New York City College of Technology, CUNY

CURRICULUM MODIFICATION PROPOSAL FORM

This form is used for all curriculum modification proposals. See the [Proposal Classification Chart](http://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/collegecouncil/files/2014/08/2013-10-09-Proposal_Classification_Chart.pdf) for information about what types of modifications are major or minor. Completed proposals should be emailed to the Curriculum Committee chair.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title of Proposal** | Adding Writing Intensive attribute to COMD 3504 - Communication Design Theory |
| **Date** | 01/28/2021 |
| **Major or Minor** | Minor |
| **Proposer’s Name** | Jenna Spevack (on Fellowship Leave) / Douglas Davis |
| **Department** | COMD |
| **Date of Departmental Meeting in which proposal was approved** | January 22, 2020 |
| **Department Chair Name** | Douglas Davis |
| **Department Chair Signature and Date** | A picture containing clipart  Description automatically generated |
| **Academic Dean Name** | Gerarda Shields |
| **Academic Dean Signature and Date** |  |
| **Brief Description of Proposal**  (Describe the modifications contained within this proposal in a succinct summary. More detailed content will be provided in the proposal body. | This minor modification proposal contains the required documentation to add the WI designation to all sections of COMD 3504 - Communication Design Theory. |
| **Brief Rationale for Proposal**  (Provide a concise summary of why this proposed change is important to the department. More detailed content will be provided in the proposal body). | This course meets the requirements for Writing Intensive (WI) and will provide students enrolled in the COMD BFA with an additional WI course offering. |
| **Proposal History**  (Please provide history of this proposal: is this a resubmission? An updated version? This may most easily be expressed as a list). | Per instructions provided by the WAC committee and the Provost’s office, this request was submitted on 4/20/20. Due to miscommunications, we are resubmitting as a minor modification. |

Please include all appropriate documentation as indicated in the Curriculum Modification Checklist.

For each new course, please also complete the New Course Proposal and submit in this document.

Please submit this document as a single .doc or .rtf format. If some documents are unable to be converted to .doc, then please provide all documents archived into a single .zip file.

**ALL PROPOSAL CHECK LIST**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Completed CURRICULUM MODIFICATION FORM including: |  |
| * Brief description of proposal | X |
| * Rationale for proposal | X |
| * Date of department meeting approving the modification | X |
| * Chair’s Signature | X |
| * Dean’s Signature | X |
| Evidence of consultation with affected departments  List of the programs that use this course as required or elective, and courses that use this as a prerequisite. | NA |
| Documentation of Advisory Commission views (if applicable). | NA |
| Completed [Chancellor’s Report Form](http://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/collegecouncil/files/2014/08/2013-10-09-Chancellor_Report_Quick_Reference_Guide1.doc). | X |

**EXISTING PROGRAM MODIFICATION PROPOSALS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Documentation indicating core curriculum requirements have been met for new programs/options or program changes. | NA |
| Detailed rationale for each modification (this includes minor modifications) | NA |

**COMD MINOR MODIFICATION PROPOSAL CONTENTS**:

* [Rationale](#bookmark=id.oqgpud4q8vi8)
* [Chancellor’s Report form for WI](#bookmark=id.po84duj54nbe)
* [COMD 3504 Syllabus](#bookmark=id.kjer3lrdm75y)

**Rationale**

COMD 3504 - Communication Design Theory meets the requirements for Writing Intensive (WI) and will provide students enrolled in the COMD BFA with an additional WI course offering.

**Chancellor’s Report WI Form for COMD 3504 - Communication Design Theory**

**IV. Section AV: Changes to Existing Courses**

**Please include all fields, but only fill in the ones that are changing. Old information on the left should have a strikethrough line (see below), and new information on the right should be underlined**

