

Dynamic Typography

DIMA 155

Spring 2009

Instructor: **Rafael Macho**

rafaelmacho [at] ucla [dot] edu

www.propelo.tv

rm [at] propelo [dot] tv

www.rafaelmacho.com

TA: Xárene Eskandar

xarene [at] ucla [dot] edu

Tuesday, Thursday, 9:00 - 11:50 AM, Broad Art Center, Room 4230

Class website: <http://classes.design.ucla.edu/Spring09/155>

Syllabus

Course Description:

Studio, six hours; outside study, nine hours. Preparation: completion of preparation for the major courses. Enforced requisites: courses C101 or 104 or C106, and 154A. Integration of print and digital information technology, with continued emphasis on fully integrating visual vocabulary with mastery of conceptual and creative procedures. P/NP or letter grading.

Class Structure:

Classroom time will be used primarily to review work either as class discussion or individual meetings. Every week you will have a new assignment due the following class. Work is to be presented according to instructions by 9:00am.

Class Description:

In this class students will be introduced to strategies of visual communication through kinetic elements, focusing on form, speed, rhythm, orientation, color, texture, and quality of motion. Students will explore the typographic language in a variety of exercises dealing abstractly or concretely within motion. Through analyzing contemporary and historical examples, such as film and TV titles, music videos, commercials, video art, as well as exemplary typography work in print design, students will develop their own potential for expression through dynamic typography.

The first four exercises are quick projects focusing on learning how to express visual communication concepts through motion and sound. These exercises will progress along with to

the learning curve of the software After Effects in order to let students refocus their creativity and take control of the technical aspect. For the final project each student will create a project based on the theme “alphabet from A to Z” using various techniques including motion and sound. For each letter, the student will visualize a word starting with each letter. Students will realize the project while sustaining a chromatic constancy, with transition and rhythm. These assignments deal with control of the time, chromatic constancy, editing, and the visual typographic representation in time and space. It is advised to limit the use of software tools and to concentrate on the concept. The entire semester focuses on the software Adobe After Effects as a recognized platform tool, in combination with editing tools such as Premiere or Final Cut.

Other software such as Flash, Processing, stop motion such as Dragon, must be discussed with the instructor specific to the current exercise if allowed. Production techniques may range from filmmaking digital or film, hand draw animation, stop motion animation to editing video footage. Each student will also give a research presentation about a designer and discuss his or her contributions to design, animation, and typography.

Projects will be evaluated based on their concept, aesthetic qualities, and execution. All exercises must be completed in order to pass the course. Late assignments will reduce the assignment's grade by one partial grade (B to B-) each class day they are late. Exercises are only considered as complete when they are accessible from the course website. Attendance is mandatory. More than two absences without the instructors' permission (medical certificate might be requested), before the class meetings, will decrease the overall grade by one partial grade for each missed class. Three times running late will be considered as one unexcused absence. Students must attend at least three DIMA sponsored lectures during Spring quarter 2009.

Grading:

15%: Participation, Attendance, and Research Report. 60%: Exercises 1, 2, 3, and 4 (15% each).
25%: Final Project

Required Reading

“How To Be a Graphic Designer Without Losing Your Soul”, by Adrian Shaughnessy.

Recommended Readings

Tibor Kalman, Perverse Optimist

Milton Glaser, The Design of Dissent

Stefan Sagmeister, Things I have learned in my life so far

Steve Katz, Visualizing from Concept to Screen

Good Magazine, The Eye Magazine, Print,...

Research Report:

Deadline: Tue, April 7

Dynamic Typography topics: experts in animation, motion graphics, and type design.

Choose one of the designers or a company from the following list of pioneer artists and designers in motion: Trailer designer, Film Title designer, TV Title designer, or Film Title companies:

Genevieve Gauckler	Imaginary Forces
Saul Bass	Psyop
The Light Surgeons	Prologue
Smith & Foulkes	Pleix
Pablo Ferro	Maurice Binder
Werner Jeker	Doug Aitken
Milton Glaser	Oscar Fischinger
Saul Bass	Kuntzel Deygas
Tibor Kalman	Bruce Mau

Your research report is a 10-minute in-class presentation to your peer students. This presentation is based on research. The following structure is expected:

1) Introduction

Short statement about who the individual/group is and what they are known for.

2) Background

Biographical information, the life and times of your subject.

3) Work

Description of the person's or studio's work and achievements. Include at least 10-20 full-frame visuals to give a representative picture of their work.

