

Information Design

3 Credits

GRA 4198C

Section

CRN

In-person

SPRING 2024

M/F 9:00 - 10:50pm

Room 1009

FAU BCC Higher Ed. Complex

111 East Las Olas Blvd.

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Camila Afanador-Llach

cafanadorllach@fau.edu

Office hours:

W 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm and by

appointment online

This course focuses on information design systems and data visualizations. Considering the role of designers in shaping content for different audiences, students develop analytical skills for data organization and visual display. Through research, projects, exercises, sketches, and readings, students create visual narratives.

You will analyze information design systems and their cultural context. We will explore visual languages and learn tools for storytelling aimed at different audiences. You will use sketching as a tool for visual thinking to develop analytical skills for data organization and display. Typography, pictograms, infographics, information architecture, data visualization, maps and signage are some of the areas of exploration. **Prerequisites:** BFA Graphic Design status in Art Department, GRA3112 and GRA3193, or permission of department

GOALS

- › Develop visual and analytical skills for organizing and displaying information.
- › Shape and integrate complex information with clear and innovative visual systems.
- › Analyze multiple information design systems and their context.
- › Recognize the role of designers in shaping information for efficient communication historically and in the present.

OBJECTIVES

On completion of this course, students should be able to:

- › Integrate sketching as a visual thinking tool in the design process to generate ideas and find relationships between contents.
- › Research a topic and use narrative structures to articulate and represent visual form, content and message contemplating the end user receiving that content.
- › Generate innovative design solutions to the display of complex sets of data
- › Engage in discussions about information overload in society and methods in which different disciplines deal with information visualization.

METHODS AND EXPECTATIONS

The course will emphasize practical studio work both in and outside class, and will be complemented with online activities and readings informing the subject areas of exploration.

Special attention will be paid to the use of sketching as a tool for conceptualizing, generating and communicating ideas. Grades are based on the student's process class by class and not solely on the final outcomes. Students must arrive to class prepared with class materials and are expected to maintain their sketches, notes and research materials. Assignments are required to be completed by their

Academic Integrity

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see University Regulation 4.001.

Students with disabilities

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU's campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at www.fau.edu/sas/.

Counseling and Psychological

Services (CAPS) Center
 Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

designated due date. **All cell phones must be turned off during class. No texting, email or social media sites during class.**

COURSE MATERIALS

Students are required to have a flash drive or portable hard drive. Also pencils, pens, color pencils, other mark-making tools, paper, sketchbooks, scissors.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend all meetings, actively participate during class, submit work in progress, attend all scheduled critiques, participate in feedback sessions in-person and online, and submit assignments by the due dates. We only have six in-person meetings and attendance to these sessions is mandatory. Each absence to in-person meetings will drop total course grade 10 points. Students are responsible for completing and submitting work online through Canvas during the week. Attendance will be recorded on Canvas Roll Call.

Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University-approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student's responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences.

ENGAGEMENT POLICY

You are expected to actively take part in this course in the following ways:

- > Attend class meetings on time
- > Make work thoughtfully and with intention, and be prepared to show in time for discussions and critiques.
- > Be open to iterate and improve your work based on feedback. Your work can always be better
- > Be pro-active and read course materials, do research on your own and look for ways to improve your work.
- > Be prepared to meet all deadlines for critiques and process.
- > Actively participate in oral and written critiques giving generous feedback to your peers.
- > Care about yourself and your work, the work of classmates, and your future profession.

PUBLICATION

Sometimes I present student work to external audiences (in design conferences or publications). Students are credited as the creators. Please let me know if you are not comfortable with me sharing your projects in the future.

COPYRIGHT + CITING

All work for each assignment must be new work and your own work. When/if you use other's work it must be properly cited following the arts-standard, Chicago Manual of Style guidelines. Even if you are using assets that appear as "no attribution required" but that you didn't create, it is your responsibility to cite to

Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to fau.edu/counseling/

avoid misrepresenting your skills. Plagiarism and copyright issues are ethical responsibilities of a designer, but can be difficult to decipher. When in doubt please ask.