**Changes to be offered in the COMD department**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CUNYFirst Course ID** |  |  |  |
| **Course Number and Title** | COMD 3504 - Communication Design Theory | | |
| **FROM:** |  | **TO:** |  |
| **Department(s)** |  | **Department(s)** |  |
| **Course Number** |  | **Course Number** |  |
| **Course Title** |  | **Course Title** |  |
| **Prerequisite** |  | **Prerequisite** |  |
| **Corequisite** |  | **Corequisite** |  |
| **Pre- or corequisite** |  | **Pre- or corequisite** |  |
| **Hours** |  | **Hours** |  |
| **Credits** |  | **Credits** |  |
| **Description** |  | **Description** |  |
| **Requirement Designation** |  | **Requirement Designation** |  |
| **Liberal Arts** | **[ ] Yes [ ] No** | **Liberal Arts** | **[ ] Yes [ ] No** |
| **Course Attribute (e.g. Writing Intensive, Honors, etc** |  | **Course Attribute (e.g. Writing Intensive, Honors, etc** | Writing Intensive |
| **Course Applicability** | **[ ] Major**  **[ ] Gen Ed Required**  **[ ] English Composition**  **[ ] Mathematics**  **[ ] Science**  **[ ] Gen Ed - Flexible**  **[ ] World Cultures**  **[ ] US Experience in its Diversity**  **[ ] Creative Expression**  **[ ] Individual and Society**  **[ ] Scientific World**  **[ ] Gen Ed - College Option**  **[ ] Speech**  **[ ] Interdisciplinary**  **[ ] Advanced Liberal Arts** | **Course Applicability** | **[ ] Major**  **[ ] Gen Ed Required**  **[ ] English Composition**  **[ ] Mathematics**  **[ ] Science**  **[ ] Gen Ed - Flexible**  **[ ] World Cultures**  **[ ] US Experience in its Diversity**  **[ ] Creative Expression**  **[ ] Individual and Society**  **[ ] Scientific World**  **[ ] Gen Ed - College Option**  **[ ] Speech**  **[ ] Interdisciplinary**  **[ ] Advanced Liberal Arts** |
| **Effective Term** | Spring 2020 |  |  |

**Rationale:** This course meets the requirements for Writing Intensive (WI) and will provide students enrolled in the COMD BFA with an additional WI course offering.

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|  | **NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY**  CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  Department of Communication Design |

**COMD 3504 Communication Design Theory**

* 3 class hours, 3 credits
* Prerequisites: ENG1121 & ARTH 3311
* Writing Intensive (WI)

## Course Description

An in-depth introduction to communication design theory, this course examines theoretical perspectives of design practice within the larger discourse of design and visual culture. Communication models, the nature of representation, the dimensions of context and semiotics are explored through critical readings in key documents from the early decades of the twentieth century to the present.

## Required Text

Armstrong, Helen. *Graphic Design Theory: Readings From the Field*, Princeton Architectural Press, 2009. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/citytech-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3387353>

NOTE: This text is available online via City Tech Library’s off-campus access.

## Additional Texts and Media

**Communication Design Theory OER:** [**openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/comdtheoryoer**](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/comdtheoryoer/)

This Open Educational Resource (OER) provides students interested in the field of communication design theory with a growing selection of contemporary and historical media to support their research. Students, faculty, and researchers may submit openly-licensed media for inclusion. Except where otherwise noted, content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

(See Bibliography for list supplementary texts)

## Content Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

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| --- | --- |
| LEARNING OBJECTIVES:  *For the successful completion of this course, students should be able to:* | ASSESSMENT METHOD:  *Instructional activity and evaluation methods. Students will:* |
| Develop a historical appreciation of communication design including designers, technologies, media, and processes, and creative expression, challenges, effects and significance. | ACTIVITY: View and analyze design projects in a variety of media including print, tv and radio, audio, video and film, illustration, signage, and other forms, in classroom and at home.  EVALUATION: Via weekly blog posts and journal entries, students submit critical analyses to design projects and readings chosen by the instructor. |
| Acquire an understanding of different forms, traditions, processes and styles of communication design in different national and international contexts. | ACTIVITY: View, read, and discuss the works of significant designers in the history of communication design.  EVALUATION: During online and in-person discussions and critiques, students will articulate thoughtful responses to examples viewed in Class Lectures and outlined in textbook readings. |

**General Education Objectives and Assessment Methods**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Demonstrate an ability to think critically, to distinguish between fact and opinion, in the analysis of different kinds of design. | ACTIVITY: Exploring material from a variety of sources in the classroom, fieldtrips, and readings, students will develop vocabulary and theoretical methods necessary to analyze relationships between formal elements (i.e., style, composition), processes and concepts/approaches to communication design.  EVALUATION: Through writing assignments and class presentations, students will be able to compare and contrast the movements, styles, concepts, and important practitioners of design. Students will be asked to identify and cite primary and secondary sources in discussion and writing assignments. |
| Demonstrate the ability to evaluate critical and historical materials for the study of design and to construct a coherent and substantiated argument, written in clear and correct prose. | ACTIVITY: Student research poster and journal will allow students to practice bibliographic skills; will require students to select an aspect of design theory, research its significance, propose a thesis, develop content and design an informational academic poster.  ACTIVITY: Reflective writing in journal and blog will help students to develop effective writing skills.  EVALUATION: Verbally and in writing, students are evaluated on their ability to communicate their understanding of design theory as it applies to design practice and history. |
| Develop communication skills and demonstrate the ability to reflect critically on the learning process. | ACTIVITY: Group discussions and peer critiques include review of readings, historical design examples, and research projects.  EVALUATION: Students articulate their knowledge of design styles, movements, and significant works, and are able to present a critical opinion of their learning process using reflective writing after each exercise in their design journals. |

**Course Assignments**

This course requires the completion of two short paper assignments (from 2 to 3 pages), an academic Research Poster Project, and weekly writing (blog/journal), classroom exercises, and field trips.

