GRA6931C Research & Practice
SPRING 2024 SYLLABUS

Course Description

A rotating topics course focused on integrating research and practice to address complex problems within diverse contexts. The study and use of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research methods appropriate for an expanded practice are addressed through discussions, case studies, writing, fieldwork, and presentations. 3 credits

Prerequisite: Design and Visual Communication major student or permission of instructor.

MEETING TIMES

Tuesdays, periods 8–10 / 3:00 – 6:00 PM
MXD Design Studio, Infinity Hall 110

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Maria Rogal, MFA (she, her, hers)
Professor, Graphic Design/Design & Visual Communications
e   mrogal@ufl.edu
o   FAC 313D

OFFICE HOURS

Posted on Canvas.

COMMUNICATION

I read and respond to emails Monday — Friday, 9 AM – 6 PM. The best way to reach me outside of class is via UF Teams chat.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course fosters knowledge-building and skill development in the MXD areas, as listed below. It is a companion course to GRA 6930 Seminar, so students should actively seek connections between these two courses.

— Learn how to consider complexity, contexts, and culture to inform design and co-design.
— Explore the diverse aspects necessary to design for 'real world problems and constraints (including intercultural communication strategies, budgets, constituents' needs and wants, feasibility, dissemination).
— Work directly with communities and disciplinary experts to develop innovative solutions to community-identified problems.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Connecting your coursework to these learning outcomes will support your progress in the program. This is measured at the end of your third year.

1. **Design**: Develop a body of work(s) that includes visual communications artifacts, design systems, and design strategies and reflects original, creative, and innovative contributions.
2. **Research**: Identify and apply research concepts, methods, and activities that are contextual, respectful, and advance a co-design framework. Pursue visual research through process-driven

iterations informed by a literature review.

3. **Communication**: Creates a portfolio that organizes and communicates research, findings, proposals, and work products professionally with their intended audience using visual, verbal, and written skills. Disseminate research findings in public to further participate in disciplinary discourse (submit papers for conferences, for example).
4. **Working with People**: Collaborates and works effectively in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teams to develop approaches and solutions to complex problems. This may include using materials or content from collaborations.
5. **Specialization:** Develops **depth** in an area of one's choosing to support professional goals (the "and" in "Design and ___").

REQUIRED RESOURCES

⇢ Students in the MFA program must have appropriate hardware and software for use in and outside class time. See this website for more details regarding hardware, software, specifications, and purchasing options, including discounts for UF students. This includes accessing the Adobe Creative Cloud (Education Discount Available).
⇢ We will use the following software, which offers free education accounts when you sign up with your .edu email (for your account security, never use your UF email and Gatorlink password together outside of UF): Miro, Figma, Notion, Trello, One Drive and more (see instructions on Canvas)
⇢ The instructor will provide you with readings, viewings, and other materials on Canvas.

UNDERSTANDING DESIGN IN CONTEXT

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

HOW I TEACH

I approach teaching as a conversation — one where I provide leadership and direction, mentor, and facilitate your learning so that you can further develop as a designer and researcher. I find it helpful if you work independently, have intellectual curiosity, and are committed to your work so that you innately practice and iterate. Be willing to own your education. Since I am not a mind reader, I ask you to let me know if you have concerns or problems or want to discuss the materials or your project in addition to our class time.

STRUCTURE, SCHEDULE & GRADING

Expect a combination of the following activities under the umbrella of design research and an iterative design practice. This and program SLOs will be used to situate your progress. You are never expected to acquire mastery until completion, so remember that practice is progress.

This is an experiential course to learn and grow, as well as to embody some of the key concepts of the MXD and Horizontal Design: Respect, Reciprocity, Representation, Relationality, Trust-building, and Context (Culture, Economy, Society, Environment, etc.), among other concepts. Working in context differs from working in a studio, and we will discuss ways to work and be present. The process will follow the program's general framework and methodology, although there will be space to alter this based on needs and constraints. This is one way the MXD program is dynamic.

Bi-weekly guided reflections will allow you to **connect the dots**, practice, and exercises on specific methodologies, design research tools, and feedback, which will be a time for the participants to come together to address questions of import to individuals, the project, stakeholders, and context. Throughout the course, the activities will be flexible enough to accommodate natural changes in progress. Expect change. Expect to keep a collection of all your work.

There are two checkpoints: mid-term and final. Dates are posted online.

Keep in mind the following as you connect the dots.
1. **acquiring:** academic and popular material, concept, and idea acquisition through reading, viewing, searching, and discussion.
2. **exploring:** design research activities (ex, design, embodied/experiential, documenting, collecting, etc.) to support project development.
3. **understanding:** analysis, synthesis, critical thinking, and reflection demonstrated through summaries, reflections, quizzes, and inclusion in presentations, case studies/process books.
4. **ideating:** concept and content generation.
5. **design:** design making from initial sketches and prototypes to the production of final project deliverables; note that sometimes this is diagrammatic or illustrating work in progress.

The purpose of grading and evaluation is to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of your work. We can only respond to what is observable. You can play an active role in sharing your progress in multiple ways. Individual assignments with details are provided on Canvas. The course is set up so you cannot see the average grade. As the project activities build on one another other, if you do not complete one part (ex: the research), you will have difficulty progressing because there will be nothing to base your next steps on — this is not intentionally punitive, just that there are multiple steps within an iterative design process.

