



USC

DES 123Lg The Design Challenge: Exploring the Design Process

Units: 4

SP23—MW—Time: 03:00pm-04:50pm

Contact Hours:

3 hrs contact hours per week

Average 6 hrs outside of class per week (1 hour of class time and 2 hours of outside work (3 hours total) per week.)

Location: WAH118

Instructor: Tianxi Ren

Office: By appointment TBD

Office Hours: Friday 1 – 2 pm

Contact Info: Email: tianxire@usc.edu (reply within 24 hrs)

IT Help: Hayk Avetisyan

Hours of Service: By appointment

Contact Info: Email: havetisy@usc.edu.

Course Description

The Design Challenge: Exploring the Design Process is an overview of the creative design process and introduction to techniques to solve visual problems.

Through both lecture and studio formats, this course introduces the skills of design thinking and composition. The semester begins with an overview of the history of design and the design thinking process in the contemporary context. In the following weeks, students will learn fundamental design principles and practice visual communication in 2D and 3D forms to create and evaluate designs encountered in the larger environment.

At the beginning of the semester, each student will select a favorite product as the reference for the whole semester. As the semester goes on, students will learn to analyze the design of the product, conduct research, establish parameters, iterate through experimentation and prototypes, and develop successful, innovative solutions for redesigning and rebranding the product through a series of challenges and projects.

Rapid visualization and ideation techniques are introduced in visual communication workshops throughout the semester. These techniques, such as concept sketching, mind-mapping, thumbnail drawings, and mockups, are used to quickly and effectively capture and evaluate design iterations.

Students do not have to be artists or designers to benefit from an understanding of how visual literacy and the creative process can help in other disciplines or their everyday lives.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a solid understanding of design in the context of history and disciplines through a series of creative analyses, written, oral, and visual.
2. Develop critical design thinking skills through iterative design processes that identify and solve contemporary design problems
3. Design innovatively utilizing design fundamentals, design elements, and principles of design in both 2D and 3D forms
4. Apply rapid visualization and ideation techniques effectively in the analysis and evaluation of design iterations
5. Create successful design solutions through meaningful research, experimentation, and prototypes

Recommended Preparation: Oral, written, and visual communication skills

Course Notes

Grading type: Letter

Blackboard: All class information will be posted on Blackboard

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, Acrobat), Keynote/PowerPoint, Google Docs or MS Word, Google Spreadsheet or Excel, cellphone with web, camera, and video capabilities.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Required Books:

Graphic Design Thinking: Beyond Brainstorming, Ellen Lupton, 2011
Graphic Design: The New Basics, Ellen Lupton, 2015
Design is Storytelling, Ellen Lupton, 2017
The Design of Everyday Things: Revised and Expanded Edition, Don Norman, 2013

Other required readings and supplementary materials will be posted on Blackboard and in project briefs.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Class activities: Lecture/Discussion, Presentation/Demonstration, Critique/Workshop

Types of work: Challenges (problem-solving & discovering principles, 1-3 hours timed) and Projects (long, 2 – 4 weeks, complex, project-based problem-solving for “real world” contexts). Research and data gathering through observation, collection, and reflection as well.

Assessments: Rubrics, 1:1 desk critique, weekly feedback, formal critiques.

Grading Breakdown

Including the above detailed assignments, how will students be graded overall? Participation should not exceed 15% of the total grade, unless justified for a higher amount. The sum of percentages must total 100%.

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Challenges + Participation	100 + 100 = 200	10 + 10 = 20
Project I: Design Exploration	100	10
Project II: Color Story	200	20
Project III: Space Imagination	200	20
Project IV: Sound Scope	300	30
TOTAL	1000	100

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Assignment Submission Policy

All projects and challenges have due dates. Material may be delivered electronically by email (including sending me a URL for Dropbox) or if an artifact delivered to the studio on the appropriate due date.

Grading Timeline

I grade and give feedback throughout the semester.

