



**mint**  
 Design Studio  
 University of Florida

**Alejandra Silva**  
 Visiting Assistant Professor  
 SA+AH | Office FAC121

GRA 4923C, 1 MNT, 2MNT  
 Classes #13009, #23183

Spring 2023 | Room FAD 109  
 Meeting times  
 1MNT: T/R 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
 2MNT: T/R 12:00 - 3:00 PM

Office Hours W 1:00 - 3:00 PM  
 or by appointment  
[asilvauliarte@ufl.edu](mailto:asilvauliarte@ufl.edu)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Mint is an experiential professional practice studio with an emphasis on the design process, including research, discovery, definition, design, and realization of real-world communication design projects.

Students work in collaboration with peer design teams and selected client- partners to apply design and other knowledges respectfully and responsibly. The projects we take on have a pedagogical function and are diverse in concept, content, media, and scope.

**COURSE STRUCTURE**

This is an active learning course where participants learn through a range of interactions. Our classes will be a combination of individual and collaborative graphic design and professional-development-related activities. Active

participation, humility, kindness, and collaborative attitude is vital to the success of everyone.

Phases included in our projects are discovery, definition, design, and delivery. Each phase involves the following design competences:

PROJECT PHASES

| DISCOVERY  | DEFINITION  | DESIGN   | DELIVERY  |
|--|---|--|---|
| 1. Design research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Conversations</li> <li>b. Fieldwork / original research</li> <li>c. Secondary research</li> <li>d. Competitive analysis</li> </ul> 2. Audience           3. Goals / Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Current state to future state</li> </ul> | 1. The project may already be defined, but how might it be expanded, narrowed, focused?           2. Tightly define goals within timeline           3. Frame expectations | 1. Visual prototypes (supporting key concepts and goals – usually 3)           2. Revision           3. Refinement (final) | 1. Define what this will be           2. Set expectations. Consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ownership of electronic files</li> <li>b. Brand Identity, assets, and manual</li> <li>c. Usage</li> </ul> (3. + dissemination, usually up to the client/partner) |

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Learning about impact and potential through design research, methods, strategy, and production
- Codesign: How to design with people based in real world contexts and constraints.
- Work in a team and with client-partners
- Apply research to design
- Further develop your abilities to work with ambiguity and develop resilience, which are key assets to designers and artists

## COURSE TOPICS

As an advanced graphic design course using an iterative and non-linear process, the topics below will be incorporated into assignments and project

work throughout the semester. Additional content relevant to collaborations with client partners will be incorporated as needed.

## CONTENTS

| MINDSETS  | DESIGN: RESEARCH + MAKING  | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT   | COMMUNICATION  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Positionality</li> <li>▪ Context</li> <li>▪ Equity</li> <li>▪ Respect</li> <li>▪ Reciprocity</li> <li>▪ Empathy</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Methods Application</li> <li>▪ Visualizing Research</li> <li>▪ Process</li> <li>▪ Codesign</li> <li>▪ Iterative Making</li> <li>▪ Production</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ Outreach</li> <li>▪ Agreements</li> <li>▪ Studio Life</li> <li>▪ Building Networks</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trust</li> <li>▪ Presentation</li> <li>▪ Documentation</li> <li>▪ Collaboration/Teamwork</li> <li>▪ Reflection</li> <li>▪ Exchange/Participation</li> </ul> |

## EXPECTATIONS OF MINT STUDENT DESIGNERS

Students will take responsibility for organizing projects, researching to find data/sources of information, documenting and sharing information, and working together with the client-partner and key stakeholders to complete project work.

- Class sessions focus on the work at hand and establish an environment to do this in a respectful, creative, and efficient manner.
- Our main goal is to be agile and flexible in order to meet project/work needs,

acknowledging these may change based on interactions, the design process, and research findings.

- In taking on a project, we make an agreement with the client- partner and a commitment to finish what we agree to, within reason and with respect.
- We work to establish a relationship of trust. To do this, we treat everyone with whom we interact with the respect that we want for ourselves, keeping in mind that respect may look and act different in different contexts.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

In order for you to fully participate and meet course learning objectives, students taking graphic design courses are required to have appropriate hardware, software and access to the Internet. See [this website](#) for more details regarding hardware, software, specifications, and some purchasing options, including discounts for UF students.

Because computer access is an institutional requirement, computer costs are designated as allowable costs for students who qualify for Financial Aid. Accordingly, Student Financial

Affairs has added costs for access to a computer into budgets. For more information, contact your financial adviser in the Office of Student Financial Affairs directly. Required materials:

- Laptop that meets the requirements on the SA+AH [tech requirements](#) page
- Adobe CC subscription; link to UF [student discount](#) rate
- Accounts on Microsoft Teams and GSuite
- Readings will be provided electronically
- Desired sketching tools

## COMMUNICATION

While in person communication is preferred, our projects will also need some remote communication throughout the week.