**Teaching & Learning Methods**

* Lectures and class discussion
* Research-based projects
* Research Journal
* Peer-to-peer exercises and critiques
* Weekly use of online forums for reflective writing
* Field trips

## Sample Weekly Topics with Suggested Readings & Activities

**Unit 1: Groundwork**

**Week 1:** The What and Why of Design Theory

**Topics covered:** What is Design Theory and why it matters.

**Readings:**

* Lupton, Ellen. “Foreword: Why Theory?” *Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field.* New York: Princeton Arch, 2009. 9-15. 6-8.
* Armstrong, Helen. “Introduction: Revisiting the Avant-Garde.” *Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field.* New York: Princeton Arch, 2009. 9-15.

**Sample Activity:** Group Exercise: How to read and understand theory.

**Week 2: Models of Communication**

**Topics Covered:** Communication Models and The Message Cycle

**Suggested Readings:**

* Davis, Meredith. “Communication Models” *Graphic Design in Context: Graphic Design Theory*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012. 14-31
* Terranova, Tiziana. *Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age*. Pluto Press, 2004. Selected pages

**Sample Activity:** Group Exercise: How to read and understand theory

**Week 3: What and How Things Mean**

**Topics Covered:** Representation, Context

**Suggested Readings:**

* Davis, Meredith. “The Nature of Representation” *Graphic Design in Context: Graphic Design Theory*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012. 34-53
* Kress, Gunther & Theo van Leeuwen. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. 2006. Selected pages.

**Sample Activity:** Research Project Journal Introduction

**Week 4: The Favors of Context**

**Topics Covered:** Gestalt, Social Schemas, Technology & Tools, Economic Context

**Suggested Readings:**

* Davis, Meredith. “The Nature of Representation” *Graphic Design in Context: Graphic Design Theory*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012. selections from 56-99
* Norman,Donald. *Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things*. Basic Books, 2005, Selected pages

**Week 5: Language, Signs and Symbols**

**Topics Covered:** Semiotics

**Readings:**

* Davis, Meredith. “The Nature of Representation” *Graphic Design in Context: Graphic Design Theory*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012. selections from 104-141
* Hall, Sean. *This Means This, This Means That: A User's Guide to Semiotics*. Laurence King Publishing, 2012, Selected pages.

**Sample Activity:** Group Exercise: Exploring the Taxonomy of Signs (icon / index / symbol)

**Unit 2: Origins**

**Week 6: Avant-Garde**

**Topics Covered:** Avant-Garde, Futurism, De Stijl, Materiality, Functionalism

**Readings:**

* Marinetti, F. T.. “Manifesto of Futurism.” Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field. New York: Princeton Arch, 2009. 20-21.
* Warde, Beatrice. “The Crystal Goblet or Printing Should be Invisible.” Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field. New York: Princeton Arch, 2009. 39-43.
* Helfand, Jessica and John Maeda. “Dematerialization of Screen Space.” Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field. New York: Princeton Arch, 2009. 119-123.

**Week 7: Constructivism**

**Topics Covered:** Role of Designer, Photography, Social Responsibility

**Readings:**

* Rodchenko, Aleksandr. “Who We Are: Manifesto of the Constructivist Group.” Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field. New York: Princeton Arch, 2009. 22-23.
* Lissitzky, El. “Our Book.” Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field. New York: Princeton Arch, 2009. 25-31
* Sagmeister, Stefan. “How Good is Good?” <http://www.graphicdesigntheory.net>

**Sample Activity:** Library Workshop

**Midterm**

**Week 8: Bauhaus**

**Topics Covered:** Visual Language, Design Methodologies and Tenants,

**Readings:**

* Ellen Lupton and J. Miller Abbott, eds., The ABCs of The Bauhaus and Design Theory, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996. Selected pages.

**Sample Activity:** Midterm Research Proposal Due

**Unit 3: Expansion**

**Week 9: International Style Evolution**

**Topics Covered:** New Typography, The Grid, Geometry, and Universalism

**Readings:**

* Müller-Brockmann, Josef. “Grid and Design Philosophy.” Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field. New York: Princeton Arch, 2009. 62-63.
* Tschichold, Jan. “The Principles of the New Typography.” Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field. New York: Princeton Arch, 2009.35-38.

