syllabus, but be sure to check your email and Canvas regularly for adjustments to the schedule.

Readings include a mixture of chapters from your textbook and other sources, including selections from books, articles from newspapers and blogs, and scholarly journal articles. There will also be some video clips assigned. I have included both primary and secondary sources. Although this course is an art history course, you will engage with the broad field of visual culture.

Course objectives
• Students will demonstrate an understanding of both formal and conceptual issues that have shaped communication design and its discourses, particularly since the 19th century.
• Students will reach an understanding of the relevance of historical examples of communication design on contemporary practice and society.
• Students will be able to position design production within a broader field, understood as both reflecting and shaping political, economic, social, cultural, and technological developments.
• Students will apply the vocabulary and analytical skills needed to conduct research, think critically about the course content, and present conclusions thoughtfully in verbal and written form.
• Studio students will be able to analyze how meaning and value are constructed and mediated over time and recognize their own work within the context of a historical and cultural framework.

Course disclaimer
Content in the arts and design can sometimes include works, situations, actions, and language that can be personally challenging or offensive to some students on the grounds, for example, of sexual explicitness, violence, or blasphemy. We will sometimes encounter examples of harmful stereotypes, racially insensitive images, and expressions of cultural and racial superiority. As the College of Visual Arts and Design is devoted to the principle of freedom of expression, artistic and otherwise, it is not the college’s practice to censor these works or ideas on any of these grounds. Students who might feel unduly distressed or made uncomfortable by such expressions should withdraw at the start of the term and seek another course.

Course materials
The following textbook is required:

You can either purchase a printed, hard copy or the e-book version. There are some hard copies available in the UNT bookstore. There is also a hard copy of the book on course reserve at the Willis Library for 2-hour checkout. You can purchase the e-book or a hard copy of the book on the publisher’s website here: https://www.wiley.com/en-us/Meggs%27+History+of+Graphic+Design%2C+6th+Edition-p-9781119136231

The book is also available through Amazon and other online booksellers. You might consider renting the book rather than buying if you are concerned about the cost.

The other readings come from a variety of sources and will be available through the Willis Library course reserves and/or posted on Canvas. The password for our e-reserves is ARTH4842. You are expected to do the assigned readings before class. I will occasionally adjust our schedule of topics to accommodate extra discussion or in-class activities.

These books are not required but are recommended:
- Steven Heller and Véronique Vienne, *100 Ideas that Changed Graphic Design* (London: Laurence King, 2012). (available as an e-book through UNT Libraries)

There are also a number of helpful online resources for the study of communication design history that can be found on Canvas.

**Technical assistance**
At UNT we have an IT Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.
Email: helpdesk@unt.edu
Live Chat: https://it.unt.edu/helpdesk/chatsupport
Phone: 940-565-2324
In Person: Sage Hall, Room 330
Hours and Availability: Visit https://it.unt.edu/helpdesk for up-to-date hours and availability.

**Acceptable Student Behavior**
Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct.

**Rules of Engagement**
Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. These rules will be factored into your final participation grade. Here are some general guidelines:
• While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.
• Treat your instructor and classmates with respect, even when their opinion differs from your own.
• Speak from personal experiences. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individual’s experiences.
• Use your critical thinking skills to respectfully challenge other people’s ideas, instead of attacking individuals.

Student Support Services
UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:
• Student Health and Wellness Center (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center)
• Counseling and Testing Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
• UNT Care Team (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care)
• UNT Psychiatric Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry)
• Individual Counseling (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling)

Other student support services offered by UNT include
• Registrar (https://registrar.unt.edu/registration)
• Financial Aid (https://financialaid.unt.edu/)
• Student Legal Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)
• Career Center (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)
• Multicultural Center (https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center)
• Pride Alliance (https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance)
• UNT Food Pantry (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry)

Academic Support Services
• Academic Resource Center (https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)
• Academic Success Center (https://success.unt.edu/asc)
• UNT Libraries (https://library.unt.edu/)
• Writing Lab (http://writingcenter.unt.edu/)
• MathLab (https://math.unt.edu/mathlab)
Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences
According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Accommodation Statement
UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Emergency Notification & Procedures
UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Survivor Advocacy
UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT’s Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim’s compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of
Students Office at 940-565-2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at 940-565-2759.

Course Requirements & Grade Distribution
Attendance & Participation: 15%
Team Oral Presentations: 5%
Quiz (multiple choice) over pre-19th century material covered: 5%
Special Collections-related assignment: 5%
Midterm Exam (multiple choice): 10%
Midterm Essay responses: 15%
Final Exam (multiple choice, only on content covered since the midterm): 15%
Final Project: 30%

Attendance & Participation
Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. Your Attendance & Participation grade will be lowered by one full letter grade for more than 3 unexcused absences. An excused absence is granted if you are ill or have an urgent reason for being unable to attend class. Appropriate documentation is required (i.e. a doctor’s note or proof of a positive Covid test). It is important that you communicate with me or the TA who has been assigned to you prior to being absent so we can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Excessive tardiness will count as an absence (3 late arrivals=1 unexcused absence). Do not leave the class while it is in session unless you have an urgent reason.

