syllabus gra6973
SPRING 2024
mxd mfa project

GRA 6973
Project-in-lieu-of-thesis (MFA Project)
Supervised research in an area relevant to design and visual communications that combines design exploration and academic inquiry. This project is conducted over two or more semesters for 15 credits. The deliverable package in the final semester of study includes an oral defense, thorough documentation of the project and its process, and public dissemination.
Credits: variable; Prereq: Permission of supervisory committee chair and
Director of Graduate Studies, MXD.
MEETING TIMES
Weekly, to be scheduled during the first week of the semester.
INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Maria Rogal, MFA, UXC
Professor, Design & Visual Communications
e   mrogal (at) ufl.edu
o   FAC 313D
OFFICE HOURS
By appointment.

COMMUNICATION
Please communicate via Teams direct messaging or tag me if communicating in a Teams channel. Schedule an appointment to discuss important private matters (via Zoom or in person). Reach out to the UF Helpdesk to technical issues with UF communications: helpdesk website or call 352-392-4357

COURSE OBJECTIVES
This course is holistically designed as a guide for the thesis project. As such, the objectives include a range of activities, many iterative, which are required to conduct a complex project that is scholarly and creative. The course objectives include:

1. Learn to develop a complete project-in-lieu-of-thesis proposal, including a rationale, research questions, antecedents (influences)/literature review, methodology, structure & timeline
2. Design and develop the project within an identified context
3. Identify and apply research methods to achieve desired outcomes
4. Conduct appropriate, responsible, and participatory research based on the project methodology
5. Develop and produce design deliverables that function respectfully within their intended communities and contexts.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

This will be created in consultation with the instructor during the first two weeks of the semester. The schedule must include a plan for two check-ins with your full committee or similar interactions. Prepare to assess progress every four weeks.

REQUIRED RESOURCES

Required

→ Adobe Creative Cloud (Education Discount Available)

→ Free Education Accounts provide access to industry-standard software we will use in class: Figma, Miro, Notion, and Trello (see instructions on Canvas)

→ Students studying in the MFA program must have appropriate hardware and software for use in and outside of class time. See this website for more details regarding hardware, software, specifications, and some purchasing options, including discounts for UF students.

→ Booth, W.C. (2016). The Craft of Research, Fourth Edition (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing), 4th Edition. University Of Chicago Press.

Recommended

→ Cross, N. (2006) Designerly ways of knowing, London, Springer.

→ Eco, W. (2015) How to Write a Thesis (MIT Press). 1 Tra Edition. The MIT Press.

→ Graff, G. (2014) "They Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing (Third Edition), 3 Edition. W. W. Norton & Company.

→ Butler-Kisber, L. (2010) Qualitative Inquiry: Thematic, Narrative and Arts-Informed Perspectives. 1 Edition. SAGE Publications Ltd.

→ Kumar, V. (2012) 101 Design Methods: A Structured Approach for Driving Innovation in Your Organization, New York, Wiley.

→ Muratovski, G. (2016) Research for Designers: A Guide to Methods and Practice. 1 Edition. SAGE Publications Ltd.

UNDERSTANDING DESIGN IN CONTEXT

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned reading, materials, and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint, or belief.

GRADING

This is an S/U course. See the current UF grading policies for assigning grade points. The purpose of grading and evaluation is to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of your work. To this end, I can only respond to what is observable. The grade of C or better is Satisfactory.

Time allocation is based on the number of credits per semester. Expect to do the same amount of work assigned in GRA 6930 or GRA 6931C for 3 credits and multiply that work process and product by the number of credits you are enrolled for.

Satisfactory (S)

→ Exceptional to average conceptual/theoretical, formal, and technical work appropriate for project exploration.

→ Using evidence and data to support arguments.

→ Working with people responsibly and effectively to inform your project work.

→ Making that is consistent with the requirements and objectives listed above.

→ Consistent exploration, iteration, and production.

→ Clear writing adhering to a recognized style guide.

→ A high commitment to project development as demonstrated through design process and semester deliverables.

→ Seeking and incorporating feedback from chair and others

→ Organized visual, verbal, and written presentation of materials

Unsatisfactory (U)

→ Below the average level of conceptual/theoretical, formal, and technical work appropriate for project exploration and inconsistent with the abovementioned requirements and objectives.

→ Unclear writing or writing that does not follow a conventionally accepted style.

→ Inconsistent production.

→ Outcomes demonstrate little commitment to project development.

→ Limited feedback or feedback not incorporated into project.

