



FALL 2016

Signs & Symbols (and Logos), GRA 2000-01, 2 Credits

Faculty: Neda Moridpour

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Class: Mondays, 2:00 PM-5:00 PM, B211B

Office Hours: Please email the faculty to schedule an appointment.

Course Description:

The meaning of a sign is something collective. Each one of us has acquired a set of conventions, as early as our childhood. Graphic structures rely upon conventions like this to form meanings. This class will re-think the process of creating signs in a social space. In the first project, students will design a pictogram to communicate an idea. The project will later expand into designing similar symbols in a matrix. We will then explore corporate logos and study the history and development of some of the logos and advertisements. Students will be encouraged to design responses within an activist's spirit. Intermediate level students who have had some computer experience and want to learn more about using applications to produce design work should take this class. Demonstrations will include Illustrator and Photoshop.

Course Goals, Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

This class will re-think the process of creating signs in a public space. Throughout several projects, students will design pictograms to communicate an idea. The projects will later expand into designing symbols and logos from an activist perspective. Students are expected to work on their own initiated project. Each student will also be part of the support system for the other students' projects.

Criteria to Receive Credit:

Students are expected to complete all project assignments and their own self-initiated work by the end of the semester, participate in class discussions and critique, and show evidence of individual growth as an artist.

Attendance Policy:

Regular attendance is required. Classes will include demonstrations; slide lectures, and/or discussions. If you are ill and need to miss a class you should communicate that with your faculty in advance. If a student misses 3 classes they will not receive credit in the course. Please note that demonstrations will not be repeated and it is the student's responsibility to make up all missed work.

Required Materials and Supplies:

Flash drive or external hard drive, straight edge metal ruler or metal triangle, Exacto knife with extra blades. A production budget of \$70-100 (includes print credits) and CD R/W disks to back up your work.

Plagiarism/ Misrepresentation of Works:

Students are expected to acknowledge when any part of their work is taken directly from another artist's and/or writer's work. Any work that has not been personally completed should not be presented as one's own. For academic papers, students should follow the academic convention styles required by their faculty. For more information, please contact the SMFA Writing Center.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

Week 1- Sep 12:

1. Introduction: Intro to class, Objectives, expectations

2. Project #1: POETIC PICTOGRAMS/ The Figure

Design a pictogram representing a human figure but based on a social/political/environmental theme (Exp. Black Lives Matter, War, End Rape on Campus, etc.) Simplify forms; emphasize details that carry symbolic meanings
Try at least 3 different image sources – stock photography, your own photos, drawing from memory, etc.

Try different aesthetics and approaches in rendering

What do you include, what do you exclude, how much detail do you want and why

>> Slides: Kara Walker, Muntadas, Vik Muniz, Andy Warhol, Sheperd Fairey, Julian Opie (Adventures of Prince Achmed)

3. Demo: Illustrator- creating an object, the path tool, tracing a photograph, path functions to create complex objects

For next week:

1. Complete your pictograms
2. Print all your versions large on 11 x 7 sheets

Read:

1. The Design of the Dissent, by Milton Glaser & Mirko ILIC
2. Signifier and Signified, by Roland Barthes
3. The Rhetoric of the Image, by Roland Barthes (Panzani ad)

Week 2- Sep 19:

1. Feedback on your figures

2. Project #2: POETIC PICTOGRAMS/ The Object

Design a collection of pictographs referring to objects in relation to the theme you chose for last week's assignment

Use similar techniques as last week

This time try to make the objects look like they are from the same group

3. Visit:

- MFA library at the Horticultural Center to look at books on heraldry, arms, flags. Take a notebook and a pencil with you to sketch, a camera to copy images, they also have a copier.
- The online archive of the Center for the study of Political Graphics

4. Demo: Illustrator and work time

For next week:

- Complete your pictograms.
- Have 5-7 pictograms in different versions. Print all on 11 x 17 sheets

Week 3- Sep 26:

1. Feedback on your figures

2. Project #3: POETIC PICTOGRAMS/ Applications

Patterns & Narratives & Commercial Production Methods

- Using your pictograms we will create a pattern and/or narratives

Print on fabric or think of installations

- Design commercially created objects (Keychain, embroideries, reliefs, stamps...)

>> Slides: William Morris, Soviet fabric designs, Zuzanna Licko, Wim Delvoye, Takashi Murakami, Ryan McGinness, Xu Bing, Kota Ezawa

For next week:

- 1.Create sketches for various applications of your pictograms (mug, hat,

keychain?)

