

# Symbols

## Class goals

- Explore symbol characteristics through observation, research, translation, and creative design
- Develop skills in use of symbol as primary visual element in graphic design layout
- Work with mark, composition, color, form, to create symbols
- Introduce basic symbolic communication theory
- Create visual meaning using symbolic form(s)
- Explore symbolic communication and context
- Investigate graphic design problem solving process
- Employ various processes/techniques of graphic design
- Introduce professional graphic design methods and options
- Introduce basic Mac, file management, Adobe Illustrator skills
- Develop and demonstrate skills in craft and presentation
- Develop an approach to graphic design that leads to personal standards of excellence
- Create a portfolio of class projects that demonstrates skills and knowledge gained in class. This portfolio can function as vital part of the BFA portfolio review.

## expectations

This course is composed of lectures, presentations, demonstrations, critiques, and studio time. You are responsible for reading all materials assigned and writing when it is requested. Involvement in studio time, class critiques and discussions will be a valuable opportunity to see how others approach their work. When helping you with your work I will focus your attention on your process to help you develop an awareness of your creativity. Often this may feel like I am not giving you the help you are expecting. Instead, I am trying to help you make discoveries.

## special needs

If you have special needs we should consider regarding this course, please talk to me early in the semester.

## grading

Projects, attendance, class participation and the seriousness you bring to assignments discussions and critiques will establish your final grade. When evaluating your work I will look at the degree of exploration and inquiry that has taken place. Project grades will represent levels of refinement in both craft and conceptual development. Documentation of process is essential. Projects redone for the final portfolio can increase one letter grade at most.

## attendance

Attendance is crucial. Promptness to class is expected. Absences or lateness will dramatically effect your grade because your understanding of the subject matter and projects will suffer. You must be in class to benefit from the things we do in class.

- 3 absences will lower your semester grade a full letter.
- Arriving 5 minutes late or leaving five minutes early will be noted -2 of either will count as an absence
- Handing in projects late or incomplete will count as an absence on the day they are due and the project will be discounted one letter grade for each day of lateness.

## missed classes

If you are absent I expect you to contact a fellow student and find out what you have missed and what is required for the next class. Do not expect me to "catch you up" the next time we meet - this usually leads to being behind two classes and is very hard to overcome. Contact me with specific questions after you have familiarized yourself with the assignment.

## final portfolio

You must produce a finished and well organized portfolio by the end of the semester. This should be comprehensive and include all of your rough work as well as your final projects.

## ART 206

### Section 2

M W 11 - 1:30

NFAC 182/172

### Instructor

Stuart Morris

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## Materials

A variety of drawing and design materials and tools will be needed to complete the projects for this class. Most of these are basic tools for work as an artist or designer and will continue to be important throughout your studies.

All are available at the University Bookstore and many are available at other stores in town, or in catalogs.

### General Art Materials and Tools

- cutting mat (12" x 19" or larger)  
DO NOT cut on tables!
- x-acto knife with blades (or equivalent)
- good paper scissors
- 18" or 24" metal ruler
- drawing media (pencil, ink, charcoal, etc) and paper
- white plastic eraser
- drafting or drawing pencils (2H and 4H)
- drafting or masking tape
- clear tape (3M Magic tape)
- glue stick
- Sobo or Elmer's white glue

### Course Specific Materials and Tools

- \* pad of marker paper  
(Bienfang, ProArt, or Canson brand)
- 24" T-square with raised inking edge (optional)
- french curve set (optional but very helpful)
- \* black Micron disposable technical pens
- \* black graphic Prismacolor markers (fine point & larger)
- gray and colored graphic markers  
(purchase as needed)
- proportion scale/wheel
- \* spray mount adhesive – 3M brand Super77
- \* mat board for mounting/presenting projects
- mat board for building 3D projects  
(purchase as needed)
- \* Itoya (or other brand) 9x12 portfolio notebook
- 18x24 (approx size) portfolio container
- USB flash drive or external hard drive

\* = has been purchased with lab fees

## Studio and Computer Lab

Class projects will introduce basic graphic design skills, using hand techniques and computer hardware and software.