EVALUATION

The evaluation is based on:

Visual and conceptual skills—degree of visual development and quality of ideas

Search and risk taking—process of observation, inquiry and openness to search beyond conventions

Final products/craft skills—care and quality of execution of assignments to fit their purpose

Motivation and participation—timely completion of work and generous attention and input to classmates during critiques

GRADING

Final grades will be based on points:	A	93-100	outstanding work
Main Project	35	A-	86-92
Online activities	25	B+	79-85
Reading responses	15	B	72-78
Sketches	15	B-	65-71
Participation*	10	C+	58-64
		C	51-57
expectations			acceptable work; meets
Total	100	C-	44-50
		D+	37-43
		D	30-36
		D-	23-29
		F	0-22
			failure (no credit)

CLASS CALENDAR*

- WEEK 1** Introductions / Syllabus
Lecture: Introduction to Information Design
Introduction to main project
Introduction to personal data drawings project
- WEEK 2** Workshop/group work
Data sketches. Book: Dear Data / Video
- WEEK 3** Exercise 1: Graphs and charts
Reading 1: "The Functional Art" by Alberto Cairo. Chapter 1, Why Visualize: From Information to Wisdom.
Studio / Data sketches review
- WEEK 4** Discuss personal data project
Infographic project / research
Project statement
- WEEK 5** Visual Systems and typography lecture
Analysis of an infographic
Progress review - group meetings. Data sketches
- WEEK 6** Lesson: Tree of relationships
Reading: Essay Bubbles, Lines, and String: How Information Visualization Shapes Society by Peter Hall on "Graphic Design Now in Production"
- WEEK 7** Progress review - group meetings
Data sketches - Studio working day
Exercise: Abstraction through pictograms
Reading: interview to John Grimwade in the "The Functional Art by" Alberto Cairo
- WEEK 8** Critique version 1
Personal data - progress
Lesson: Maps and diagrams
- WEEK 9** Review exercises / Virtual individual meetings
Review Data Drawings
- WEEK 10** Lesson: Writing compelling copy
Individual meetings.
- WEEK 11** Review session / writing feedback
Individual meetings.
- WEEK 12** Project critique version 2 - Style guide

*The class schedule can change depending on the development of the course

WEEK 13 Data Drawings - display and presentation

WEEK 14 Test prints. Studio
Individual meetings.

WEEK 15 Final project presentations
Documenting your work / case study

Final exam: submit "Documenting your work"

REQUIRED READINGS

Design for Information. Isabel Meirelles

The Functional Art, Chapter 1. Alberto Cairo

Pictograms, Icons and Signs: A Guide to Information Graphics. Abdullah, Rayan.

Micro/Macro Readings. In: Envisioning Information. Tufte, Edward.

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

Information is Beautiful: www.informationisbeautiful.net/

Simple Complexity: www.simplecomplexity.net/

Information Aesthetics: www.infosthetics.com/

Visual Complexity: www.visualcomplexity.com/

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Dear Data. Stefanie Posavec and Giorgia Lupi.

Data Design: Visualizing Quantities, Locations, Connections. Per Mollerup

Big Data, Big Design. Helen Armstrong

Visual Function: An Introduction to Information Design. Paul Mijksenaar.

The Complete Graphic Designer: A Guide to Understanding Graphics and Visual Communication. Hembree, Ryan.

An Introduction to Visual Culture. Mirzoeff, Nicholas.

The Visual Culture Reader. Mirzoeff, Nicholas.

Designing Visual Interfaces: Communication Oriented Techniques.

Mullet, Kevin.

"The Language of Graphic Design" in *Art & Science.* Strosberg, Eliane.

Beautiful evidence. Tufte, Edward R.

Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative.

Tufte, Edward.

The Visual Display of Quantitative Information. Tufte, Edward.

Beautiful Data. The Stories Behind Elegant Data Solutions. Toby Segaran, Jeff Hammerbacher.