4) Discussion

Why is the work significant to our context?

5) Conclusions

Your evaluation and opinions.

6) References

Make sure you find a minimum of three books, articles, essays, websites about the topic.

References should be based on the Chicago Citation Style.

Be certain to practice and time your presentation before presenting in class. You will be evaluated based on the substance of your research and clarity of your presentation. You may use HTML, PDF, or other web-accessible technology to present your topic. Only presentations accessible from the class website will be accepted. Optimize the amount of information per page, legibility of typography and images based on a presentation context and a screen resolution of 1024 x 768 pixels.

EXERCISES:

Exercise 01: Contrast

Exercise 02: Words in motion

Exercise 03: Visual Speech

Exercise 04: Movie Main Titles

Midterm Review

Final Project: Alphabet

Create all exercises in the size 960x540 pixels (NTSC, Square Pixels). This is the aspect ratio of today HD 16:9. Save all your compositions in high quality. Develop storyboards for all of your projects. Photoshop storyboards are 16:9 aspect ratio. A convenient size in Photoshop is to keep working within a 960x540 resolution. Avoid working with lower resolution. Create a single template for developing storyboards, and use this system for each of your exercises. Use the H.264 compressor for your projects.

Xárene will give you specifications on how to format your work for uploading it to the site.

Exercise 01: Contrast

Review: Thursday, April 7 & 9, sketches, storyboard.

Deadline: Tue, April 14

Create 2 animations of 10 seconds each. Each animation will be based on a contrast such as “harmony – chaos”. You will choose two contrasted word combination of from the list below.

Find a way to express each word with a smart transition between them. The key is to find a solution within a minimalist list of ingredients. Use a pre-composition based on a grid of 21 by 12 squares. Place this pre-comp (pre-composition) and place it in a composition of 960x540 pixels.

Sound: Create you own sound mouth made! Nothing too laborious.

Color: Only black/white.

Timing: 2x 10 second

Delivery: 960x540 Square pixel , 24fps, 10 second.
Half-resolution 480x270, 24fps, H264 compression.

File(s): Download the AEP (After Effects) file “Exercise_01_ready.aep”

Any question regarding delivery, contact TA Xárene.

Words: **Slow – fast**
 Boring – Exciting
 Strict – Free form
 Small – Big
 Harmony – Chaos
 Skinny – Overweight

Start searching for some ideas like sketching on some grid paper. The key is to develop your idea while keeping in mind the limitation. Think about scale, size, position, and orientation to create different kinds of movement. Restrict your color palette to black, white, and shades of gray. Do not use squares to create a representational shape/figure! Search for abstract, iconic ideas. Use mouth-made sound to help you enhance your idea.

Exercise 02: Words in motion

Review: Thursday, April 16, sketches, storyboard.

Deadline: Tue, April 21

Create a 30 second continuous animation going from one word to another one. Find the inherent value of a word and animate it. Find a balance between readability and smoothness, while captivating your audience.

Choose 5 words from the list and set up in one typeface of your choice. Chose a typeface that is neutral enough (don't use a typeface like Old Western, old English Script, etc.) in order to concentrate on the motion and idea.

Please avoid stretching of typeface or any distasteful deformation. Play with scale, position, movement and opacity in an undefined space either in 2D or 2.5D (meaning using 2D elements in a 3D space within After Effects).

A new key function in After Effects will be introduced: masks. Find a way to express each word with a smart transition between them. You can multiply the elements in addition to your chosen word if necessary. No other element can be used, no graphics, no extra shapes.

Sound: SFX is optional.

Color: Monochromatic or duotone.

Tools: After Effects, 2D or 2.5D. Transform & Mask tools.

Timing: 20–30 second

Delivery: 960x540 Square pixel , 30fps, 20-30 second.

Half-resolution 480x270, 24fps, H264 compression.

Words: Falling – Rebound – Swirl – Explode – Balance

Rotate – Engine – Evaporate – Dance – Compute

Grow – Repeat – Collapse – Terminate – Rebirth

Exercise 03: Visual speech

Review: April 23, chosen speech, timing of words (time code)

Deadline: April 28

Choose a unique speech (Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Obama, Timothy Leary...) and select a part that will fit within 50-60 second. Establish a time sheet with each word time length.

With your time sheet ready, take your video camera, go outside and find words that will match each words of your chosen speech. Following your list you will have to find these words either in an urban environment, on street posters, billboards, grocery, etc.

