ARTH 5801 – Topics in Art History
Women and Design, 1850–Today

Contact Information
Carey Gibbons
Assistant Professor, Art History, CVAD
Office location: Art Building 217
Phone number: 940-565-4777
Email: Carey.Gibbons@unt.edu
Office hours: Mondays, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM & Wednesdays 3:30 – 4:30 PM. Also available by appointment (in-person or virtual)

Course description
This course emphasizes the role of gender in the history of design, with a particular focus on illuminating women’s relationship to design, both as designers and those designed for, and as subjects for representation within graphic design and illustration. Exploring communications design, fashion design, industrial design, and interior design, the course will highlight hidden or previously ignored figures and design projects, while examining the ways in which design has reflected and shaped culture and society. Some of the topics addressed will include gender stereotypes and biases in design, challenges to binary constructions of gender through design, the ways in which design has both empowered and limited users, the proliferation of varied images of women in print media, and the rise of the “New Woman” trope at the end of the nineteenth century. We will also consider how feminist perspectives can contribute to re-thinking our understanding of and relationship with design.

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, discussions, and activities throughout the semester. I have included a course schedule of topics and readings, but be sure to check your email and Canvas regularly for adjustments to the schedule.

Readings include both primary and secondary sources and reflect varied theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of design. Rather than emphasizing a chronological or evolutionary development, the course will revolve around a variety of thematic focuses.

Course objectives
• Increase your understanding of the relationship between women and design within the context of historical, social, and cultural developments.
• Gain insights into the work of women designers, designs produced for women, the ways that women interact with design, and designs that represent women.
• Build a strong historical and theoretical framework from which to analyze connections between women and design, reaching an understanding of gender beyond static, binary constructions of male and female and in relation to culture, nature, and technology.
• Reach an understanding of the issues facing women designers today.
• Studio art and design students should be able to analyze design in relation to issues of gender and recognize their own work within the context of a historical and cultural framework.
• Apply the material learned to conduct and present research, insights, and conclusions in verbal and written form.

Course disclaimer
Content in the arts 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 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 readings come from a variety of sources and will be posted as pdfs/links on Canvas or put on course reserve at the Willis Library. You are expected to do the assigned readings before class. I might occasionally adjust our schedule of topics to accommodate extra discussion or in-class activities.

Course technology & skills
• Computer
• Reliable internet access
• UNT Email
• Canvas
• Using presentation and graphics programs such as Powerpoint or Google Slides

Technical assistance
Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.
UNT IT Help Desk
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. Use “I” statements to share thoughts and feelings. 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)
- 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

Participation/Attendance – 20% of final grade  
Oral presentations (2 10-minute presentations on readings) – 10% of final grade (5% each)  
Virtual exhibition – 25% of your final grade  
Presentation on virtual exhibition (10–15 minutes) – 5% of your final grade  
Final research paper – 30% of your final grade  
Presentation on research for final paper (10–15 minutes) – 5% of your final grade  
Course reflection assignment (2–3 pages) – 5% of your final grade

### Attendance

Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. For each unexcused absence past the first one in this course, your final participation/attendance grade will be lowered by one letter grade. It is important that you communicate with me prior to being absent so we can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform me if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill (including Covid), in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community. In order for an absence to be excused, you must provide appropriate documentation (i.e. a doctor’s note, proof of positive Covid test, etc.).

Excessive tardiness will count as an absence (2 late arrivals=1 unexcused absence). Do not leave the class while it is in session unless it is an emergency.

### Participation

In order to have productive discussions of the course material, it is required that each student come to class having completed the required reading and any assignments. A strong participation grade is not solely based on attending class regularly. If you want to earn a participation grade higher than a C, you will have to speak in class and participate in any class activities.

No cell phones shall be visible or audible in the classroom after class begins. If you are seen using a phone during class without permission, you will told to stop and receive an unexcused absence for the class period.

### Oral presentations

You will give 2 10-minute presentations on 2 readings of your choice this semester. I will be sending around a sign-up sheet for these presentations.
Virtual exhibition & presentation
You will be completing a virtual exhibition on a topic of your choice related to women and design that will be due on October 19 (by 5:00 PM CT). Your exhibition will include a checklist of images of works to be included, descriptive labels, and a 3-page curatorial statement. You will also be expected to give a 10–15-minute presentation in class on October 19 on your virtual exhibition. More detailed instructions to follow.

Final research paper
You will also be completing a 15–20 page final research paper on a topic of your choice related to women and design. Your topic must be approved by me by November 2 at the latest. The deadline is December 14 (by 5:00 PM CT), and you must submit your paper on time. A letter grade will be deducted from the paper grade for each day past the deadline if you are late. More detailed instructions to follow.