LTR	Common grading scales Project defined criteria	S/U	C/I	0–5	100% Scale	GPA
A	Exceeds ALL			5	95 – 100%	4.0
A-	Exceeds MOST, Meets ALL				90 – 94%	3.67
B+	Exceeds SOME, Meets ALL			4	87 – 89%	3.33
B	Meets ALL	S	C		84 – 86%	3.0
B-	Meets ALMOST ALL			3	80 – 83%	2.67
C+	Meets MOST				77 – 79%	2.33
C	Meets SOME			2	74 – 76%	2.0
C-	Meets LESS THAN SOME	U	I		70 – 73%	1.67
D+	Meets FEW			1	67 – 69%	1.33

D	Meets VERY FEW				64 – 66%	1.0
D-	Meets HARDLY ANY			0	60 – 63%	.67
E	Meets NONE				<60%	0

UF GRADING POLICIES

Current UF grading policies for assigning grade points. Work produced in this course should demonstrate your potential as a designer. Use all the tools in your toolkit, develop these through practice, and create new tools when needed. All work produced in this course should directly apply to your final graduation portfolio and showcase your tools and interest. Sustained attention is required throughout the semester. Participation, iteration, communication, and radical creativity will be critical to everyone's success.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

While there are different activities throughout the semester, your participation is usually a gauge of your progress. If you have ways you prefer to participate, please see me after the first class meeting to discuss accommodations and options for you to participate fully and benefit. This can accommodate introverts, extroverts, different learning styles, and comfort levels.

ITERATIONS

Both research and design are iterative processes that allow you to build on your ideas. It is good practice to work consistently, obtain feedback from instructors and peers, and learn in this environment. To come to class prepared and put maximum sustained effort into your work leaves everyone at an advantage. We depend on each other for growth and development, critical insight, and feedback, so we get back what we give when we put in this work.

COMMUNICATION

You are responsible for emails sent to your ufl.edu account and messages to you via Teams. It is a good practice to check both at least once daily between Monday and Friday. I check emails at least once daily Monday—Friday and Teams more frequently.

PROGRAM VISIBILITY

Unless otherwise requested, your work may be used to promote the graphic design program at the University of Florida, in faculty teaching portfolios, and as educational examples in academic conferences or journals. We will make every attempt to credit your work to you where appropriate. You retain the copyright of your work.

ATTENDANCE

Being present for class allows you to participate in the co-design community that supports the MxD. If you must miss class without anticipating official documentation, email the instructor ahead of time to make arrangements. Students observing a religious holy day of their faith must notify the instructor in advance. Other requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:
https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

Each unexcused absence will reduce the final course grade by half a letter grade (ex: A to A–, B+ to B). Two late arrivals (5 minutes or more late) or early departures (before class is dismissed) will equal one

unexcused absence. Arriving more than 20 minutes after the start of class is no longer considered tardy and will count as an unexcused absence. More than five absences result in automatic course failure unless we've planned of time to accommodate ongoing, documented situations.

DEADLINES + MAKEUP WORK
All work is due on the day and time listed. Missed work can be made up in the case of documented emergencies or for university-approved reasons such as military/university travel, illness, or religious observances; contact me ahead of time to make arrangements. Work may be different from what is originally assigned. It is your responsibility to ask for make-up work within a week of the absence. If you are absent or late it is your responsibility to obtain missed information from another student in the class. Read the full university policies regarding attendance, excused absences, and make-up exams at:
https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

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 must share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester (or let me know if something is pending). You may also let me know informally if there is something that I can do to support you in this course — I am aware that official accommodations are often hard to come by, require resources, and are often designed for other kinds of courses.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
If you use words, images, or ideas that are not your own, cite them. Claiming the work of others as your own is a serious breach of professional ethics and will result in a failing grade in this class. The UF Honor Code specifies other behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. View the Honor Code online: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/

If you want to use generative technology in your work, ask your instructor in advance, discuss how you will use it, and request approval. Using ideas, images, or word phrases created by another or by generative technology, such as ChatGPT, Claude.ai, and the like, **you must identify their source**. You may not submit false or fabricated information, use the same academic work for credit in multiple courses, or share instructional content. Students with questions about academic integrity should ask their instructor before submitting work.

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 this feedback 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/.

M&S FEES
$50 — this supports the studio learning environment and more.

UF HELP DESK

Reach out to the UF Helpdesk for technical issues with UF communications: helpdesk website or call 352-392-4357

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.

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 well-being, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit 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.

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). He can help diagnose problems and recommend solutions.

Lab fees are used to supply the printers with ink and paper. Be conservative in your use of these materials not only because they cost money but because they create waste. We care about the environment. Balance what you need to make your work and resource use. Reuse and recycle whenever possible. Note that your GD lab fees do not cover the printing of materials or use of supplies for other courses, even art-related courses. Printing for non-GD courses or activities (even if your own) must be done elsewhere. Misuse of equipment will result in heavy monitoring of everyone and/or the loss of privileges for those who don't think policies apply to them. Paper is only supplied for the color and black laser printers. Plan to purchase your paper for the Epson inkjet and plotter printers. Toners and ink are covered for all printers.

EXCELLENT PRACTICES

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

12. If you encounter other problems in the classroom or studio, speak with your instructor outside or with the graphic design program head.
13. Throw away trash. Refrain from leaving food lying around. We ask that you be attentive to cleaning up and throwing away food remains—preferably in the hallway trash cans.
14. Do not use spray adhesive in the studios or the building. There is a professional and safe spray booth on the 2nd floor.