It is required that each student come to class having completed the required reading and any assignments. You are also expected to participate in any in-class activities that are assigned. Failure to do so will negatively affect your Attendance & Participation grade.

Although we will have some discussion during class, the class is primarily lecture-based. However, I will post questions on Canvas discussion boards for you to answer. Regular participation on these discussion boards will ensure that you receive a good Attendance & Participation grade.

No cell phones shall be visible or audible in the classroom after class begins unless there is an emergency. If you are seen using a phone repeatedly during class without permission, your Attendance & Participation grade will suffer.
**Group Oral Presentations**
You will be assigned to groups of 5 and provided with different topics on which to present. The date your team will present can be seen on the course schedule below. You are expected to show a presentation with slides when you present and determine which team member(s) will be speaking in advance. An “A” presentation is focused, clear, well-organized, engaging, thoughtful, accurate, and informed by research and analysis. You must submit your slides, a bibliography, and a list of responsibilities for each team member on Canvas. See the Assignment instructions on Canvas for more details.
Note: I am open to alternative presentation formats (i.e. a song, video, performance), but you must ask me for permission in advance!

**Special Collections Assignment**
You will view Special Collections materials in room 443 on the 4th floor of the Willis Library during the third week in February and complete a writing assignment. More details to follow shortly.

**Quiz & Exams**
You will have a multiple choice quiz on pre-19th-century material that will be completed independently on Canvas. The quiz will become available at 3:30 pm on Wed., February 1 and will be due by Mon., February 6 at 12:00 pm.

There will be a multiple choice Midterm Exam that you complete on Canvas from 2:00–3:20 pm (during class time) on Wed., March 8. You will also have to complete responses to 2 Midterm Essay questions (450–750 words each). The questions will become available on Mon., March 6 at 12:00 PM and will be due by 11:59 PM on Friday, March 10.

There will be a multiple choice Final Exam on Canvas on Mon., May 8 from 1:30–3:30 PM.

On the quiz, multiple choice exams, and essays, you are not allowed to collaborate with other students or individuals, but you are allowed to consult readings, notes, and other research sources.

**Final Project**
You will have options for your final project, including a research paper (8–10 pages), creative writing project, virtual exhibition, podcast episode, or walking tour. I will
provide you with detailed instructions, and your topic must be approved by me by 11:59 PM on Wed., April 12. The assignment is due by Mon., May 1 at 12:00 PM. A letter grade will be deducted from the final project grade for each day past the deadline if you are late.

**Grading**
A: 90% course average or above. Excellent work produced throughout the semester.
B: 80% course average or above. Good work produced throughout the semester.
C: 70% course average or above. Fair work produced throughout the semester.
D: 60% course average or above. Passing work produced throughout the semester.
F: Failure

**COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS (subject to revision)**

**WEEK 1 – Wed., January 18**
Syllabus review/Introduction to the course; How should we study communication design history?

Required readings:

Recommended readings:

**WEEK 2 – Mon., January 23 & Wed., January 25**
How should we study communication design history? (cont.); Prologue to Communication Design: The Visual Message from Prehistory through the Medieval Era

Required readings:
• Meggs, Chapters 1–4

**WEEK 3 – Mon., January 30 & Wed., February 1**
A Graphic Renaissance: The Origins of European Typography and Design for Printing
Presentation Group 1 (on Feb. 1)

Required readings:
• Meggs, Chapters 5–8

Assignment: Canvas multiple choice quiz available at 3:30 pm on Wed., February 1; due by Mon., February 6 at 12:00 pm.

**WEEK 4 – Mon., February 6 & Wed., February 8**
The Industrial Revolution; The Arts and Crafts Movement and Its Heritage
Presentation Groups 2 (on Feb. 6) & 3 (on Feb. 8)
Canvas quiz must be completed by Mon., February 6 at 12:00 pm.

Required readings:
• Meggs, Chapters 9 & 10
• Linda M. Waggoner, “‘Her Greatest Work Lay in Decorative Design’: Angel DeCora, Ho-Chunk Artist (1869–1919),” in *Baseline Shift: Untold Stories of Women in Graphic*

Recommended readings/viewings:
• Browse Neebinaukhzhik Southall’s website, The Native Graphic Design Project.
• “Grammar of Ornament,” National Museums Scotland
• Martha Patterson, Ch. 1, “Selling the American New Woman as Gibson Girl,” in Beyond the Gibson Girl: Reimagining the American New Woman, 1895–1915 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 27–49.
• Coded: The Hidden Love of J.C. Leyendecker. Documentary can be watched on Amazon with Paramount+ trial.

WEEK 5 – Mon., February 13 & Wed., February 15
Visit to view Special Collections materials at Willis Library (room 443) + Assignment
Note: I will be in NYC at the College Art Association conference on Wed., February 15.

WEEK 6 – Mon., February 20 & Wed., February 22
Art Nouveau; Glasgow School; Vienna Secession
Presentation Group 4 (on Feb. 22)
Special Collections Assignment due by Wed., February 22 at 12:00 pm.