→ Unclear or unorganized visual, verbal, and written presentation of materials

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ATTENDANCE

Requirements for meeting attendance, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. See the UF Attendance Policy. Attending regular meetings with your chair, and

others as scheduled, is expected. Excused absences follow university guidelines and may include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements, military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities or court-imposed legal obligations. If you have a delay, please contact the instructor by Teams, email, or text before our meeting time if at all possible. Makeup Work: A consistent process is important to meet the overall timeline. Makeup work is allowed in the event of an excused absence. However, this does not alter end-of-semester or Graduate School deadlines.

ACCOMMODATIONS
Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center. Students need to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

You may also inform me if there is something I can do to aid your performance and functioning in this course.

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. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. 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 https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

SEMESTER TIMELINE
Typically, you will schedule weekly meetings with your supervisory committee chair. Depending on the semester, group meetings or other feedback sessions might better serve you. Since you will be dedicating significant time to your project, plan to think in an agile way — assess what's working and what can be improved every two to four weeks. Focus on a growth mindset, knowing that your work process may have ebbs and flows, strive for a balance and not "all or nothing" approach, where if something doesn't work you abandon it without further thought. The latter are times to consult your chair, committee members, and peers — whoever can assist. A timeline with key dates and topics will be developed on an individualized basis, using the schematic below as an initial framework. The timeline includes the following content and whatever else you may want to add. While the timeline here is for the Fall semester, plan to sketch out the entire year (with your oral defense scheduled for the first week of April next year). *Plan to schedule your committee meetings, including the defense. Schedule check-ins with committee members and meet with other faculty as needed.*

UNIVERSITY POLICIES & INFORMATION

ACCESS TO LIBRARIES

Students with disabilities have an equal right to use and benefit from resources at the George A. Smathers Libraries, including (but not limited to) Course Reserves materials. To ensure this right, students with disabilities:
1. Have the responsibility to identify themselves as needing appropriate, reasonable accommodations for their disabilities. 2. Have the responsibility for making their needs known promptly. 3. Have the same obligation as any library user to comply with library policies and procedures."

The George A. Smathers Libraries Course Reserves Unit will work with patrons needing assistance or accommodations to access course reserves materials. Please contact the Course Reserves Unit at 352-273-2520, or email at eres@uflib.ufl.edu for information or assistance. We encourage students to contact and register with the University of Florida Disability Resource Center at 352-392-8565 or accessuf@dso.ufl.edu.

UF RELIGIOUS
HOLIDAYS POLICY
[Students, upon prior notification of their instructors, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith](). Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence. Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observances.

IN-CLASS RECORDING

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Note the instructor may also record the course. This instructor finds recording a helpful memory aid to improve the student experience, the course itself, and to inform both her teaching and research. Assume this course is being recorded for her notes.

UNIVERSITY HONESTY POLICY

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." The Conduct 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 in this class.

EMERGENCIES
Call the University Police Department at 352-392-1111 or 911 for emergencies.

UF HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES
U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact 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.

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.

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.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

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; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES
E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.

DESIGN STUDIO NOTES

TECHNOLOGY,
COURSE FEES, AND EQUIPMENT USE
With questions related to your computer system and technology (network, printers) in the graphic design studio(s), you can contact the program's Senior Teaching Lab Specialist — Michael Christopher (mchristo@ufl.edu) via email or Teams. He can help diagnose problems and recommend solutions.

EXCELLENT PRACTICES
1. Be open and constructive. Critique ideas, not people.
2. You are all colleagues—friendship is a bonus. Be community-minded.
3. Work hard to guarantee that the studio and graphic design area are safe and brave spaces for all. Respect personal differences, elevate, and celebrate diversity.
4. The studio is a creative, professional workplace. It is not your home. Respect and maintain this space.
5. Respect each other by listening to your music on headphones during individual design sessions and keeping your desk, row, and communal areas clean.
6. Recycle paper, bottles, and cans. Reuse other materials.

7. Throw away trash. Do not leave food lying around. We ask that you be attentive to cleaning up and throwing away food remains—preferably in the hallway trash cans.

8. Never use or harm animals or the environment in your projects. Using animals in your design projects is strictly regulated and prohibited unless you have UF approval. Keep in mind I will never authorize this for a design project. For more information, see http://www.arts.ufl.edu/resources/forms/forms1.html

9. When working in the evening or when a few students are present, you should keep the studio door closed. Do not reveal the door passcode to anyone outside of the program. Never leave the studio open and unattended.

10. Cell phones should be turned to vibrate or low ring mode during class. If you must take a phone call, do so in the hallway or production room to minimize disruption. If you have an emergency, you may also use my office.

11. If you encounter other problems in the classroom or studio, first speak with your instructor outside of class or speak with the DGS.

12. Access to individual classrooms, laboratories, and studio facilities is limited to those enrolled in the program. If you notice any strangers, feel free to question or report them to the University Police. See http://police.ufl.edu. Dial 911 for emergencies or 352-392-1111 otherwise. Let's take care of each other!