Field Examination

Multimedia Critique, Design, and Theory

May 2001

INSTRUCTIONS:

You have four hours to complete this examination.

You must answer *one* question set (1a and 1b or 2a and 2b) from Section A (Critique and Design) and *one* question from Section B (Theory). Section A is worth 60 marks in total: 40 marks for 1a or 2a; 20 marks for 1b or 2b. Section B is worth 40 marks.

SECTION A: CRITIQUE AND DESIGN

Question 1
a) Choose ONE area of content that is covered by BOTH assigned texts. Compare the strengths and weaknesses of the design of the two texts. With reference to at least THREE titles from the Theory list and THREE from the Critique and Design List, attend to at least two modes (visual images, written text, spoken text, sound, video) employed by the text.

b) Imagine that the two assigned texts are published by the same organization, and that you have been hired by the organization to redesign the two texts so that their designs complement one another and closely as possible. As your point of reference, suggest changes in the design of ONE of the texts to help accomplish this goal, providing detailed reasons for your choices. Your answer must make reference to at least FIVE different titles (chosen from either reading list).

OR

Question 2
a) Drawing on one theorist (or one body of theory) of visual design from the reading list and THREE texts from the Critique and Design list, develop a design critique of ONE of the assigned texts that identifies and discusses some of its most significant features.

b) Imagine that you have been hired by the organization to redesign the text above for a specific audience and context of use. Identify that audience and context, and drawing on at least FIVE titles (from either or both categories of the Reading List), propose and discuss a set of appropriate, specific changes that would improve the delivery of the text.

SECTION B: THEORY

Question 1

"The place of language in public forms of communication is changing. Language is moving from its former, unchallenged role as *the* medium of communication, to a role as *one* medium of communication, and perhaps to the role of the medium of comment, albeit more so in some domains than in others, and more rapidly in some areas than in others." (Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*). Discuss with reference to at least THREE works from the Theory list.

Question 2

Hypertext theorists have suggested that hypertext reflects a paradigm shift in human thought. With its capacity for multilinearity, nodes, links and networks, hypertext should be seen, as one theorist has noted, as a direct response to the strengths and weakness of print. Do you agree or disagree that hypertext represents such a radical shift? In your answer, make reference to at least THREE works from the Theory list.

Question 3

Drawing on a literary text of your choice and at least THREE works from the theory list, discuss the issues surrounding the adaptation of the literary work to TWO new media productions (e.g., electronic games, CD-ROMs, DVDs, Web sites).