ASSIGNMENTS

Participation - E-mail | Class Discussions | Workshops - 25%

This is an interactive course that will be run much like a studio. It won't work unless students actively participate in discussions both in the classroom and on the e-mail list. You will also be graded on your effort to complete workshop exercises.

Course Notes - 10%

The readings in this course are not meant to be forgotten at the end of the term. You should leave the course with key concepts that you can employ in writing, design, and thinking for the rest of your life. To this end, all students are required to take notes on each reading and submit them periodically for review. It is essential to bring the notes to each class: you will use them during the workshops. No notes, no workshop.

My recommended note-taking method is as follows:
1. Do the reading.
2. As you read, underline or outline passages that you feel are of significance. What is significant? Anything that will help you explain the reading to others, or anything that reminds you of other readings in class or readings that you have conducted elsewhere.
3. Transcribe the significant passages in a text document, along with bibliographical information and page number.
4. Under the transcribed passage, write a comment about why it is significant.

Group Presentation - 10%

Each assigned group will prepare a presentation based on the reading for that week covering key points, terms and points of contention or discussion. Your presentation should be as attentive to stimulating discussion as it is to the theatrics of power point. This is not simply a summary of the reading, although the group must give a comprehensive overview of the text; instead, the goal of the presentation is to "translate" the weekly reading so that it is relevant within the context of previous and future course discussions. The group must make use of audio/visual materials of their choice to enhance the quality of the presentation. Don't just present the text -- engage your colleagues.

Grade Breakdown:
Comprehensiveness (did you cover the most important parts of the article?): 5%
Relevance (did you relate the reading to other course readings or current events?): 3%
Innovation (did you make an effort to use A/V materials or other methods to enhance the learning experience?): 2%

ASSIGNMENT 1 - Hypericonomy - 25%
Due Thursday, October 19

This project requires you to complete a "hypericonomy," a collage-like theoretical imagetext based on autobiography, history, pop culture, and academic discipline. Additional details will be provided in course readings, discussions, and ongoing instructions. Since there are no specific rules for what a "hypericonomy" looks like, students will be required to develop their own research methodologies and modes of presentation. You will also be required to write a 3-5 page essay that describes the theoretical rationale for your specific project.

ASSIGNMENT 2 - Picturing Theory (select ONE option below) - 30%
Iteration 1: Thursday, November 30
Final Iteration: Thursday, December 7
Picture Theory Poster
Drawing on your knowledge of a specific theorist covered in the course, develop a detailed poster that encapsulates this person's work. Your poster should serve as a sort of hypericon that uses images and text to capture the "essence" of an entire text or a specific concept. You will also be required to write a 5-7 page essay describing how your design choices achieve the goal you have set for yourself with this assignment. Additional details provided in class.

Theory Book Cover
Drawing on your knowledge of a specific theorist covered in the course, develop a book cover for one of his/her works. Like the poster project above, your cover should serve as a sort of hypericon that captures the "essence" of an entire text. Unlike the poster, however, you are dealing with a specific set of design constraints, and you must also take into account other covers created for the same text. You will also be required to write a 5-7 page essay describing the rationale for your book cover design.

McLuhan / Fiore Essay
This project is for students who prefer a straight writing assignment. You will apply Alex White's "seven design components" to dissect McLuhan / Fiore's *The Medium is the Massage*. How are each of these elements treated in the book? What suggestions would you make to improve the book by drawing on the seven components? You should include, in your essay, reprints of pages from McLuhan and also from White to illustrate your argument.

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