- **Email & Teams** | You can always reach out to Alejandra before/after class, in office hours and via UF email or Teams chat. This class requires to check emails and Teams daily, preferably twice a day, between Monday and Friday.
- **Zoom** | Meetings can be arranged when needed. Set up your Zoom account through [ufl.zoom.us](http://ufl.zoom.us) and create your profile including your name and a professional profile image. If

you have privacy concerns and do not want to use an image, please typeset your name or use a designed icon. Note that we may Zoom with client-partners and stakeholders, so the image you project also reflects the team.

- **Dress** | think smart casual for presentation days and when meeting with client partners — we aim to present ourselves as professionals.
- **Meeting recordings** | Some meetings with client partners, whether live or remote, may require recording with the consent of everybody in the room. Unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

## HOW I TEACH + CLASS METHODS

This is a professional practice class. My goal is to facilitate a highly interactive environment similar to a professional design studio. Students will work on real world projects and assignments with a particular structure. This should also be flexible enough to allow you to thrive and succeed individually and as a group, prioritizing responsibility, professionalism, independent

thinking, autonomy, and a proactive client-designer relationship. I will provide extensive feedback and support. My goal is to expose you, both theoretically and practically, to the current and future needs and expectations of the design profession. One goal I have is to identify and maintain standards of excellence in all aspects of interactions.

## EVALUATION

The purpose of evaluation is to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of one’s performance. Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points is online [here](#).

Grades are based on your overall performance in Mint although specific project assignments and roles factor into this evaluation.

Final grades are calculated based on a combination of self, peer, client/partner, and instructor assessments of your performance in the following categories:

### GRADING CRITERIA

| CRITERIA DESCRIPTION | Communication   | Team Process  | Midterm  | Design Work   |
|----------------------|---|---|--|---|
|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Client Relations</li> <li>▪ Class communication</li> <li>▪ Biweekly presentations</li> <li>▪ Project Report</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Semester long engagement: Proactive communication and work</li> <li>▪ Respect</li> <li>▪ Accountability</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individual reflection</li> <li>▪ Group poster exhibition</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ideation</li> <li>▪ Iterative making</li> <li>▪ Use of feedback</li> <li>▪ Testing</li> <li>▪ Quality and quantity as expressed in Letter of agreement</li> <li>▪ Design delivery</li> </ul> |
| POINTS               | 10%   | 30%   | 10%  | 50%   |

## EXPECTATIONS OF PARTICIPATION + INTERACTIONS

Participation by all members is critical to a positive and productive learning environment. The following descriptors show the relationship between commitment and grades.

- **Excellent team member (5)** | Consistently demonstrates excellent and exemplary preparation; has analyzed research findings and other material (e.g., visual resources, course material, discussions, experiences, etc.). Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of material. Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussions and critiques. Responds very thoughtfully to other students’ comments, contributes to cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material, etc. Demonstrates consistent active involvement. This is likely to result in the following semester grades: A, A-
- **A good team member (4)** | Demonstrates good preparation: knows research findings and other materials well—has thought through implications of them. Offers interpretations and analysis of material to class. Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students’ points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion. Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement. This is likely to result in the following semester grades: B+, B
- **Satisfactory participant (3)** | Offers straightforward information from research, without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class). Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but

contributes to a moderate degree when called on. Demonstrates sporadic involvement. Has not earned the confidence of the community. This is likely to result in the following semester grades: B-, C+, C

- **Needs improvement (2)** | Student is present, not disruptive. Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much. Demonstrates infrequent involvement in discussion. Demonstrates basic preparation: knows research and other materials superficially, does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them. Proposes very limited ideas during

critiques or within a group. Works on outside work during Mint. Does not have the confidence of the community and aren't contributing to the studio. This is likely to result in the following semester grades: C-, D+, D, D-

- **Unacceptable (1)** | Student is barely present or disruptive for team dynamics. Does not respond or does not offer much. Rare involvement in discussion. Is not prepared. Does not have the confidence of the community and is not contributing to the studio. This is likely to result in the following semester grades: D-, W

## GRADING SCALE

The grading scale for this course is consistent with the current [UF policy](#) for assigning grade points, written below as Letter grade / GPA points / Percent.