Digital projects will be taught on Macintosh computers, and the class will focus on an introduction to Adobe Illustrator version CS 5. Demos will take place during class, and will not be repeated. Computer projects will use software and fonts available in the UWSP NFAC Mac Labs. Color and black/white printers are also available in the NFAC Mac Labs.

It is important to back up your work in at least two places! Lost files are not an excuse for incomplete or late work at school or in the professional workplace. Please purchase a USB flash drive or external drive to back up your files.

In the Mac Labs it is best to work on the local computers, and copy your completed files to the H:Drive when done working. Student work stored on the H:Drive can be accessed from any computer on campus.

File management details will be discussed during class demonstrations.

The NFAC 182 studio and NFAC 172 Lab will be available for use during scheduled class time, and there will be some scheduled in-class work time. Students will also need to schedule time to work on projects outside of class. NFAC 182 and other Art & Design studios are available for studio work, and there are hours available to work in Mac Labs NFAC 172, NFAC 190, and in the UWSP LRC.

UWSP Lab hours can be found on the Information Technology website.

The University also has a subscription to Lynda.com software tutorial demos and training, available for free unlimited student use:

<http://lynda.uwsp.edu>

## 1. Language Form Composition

Develop a set of letterform-based symbols. Use one assigned typeface for all 3 projects. Focus on developing compositions that communicate visually, and symbolically represent sound and/or meaning.

- All solutions must use black/white only
- Distortion or stretching letterforms not allowed
- Explore and evaluate the visual and symbolic characteristics of the typeface and use this to guide your process
- Create 25-30 thumbnails of each
- Choose best solutions to create 4 finals of each
- Present 4 finals of each as marker comps on 8"x 10" marker paper in black/white
- Consider positive/negative form, scale relationships, detail in form, and placement on page

a. Develop List of at least 20 adjectives that describe your typeface. Create 4 different symbols using one letter and one numeral in each composition that express an adjective out of your list. Overlap white numeral on top of black letter to explore relationship of positive & negative space. Explore legibility/abstraction. Make both letter and number equally visible (or invisible). Communicate the essence of the letterform and/or typeface. Must be at least 1" border from mark to paper edge in final comps.

b. Create 4 different symbols by dividing and re-combining a single letter or numeral into a form that looks as if it is a new symbol in the existing typeface. Consider the sound this new symbol represents. Letterforms can be cut, torn, rotated, etc. Letterform parts cannot overlap (touching is ok). All parts of each letterform must be used. Must be at least 1" border from mark to paper edge in final comps.

c. Design 4 different symbolic patterns/compositions using the same letterform in combinations of at least 3. Explore how positive/negative space and relationships of letterforms to each other and the entire page effect communication. Letterforms cannot overlap (touching is ok). Invent a proper noun that this symbol represents and write a mythology that explains this words origin.

## 2. Iconic Marks

- Translate an object into 2D form
- Create a symbolic mark based on 2D investigation using design process (thumbnails, reduction, roughs, comps)
- Create a second symbol to communicate object significance, following same process
- Create a third symbol combining the two
- Present all 3 final symbols as marker comps on 8"x10" marker paper in black/white

## 3. Digital Translation

Using Adobe Illustrator, translate the 2 best comps from project 1a, 1b, and 1c; and the 3 solutions from project 2 into digital presentation form. Mount all 9 to board for final presentation.

## 4. Color and Meaning

Explore color as symbolic communication. Develop and apply a color palette to accompany the symbols created in project 2.

## 5. 3D Form

Explore symbolic meaning in 3D form. Create a 3D translation of symbolic mark. Explore issues of volume, positive/negative relationships, open/closed space, scale, etc. Consider the view from all directions when working on the design. Create 3D comps as scheduled. Final will be constructed using black and white mat board.

## 6. Symbol Set - Narrative

Design a set of symbols based on daily life activities. Final project will be presented as marker comps as scheduled; refined using Adobe Illustrator; printed and presented as a set.

- Symbols represent different daily activities
- Symbols must function independently and as a cohesive set
- Symbols must work as high res vector graphics and using a limited 20x20 pixel grid
- Symbols must be designed using black and white
- Develop a color palette using Pantone Formula colors and apply to the symbol set
- Final presentation to include symbol set as vector and pixel graphics, and in black/white and color

# ASSIGNMENTS