Additional Policies

Please inform me (email or text) regarding the following: late assignments, missed classes, attendance expectations, use of technology in the classroom, etc.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings/Preparation	Deliverables
Week 1 Jan 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Overview • Self-introduction • Assign CHALLENGE I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the syllabus posted on Blackboard 	CHALLENGE I: Decorate your name tag
Week 2 Jan 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design as Basic Knowledge: Process and product • Assign CHALLENGE II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narman, D (2013) <i>The Design of Everyday Things</i>, Chapter 1, "The Psychopathology of Everyday Things" • Lupton, E (2011) <i>Graphic Design Thinking: Beyond Brainstorming</i>, Introduction, "The Design Process" 	
Week 3 Jan 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Fundamentals: Contrast + Figure-ground • Assign PROJECT I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lupton, E (2015) <i>Graphic Design: The New Basics</i>, P98-115, "Gestalt Principles" • LinkedIn Learning: https://www.linkedin.com/learning/universal-principles-of-design/figure-ground?autoplay=true&u=76870426 	CHALLENGE II: Introduce your favorite product - research
Week 4 Jan 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Fundamentals: Scale + Proportion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lupton, E (2015) <i>Graphic Design: The New Basics</i>, P60-67, "Scale" • UX360 Design: https://ux360.design/proportion-design/ 	
Week 5 Feb 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Critique • Visual Communication Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lupton, E (2011) <i>Graphic Design Thinking: Beyond Brainstorming</i>, P114-125, "Sprinting", "Alternative Grids" • LinkedIn Learning: https://www.linkedin.com/learning/photoshop-quick-tips/introducing-photoshop-quick-tips?autoplay=true&u=76870426 	PROJECT I: Design Exploration
Week 6 Feb 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Elements: Line + Shape • Assign CHALLENGE II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lupton, E (2015) <i>Graphic Design: The New Basics</i>, P32-47, "Point, Line, Plane" • LinkedIn Learning Part I: https://www.linkedin.com/learning/graphic-design-foundations-layout-and-composition/introducing-the-foundations-of-layout-and-composition?autoplay=true&u=76870426 	
Week 7 Feb 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Fundamentals: Color • Assign PROJECT II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lupton, E (2015) <i>Graphic Design: The New Basics</i>, P80-97, "Color" • LinkedIn Learning: https://www.linkedin.com/learning/topics/color-theory?u=76870426 	CHALLENGE III: Sketch your favorite product - experiment
Week 8 Feb 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Fundamentals: Balance & Emphasis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lupton, E (2015) <i>Graphic Design: The New Basics</i>, P48-59, "Rhythm & Emphasis" • LinkedIn Learning Part II: https://www.linkedin.com/learning/graphic-design-foundations-layout-and-composition/introducing-the-foundations-of-layout-and-composition?autoplay=true&u=76870426 	
Week 9 Mar 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Critique + Visual Communication Workshop • Assign CHALLENGE IV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lupton, E (2011) <i>Graphic Design Thinking: Beyond Brainstorming</i>, P126-139, "Kit of Parts", "Brand Languages", "Mock-Ups" • LinkedIn Learning: 	PROJECT II: Color Story

		https://www.linkedin.com/learning/photoshop-quick-tips/introducing-photoshop-quick-tips?autoplay=true&u=76870426	
Week 10 Mar 13	Spring Recess No Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lupton, E (2017) <i>Design is Storytelling</i>, P34-37, "Storyboard", P88-96 "Personas" 	
Week 11 Mar 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Fundamentals: Perspective + Focus Assign PROJECT III 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lupton, E (2015) <i>Graphic Design: The New Basics</i>, P128-139, "Hierarchy" LinkedIn Learning Part III: https://www.linkedin.com/learning/graphic-design-foundations-layout-and-composition/introducing-the-foundations-of-layout-and-composition?autoplay=true&u=76870426 	CHALLENGE IV: Storytelling your favorite product - prototype
Week 12 Mar 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Critique Visual Communication Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lupton, E (2011) <i>Graphic Design Thinking: Beyond Brainstorming</i>, P126-139, "Kit of Parts", "Brand Languages", "Mock-Ups" LinkedIn Learning: https://www.linkedin.com/learning/photoshop-quick-tips/introducing-photoshop-quick-tips?autoplay=true&u=76870426 	
Week 13 Apr 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Fundamentals: Rhythm + Motion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lupton, E (2015) <i>Graphic Design: The New Basics</i>, P232-247, "Time and Motion" Netflix: Sky Ladder: The Art of Cai Guo-Qiang https://www.netflix.com/title/80097472 	PROJECT III: Space Imagination
Week 14 Apr 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Theory: Human Centered Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narman, D (2013) <i>The Design of Everyday Things</i>, P8-10, "Human-Centered Design", P10-30, "Fundamental Principle of Interaction" TED Talk: https://www.ted.com/talks/david_kelley_human_centered_design 	
Week 15 Apr 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-Progress Critique Visual Communication Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LinkedIn Learning: https://www.linkedin.com/learning/photoshop-quick-tips/introducing-photoshop-quick-tips?autoplay=true&u=76870426 	
FINAL Apr 24	No Exam	N/A	PROJECT IV: Sound Scape

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086
eetix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776
osas.usc.edu

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-3340 or otfp@med.usc.edu

chan.usc.edu/otfp

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

See the [CCO Resources](#) page for most current version.