Required readings:
• Meggs, Chapters 11 & 12

Recommended readings/viewings:
• Maurice Verneuil, Georges Auriol, and Alphonse Mucha, Combinaisons Ornementales (Paris: Libraire Centrale des Beaux Arts, 1901).
• YouTube video of Loie Fuller dancing, 1905

WEEK 7 – Mon., February 27 & Wed., March 1
The Influence of Modern Art; Pictorial Modernism (Plakatstil, Art Deco); Harlem Renaissance
Presentation Groups 5 (on Feb. 27) & 6 (on March 1)

Required readings:
• Meggs, Chapters 13 & 14
• “African American Culture and History: An AIGA Design Journey,” Google Arts and Culture.

Recommended readings/viewings/listenings:
• PennSound Dada sound poems
• Posters by E. McKnight Kauffer (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1937), Foreword, Kauffer biography, Note on Technique.
• “Selling Shiseido—Cosmetics Advertising and Design in Early 20th-Century Japan,” MIT Visualizing Cultures resource.

WEEK 8 – Mon., March 6 & Wed., March 8
A New Language of Form (Russian Suprematism & Constructivism, De Stijl)
Presentation Group 7 (on March 6)
MIDTERM EXAM on Wed., March 8. Complete multiple choice during class time on the 8th.
Midterm Essay questions will become available on Canvas on Mon., March 6 at 12:00 PM and will be due by 11:59 PM on Friday, March 10.

Required readings:
• Meggs, Chapter 15

WEEK 9 – Mon., March 13 & Wed., March 15
SPRING BREAK. NO CLASS!

WEEK 10 – Mon., March 20 & Wed., March 22
The Bauhaus and the New Typography; Modernism in America
Presentation Groups 8 (on March 20) & 9 (on March 22)

Required readings:
• Meggs, Chapters 16 & 17
• Herbert Bayer, “Towards a Universal Type,” in Looking Closer 3, 60–62.
• “Charles Clarence Dawson,” WTTW Art & Design in Chicago (Read article & watch video.)

Recommended readings:
• Madeleine Morley, “Celebrating Söre Popitz, the Bauhaus’ Only Known Woman Graphic Designer,” Eye on Design (AIGA), Dec. 3, 2019.

WEEK 11 – Mon., March 27 & Wed., March 29
Modernism in America (cont.), The International Typographic Style
Presentation Group 10 (on March 29)

Required readings/viewings:
• Meggs, Chapter 18
• “Norman Rockwell in the Age of the Civil Rights Movement,” Google Arts & Culture Feature

Recommended readings:

WEEK 12 – Mon., April 3 & Wed., April 5
The New York School; Corporate Identity and Visual Systems
Presentation Groups 11 (on April 3) & 12 (on April 5)

Required readings:
• Meggs, Chapters 19 & 20
• Martha Scotford, “Cipe Pineles: Artist as Art Director,” in Graphic Design History, 161–65.

Recommended readings:

WEEK 13 – Mon., April 10 & Wed., April 12
Countercultural Rebellion & Social Engagement; The Conceptual Image
Presentation Groups 13 (on April 10) & 14 (on April 12)
Must email me for Final Project topic approval by 11:59 PM on Wed., April 12!
Required readings:
- Meggs, Chapter 21

Recommended readings/viewings:
- Browse the pushpininc.com website.

WEEK 14 – Mon., April 17 & Wed., April 19
The Conceptual Image (cont.); Postmodern Design
Note: Both classes this week will meet on Zoom since I will be in London for a conference.

Required readings:
- Meggs, Chapter 22
- Steven Heller, “Cult of the Ugly,” Eye 3, no. 9 (Summer 1993). Republished on the Eye website.

Recommended readings:

**WEEK 15 – Mon., April 24 & Wed., April 26**

**A Global & Diverse Design History**

Presentation Group 15 (on April 24)

Required readings/viewings:
• Meggs, Chapter 23
• Silas Munro, “Typography as a Radical Act in an Industry Ever-dominated by White Men,” Eye on Design (AIGA), August 26, 2019.
• AIGA Design Journeys Interview with Nadine Chahine, 2018.
• Anne Quito, “Karate, Wonton, Chow Fun: The end of 'chop suey' fonts,” April 8, 2021, CNN.com.
• Dori Tunstall et al, “AIGA Respectful Design,” YouTube video.

Recommended readings:
• Jerome Harris (curator), As, Not For: Dethroning Our Absolutes, Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) et al., 2018. Exhibition documentation in MICAGD’s Archives.
• Browse Cornell Hip Hop Collection, Cornell University Library, hip hop party and event flyers.

**WEEK 16 – Mon., May 1 & Wed., May 3**

**The Digital Revolution—and Beyond; The Designer Today**

Presentation Groups 16, 17, & 18 (on May 1)

**FINAL PROJECTS DUE by Mon., May 1 at 12:00 PM**

Required readings:
• Meggs, Chapter 24
• Sarah Rose Sharp, “New Non-Binary Emojis Fall Short of Their Good Intentions,” Hyperallergic, November 15, 2019.

Recommended readings:

FINAL EXAM (multiple choice): Mon., May 8 from 1:30–3:30 PM on Canvas