| Letter       | A           | A-       | B+        | B             | B-                     | C+               | C                          | C-            | D+                      | D                    | D-                        | F                             |
|--------------|-------------|----------|-----------|---------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| GPA          | 4.00        | 3.67     | 3.33      | 3.00          | 2.67                   | 2.33             | 2.00                       | 1.67          | 1.33                    | 1.00                 | 0.67                      | 0.00                          |
| Percent      | 100 - 95%   | 94 - 90% | 89 - 87%  | 86 - 83%      | 82 - 80%               | 79 - 77%         | 76 - 73%                   | 72 - 70%      | 69 - 67%                | 66 - 63%             | 62 - 60%                  | 59% or below                  |
| Work Quality | exceptional | superior | very good | above average | slightly above average | adequate average | average borders inadequate | below average | barely meeting criteria | not meeting criteria | not meeting much criteria | failure to meet most criteria |

The grading scale for this course is consistent with the current [UF policy](#) for assigning grade points, written below as Letter grade / GPA points / Percent.

## CLASS ATTENDANCE

This is a highly presential class that requires a 10-12 hour weekly commitment and 80% of attendance. Just as in the professional world, Mint students are responsible of remaining accountable to their team and the client. This includes early communication about any potential delays or

absences and proactively offering an action plan to make up for any missed instances.

Specific needs for absence will be considered consistently with university policies published [here](#).

## ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students requesting classroom accommodations must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide

documentation to the student who must then deliver this documentation to the instructor when requesting any accommodation. Disability office: [dso.ufl.edu/drc](http://dso.ufl.edu/drc)

## DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Be advised that you can and will be dismissed from class if you engage in disruptive behavior. Students who intentionally act to impair, interfere with, or

obstruct the mission, purposes, order, operations, processes, and functions of the University shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. The Dean of Students Office: [www.dso.ufl.edu](http://www.dso.ufl.edu)

## UF HONOR PLEDGE

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code."

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither

given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." - [Student Conduct & Honor Code](#).

The Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

## ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Click [here](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/) for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional

and respectful manner. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](#).

### **CAMPUS RESOURCES: HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress. <https://umatter.ufl.edu/>
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services. <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website. <https://shcc.ufl.edu/>
- University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies). <https://police.ufl.edu/>
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608. <https://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center>

### **CAMPUS RESOURCES: ACADEMIC RESOURCES**

- E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu). <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu>
- Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services. <https://career.ufl.edu>
- Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. <https://uflib.ufl.edu/find/ask/>
- Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://umatter.ufl.edu/office/teaching-center/>
- Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://umatter.ufl.edu/office/writing-studio/>
- Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information. <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>
- On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process. <https://distance.ufl.edu/getting-help/student-complaint-process/>

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Specific details on each week's activities will be announced in advance, as well as any possible changes.

**WEEK 1 | 01/10-12** | Welcome. Intro to Mint. Goals and expectations. Work and communication styles. The design process. Personal process; blocks; flow strategies. Time management. Collaboration tools.

**WEEK 2 | 01/17-19** | Team identity and positionality. Working with people. Codesign. Respect and Trust building. Introduction to client partners. Creative brief. Preparing research: methods.

**WEEK 3 | 01/24-26** | Teams, roles and teamwork. Field work: understanding the client, identifying design challenges, and looking for opportunities. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT).

**WEEK 4 | 01/31 - 02/02** | Biweekly presentation: Results of design research. Specifications and estimates. Deliverables definition and scheduling. Letter of Agreement. Other activities TBD.

**WEEK 5 | 02/07-09** | Project work as defined on teams' schedules. Check in meetings.

**WEEK 6 | 02/14-16** | Biweekly presentation. Project work as defined on teams' schedules. Other activities TBD.

**WEEK 7 | 02/21-23** | Project work as defined on teams' schedules. Check in meetings.

**WEEK 8 | 02/28 - 03/02** | Biweekly presentation. Project work as defined on teams' schedules. Other activities TBD.

**WEEK 9 | 03/07-09** | Project work as defined on teams' schedules. Mid-term A: individual reflection.

-----Spring Break-----

**WEEK 10 | 03/21-23** | Project work as defined on teams' schedules. Check in meetings. Mid-term B: group poster exhibition.

**WEEK 11 | 03/28-30** | Biweekly presentation. Project work as defined on teams' schedules. Other activities TBD.

**WEEK 12 | 04/04-06** | Project work as defined on teams' schedules. Check in meetings.

**WEEK 13 | 04/11-13** | Biweekly presentation. Final design deliverables due (date may be adjusted but not beyond 04/18).

**WEEK 14 | 04/18-20** | Preparation of materials as needed, including production. Delivery to clients.

**WEEK 15 | 04/25** | Project report. Group presentations. Semester reflection on individual and group processes, accomplishments, wrap-up loose-ends. Opportunities for next steps.