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 TOPICS & READINGS (subject to revision)

August 31 – Syllabus review/Introduction to the course

Required readings:
• Judy Attfield, Ch. 7, “Form/Female Follows Function/Male: Feminist Critiques of Design,” in Design Studies: A Reader, eds. Hazel Clark and David Brody (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 49–53.
• Browse the page/content on the MoMA website for the recent exhibition Designing Modern Women 1890–1990 (2013–14):
https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1369
September 7 – The Gaze + Women in Graphic Design & Illustration

Required readings/viewings:
- John Berger, Ways of Seeing, Episode 2, 1972: https://youtu.be/m1GI8mNU5Sg

Recommended readings/viewings:
- Virtual exhibition on the Gibson Girl from the Library of Congress:
  https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gibson-girls-americaindex.html

September 14 – Ornament + Women in Graphic Design & Illustration

Required readings:

Recommended readings:

**September 21 – Women in Graphic Design & Illustration (continued)**

Required readings:

Recommended readings:

September 28 – Women Graphic Designers & Illustrators

Required readings/viewings:
Recommended readings/viewings:


**October 5 – Women Designers**

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


**October 12 – Women Designers (continued)**

**PEER REVIEW OF DRAFT VIRTUAL EXHIBITIONS**
Required readings:
• Read the following from Pat Kirkham, ed., *Women Designers in the USA 1900–2000: Diversity and Difference* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000):
  Pat Kirkham and Shauna Stallworth, Ch. 4, “‘Three Strikes Against Me’: African American Women Designers,” 122–43.
  Ella Howard and Eric Setliff, Ch. 11, “‘In a Man’s World’: Women Industrial Designers,” 268–89.

Recommended readings:

**October 19 – Women Designers & Workers**
VIRTUAL EXHIBITIONS DUE (by 5:00 PM CT) + PRESENTATIONS ON EXHIBITIONS!

Required readings:

Recommended readings/viewings:
• Check out one of the Netflix episodes on women designers from the series *Abstract*: https://www.netflix.com/title/80057883

**October 26 – Black Women & Design**

Required readings:

Recommended readings:
November 2 – Women, Fashion, & Beauty + Visit to the Texas Fashion Collection

Required readings:
• Paola Antonelli and Michelle Millar Fisher, *ITEMS: Is Fashion Modern?* (New York: MoMA, 2017). Read the following sections:
  Michelle Millar Fisher, R – 075, Red Lipstick, 198–99
  Anna Burckhardt, L – 058, Leather Pants, 159–60
  Stephanie Kramer, L – 060, Little Black Dress, 163–64

Recommended readings:

**November 9 – Designs for Women**

**FINAL RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC MUST BE APPROVED BY TODAY!**

**Required readings:**
• Alison J. Clarke, Ch. 56, “‘Parties are the Answer’: The Ascent of the Tupperware Party” (1999), in *The Design History Reader*, eds. Grace Lees-Maffei and Rebecca Houze (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2010), 409–14.
• Michelle Millar Fisher and Amber Winick, *Designing Motherhood: Things That Make and Break Our Births* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2021). Read Introduction (14–24); Charting the Menstrual Cycle (41–42); Home Pregnancy Test (81–82); Breast Pump (259–60); Diapers (by Juliana Rowen Barton, 295–96); Stroller (309–12).

**Recommended readings/viewings:**
• Other materials related to Walker’s life and business:
Papers and other archival material online from the Indiana Historical Society: [https://images.indianahistory.org/digital/collection/m0399](https://images.indianahistory.org/digital/collection/m0399)
The Smithsonian also has some materials for Walker including historical packaging: [https://transcription.si.edu/project/25492](https://transcription.si.edu/project/25492)
The US National Archives produced a short video in 2011 about Walker that has some useful information about her life and significance:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3qjLYszE1


**November 16 – Women and the Domestic + Interiors**

Required readings:

Recommended readings:

**November 23 – NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY!**
Required readings/viewings:
• Judith K. Brodsky, Ch. 11, “Feminist Artists and the Gaming Industry,” and Ch. 12, “Japanese Feminism, Video Games, and Anime,” in Dismantling the Patriarchy, Bit by Bit: Art, Feminism, and Digital Technology (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 143–60; 161–75.

Recommended readings/viewings:
• Phantom of the Operator, a film by Caroline Martel, 2004:
  https://vimeo.com/ondemand/thephantomoftheoperator
• Anita Sarkeesian YouTube videos. Here is the first in a series (3 videos total) on the “Damsel in Distress” trope in video games:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6p5AZp7r_Q
• Browse the site for the 2011 MoMA exhibition, “Talk to Me”:
  https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2011/talktome/
December 7 – PRESENTATIONS ON RESEARCH FOR FINAL PAPERS + Wikipedia Edit-a-Thon!

December 14 – FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE! (Submit on Canvas by 5:00 PM CT.)