Reproduce your pictogram on an actual object through a commercial process.

2. Propose a budget and timeline on how to produce your pictograms (you will get to present this later in the semester, you can choose a date!)

Read:

Ways of Seeing, by Paul Berger

Week 4- Oct 3:

1. Class discussion of your designs and proposals
2. Studio time to complete the work

For next week:

Presentation of your pictograms

Week 5- Oct 10 (NO CLASS- Indigenous People's Day):

Week 6- Oct 17:

1. Presentation of your full set of pictograms
2. Feedback on your finished designs for the objects to produce
- 3. Project #4: POETIC PICTOGRAMS/ The Street**

Think of site specificity, how does your pictogram interact within a public space.

Prepare a PowerPoint presentation of the chosen public space and ways your pictogram will interact with that specific public space.

For next week:

- Complete all parts of the Poetic Pictograms project
- Bring your commercially produced objects

Week 7- Oct 24:

1. Feedback on the complete Poetic Pictograms work and your commercially produced objects
2. Presentation of the specific site you have chosen for your project to interact with

3. Project #5: OFFICIAL PICTOGRAMS/ Historical Study of Corporate Logos

Research the history of at least 2 corporate symbols from this list:

AlphaRomeo, Apple, BBC, Boeing, Buick, Campbell's, Canon, CBS, FedEx, Fiat, Ford, IBM, John Deer, Kodak, Lego, MasterCard, Mazda, Mercedes Benz, MGM, Microsoft, Mitsubishi, Motorola, Nike, Nokia, Pepsi, Peugeot, Reuters, Shell, Starbucks, Texaco, UPS, Xerox, Volkswagen, Walmart, Yamaha

What were the reasons for the redesign? Who was the designer? Make sure you know the dates for each version

4. In class research time:

For next week:

Prepare a PowerPoint presentation to present your research in class

Read:

1. Logos, Flags, and Escutcheons, by Paul Rand
2. Warmer, Fuzzier: The Refreshed Logo by Bill Marsh (NY Times)

Week 8- Oct 31:

1. Presentation: Class presentation of the redesigned logo

2. Project #6: CORPORATE LOGOS/ reinterpretation

Recreate the logo in Illustrator

How are you planning to re-interpret this logo as an activist artist to talk further about the company?

>> Slides: Genesis book, Takashi Murakami, The Yes Men, Superflex, Logorama, Counterfits

For next week:

Redesign the logo, print in color and bring to class next week

Read:

1. Icons97, by Stuart Servetar

Week 9- Nov 7:

1. Presentation: Presentation of the redesigned logos

2. Revisions to complete the project

3. Project #7: DESIGNER ENTREPRENEUR

Create a concept for an organization, company or nation

- Your nation, business or organization needs to be something that cannot exist in the real world and may in itself ask self-referential questions
- Design a full identity for this- you may choose to partner with someone or work in groups to work as a collaborative design studio (expect to meet once outside of class)
- You will be the designers; the class will act as the client for this project
- Meet with group members to work
- Sample elements might include:

	NATION	BUSINESS	ORGANIZATION
Design:	Flag	Logo	Logo
Projects:	Seal	Products	Slogan for cause/Service
	Stamps	Store/Vehicle	Uniforms
	Currency	Coupons	

4. Refine: Symbol and name- finalize description for your organization

5. Develop other projects for your organization

For next week:

Bring various sketches for the symbol of your organization

Write a short description about your Nation, Business or Organization

Read:

We Got it! Project by Christopher Sperandio and Simon Grennan

Week 10- Nov 14:

1. Developing individual final projects

2. Revised and bring completed logos

For next week:

Read: "Typecast: Meaning culture and identity in alphabet omelet" by Sojin Kim and Somi Kim

Week 11- Nov 21:

>> Slides: General Idea, Mathew Barney, Trevor Paglen, Sperandio & Grennan

Studio Work to complete your projects

For next week: Dictionary of symbols, by Karl Liungman

Week 12- Nov 28:

Individual meetings

Bring the title to your brand

We will discuss the semiotics of typography

>> Slides: Election typography, Robert Indiana, Group Material

Week 13- Dec 5:

Individual meetings, final critique to create revisions for next week

Studio work to complete the final project

Week 14- Dec 12: All projects due!