**Sample Activity:** Group Exercise: Collaborative grid exercise

**Week 10: Mainstream Modernism and Corporate Culture**

**Topics Covered:** Branding and Assimilation of International Style

**Readings:**

* Rand, Paul. “Good Design is Goodwill.” Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field. New York: Princeton Arch, 2009. 64-69.
* Lasn, Kalle “1600-1886: The Birth of the Corporate ‘I.’” http://www.graphicdesigntheory.net

S**ample Activity:** Field Trip to design studio

**Week 11: Modern / Postmodern clash**

**Topics Covered:** Postmodernism, New Wave, Post-Industrial

**Suggested Readings:**

* Poynor, Rick. No More Rules: Graphic Design and Postmodernism. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. Selected pages.
* Docx, Edward. *Postmodernism is dead*. [Prospect Magazine](http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/features/postmodernism-is-dead-va-exhibition-age-of-authenticism), July 20, 2011

**Unit 4: Future Now**

**Week 12: Designing Design**

**Topics Covered:** Deconstruction, Graphic Authorship, Audience-centered

**Readings:**

* Barnbrook, Jonathon, et al. “First Things First Manifesto 2000.” <http://www.graphicdesigntheory.net>
* van Toorn, Jan. “Design and Reflexivity.” Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field. New York: Princeton Arch, 2009. 102-106.

**Sample Activity:** Research Poster Consultations (Reference: Lupton, Ellen. *How Posters Work*. Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, 2015)

**Week 13: New Paradigms or New Modernism**

**Topics Covered:** DYI, Free Culture, Metamedia, Universal Design, Relational Design

**Readings:**

* Manovich, Lev. “Import/Export, or Design Workflow and Contemporary Aesthetics.” Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field. New York: Princeton Arch, 2009. 127-132.
* Ellen and Julia Lupton. “Univers Strikes Back.” Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field. New York: Princeton Arch, 2009. 133-137.
* Blauvelt, Andrew. “Towards Relational Design.” http://www.graphicdesigntheory.net.

**Sample Activity:** Research Poster Consultations

**FINAL PROJECT:**

**Week 14:**

**Sample Activity:** Final Project Poster Presentations

**Week 15:**

**Sample Activity:** Final Project Poster Presentations

## Sample Course Assignments

**Research Journal & Poster Presentation**

*Description:* Throughout the semester students will keep a design theory research journal in which they will document and critically review/reflect on class readings, other media, and field trips. By midterm students will present a well-defined research topic and outline of a final poster to be presented at the undergraduate research poster presentation or similar at the end of semester.

*Outcomes:*

* demonstrate professional research practices (written, verbal, visual)
* connect graphic design history and theory with contemporary design field
* demonstrate connection between student's design practice and theoretical concepts covered in the course
* create an annotated bibliography and glossary
* demonstrate methods of primary and secondary source evaluation

**Writing / Blogging Assignments**

Weekly Blogging (minimum 1 developed post / 3 comments) (15%)

* Discussions from the classroom will carry over to the class site. Commenting will be used to reply to an initial blog post or other comments.
* Topics presented in class will require independent research and will be presented as developed posts on the class site for discussion and feedback.
* Research project documentation will be presented on the class blog for discussion and feedback throughout the semester.

(2) Reading Response Papers (2-3 pp) (10% each)

* After reading and reviewing two articles in the text, online and/or on reserve in City Tech’s library, students write a critical analysis of the assigned readings.

## Grade Distribution

Research Project / Poster 40%

Writing Assignments 25%

Research Journal 25%

Class Participation 10%

## Assessment Methods

Weekly classroom discussion and writing/posting/commenting assignments allow the instructor to assess individual participation and enable the instructor to see how well students comprehend the material and accurately apply terminology, strategies, and concepts. Students will meet (online or in-person) with professor at least twice during the semester to review and assess their research journal and research poster. Students are encouraged to ask questions in class and via the class blog regularly.

## Writing Intensive

This course is designated “Writing Intensive.” Students will be writing every week, in class and on the OpenLab via weekly blog posts, peer-to-peer comments, and journal entries. Part of this practice will be presenting thoughtful reflections on their learning process in order to demonstrate their comprehension of challenging theoretical concepts. The instructor will provide timely feedback and guide students as they develop their research proposals and final poster presentations. Students will also submit critical written analyses of historical design examples and readings leading to a formal 2-3 page research papers following standard citation guidelines.

## Attendance (College) and Lateness (Department) Policies

Attendance is taken and is important to success in this class. Both absences and arrival more than 15 minutes after the start of class will be marked. If excessive, the instructor will alert the student that he or she may be in danger of not meeting the course objectives and participation expectations, which could lead to a lower grade.

## Academic Integrity Standards

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion.

## Bibliography

**Main Text**

Armstrong, Helen. *Graphic Design Theory: Readings from the Field.* New York: Princeton Arch, 2009.

## Additional Texts and Media

Communication Design Theory OER: [openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/comdtheoryoer](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/comdtheoryoer/)