Should you have difficulty to find some words, create them and place them within the context of the ones you already have found. Should your speech not allow to show every word, you can skip a few in order to empower the key word.

After digitizing your footage, lay your sound and start editing your footage with simple cut between your words while matching the soundtrack.

- Sound:** Speech
- Color:** Color can be used to emphasize part of the speech. Use it wisely.
- Tools:** Final Cut Pro, Premiere, After Effects.
- Timing:** 50-60 second
- Filming:** SD or HD video camera. 4:3 or 16:9 (better).
- Delivery:** SD: 720x540 or HD: 1280x720 | Square pixel | 24p or 30fps.
Lower resolution: SD: 360x270 or HD output to 480x270, 24p or 30fps, H264 compression.

Exercise 04: Movie Main Titles

- Review:** Thursday, April 30, sketches, storyboard, planning of the team.
- Deadline:** Tue, May 12
- Note:** Work with a teammate

This project investigates the relationship between moving images and the use of typography for the names and credits of the cast. Create a 60-90 second main titles sequence. Find out what are the timing & proportions (size) between the different credits. Look at other main titles sequences for advice. You will team with another student in order to create the project. You will have to schedule and plan your cooperation in order to meet the deadline. Your team will have to plan its resources and cooperation in order to achieve the deadline and project.

The theme is: **birth – death – rebirth.**

Create a sequence within the theme, mixing imagery and typography. A fictional credit list will be provided to you at the beginning of the exercise. You will have freedom to choose an appropriate visual, technique, typography. This exercise is about working together within a tight deadline.

You will have to develop your project in 3 steps:

- 1) **Storyboard:** developing an idea with a storyboard. Images must be found, created, to realize a mood, visualize your idea. You will find
- 2) **Shot, Create** your background visual. Live action, photos, anything else.
- 3) **Edit** and **compose** your typographic elements.

Sound: Chose an existing song or create you own soundtrack.

Color: free

Timing: 60-90 second

Delivery: 960x540 Square pixel or 1280x720 , 24fps, H264 compression.

Midterm Review

Reviews: Tue, May 05, Thu May 07

For the individual midterm review, your work must be viewed on DVD NTSC, D1. Use your original compositions to render movies at 720x480, and create an interface for navigating between them. Re-render your 16:9 composition to fit within the spec of DVD NTSC, D1 if necessary. Hand in your DVD at the beginning of the review.

Possible Guest Lecturer, Thursday May 07.

FINAL PROJECT: ALPHABET

During this class you created a series of exercises dealing with strategies of visual communication through kinetic elements, shapes and text, focusing on motion, speed, rhythm, color, editing and quality of animation. In the remaining 4 1/2 weeks of class you will develop a concept and create a piece following a complete iterative (??? What is iterative, is that a word???) design process.

Alphabet:

You will create a film showcasing the 26 letters of the alphabet. For each letter you will find a word and create a clip between 1-4 seconds. The total sequence will be between 39-104 seconds (26 x 1-4 seconds)

Color:

Your chosen words must sustain within a chromatic, either warm or cold:

Warm hues: Magenta – Red – orange – yellow

Cold hues: Aqua– Cyan – Blue – Purple

The project is divided into four parts, each evaluated separately:

Part 1: Idea / Storyboard

Part 2: Animatic

Part 3: First Pass

Part 4: Final Product

The content for your project should be a series of quick visuals accompanied with a typographic treatment of the chosen word. Be direct, bold, and efficient. If you choose a complex visual you may not be able to fit within the allocated timing. The juxtaposition of quick and spontaneous visuals will create a masterpiece where sound and visuals collide, juxtapose, and intersect, creating an exciting and surprising final.

Part 1: Idea / Storyboard

Find a word for each letter. Develop your chosen words in the form of sketches and storyboards

to be reviewed individually on Tue, May 19. The quality of the sketches, storyboards and illustrations must be appropriate to communicate your idea and sufficient for a class discussion. Based on individual discussions, select one idea and develop a storyboard of at least 26 frames to be presented to the class during the Thursday, May 21 class session.

Part 2: Animatic

Produce an animatic of the entire sequence by either sketching, finding a visual for each letter and development.(due Thu, May 26).

Part 3: First Pass

Implementation of your ideas, produce a rough edit of the entire sequence for Tue June 2, with as much elements as you can.

Part 4: Final Product

Complete your animation for the final screening on Thu, June 11.

A final DVD for the class is due on Friday (end of day), June 13 or Monday the 15. The DVD should contain your final project, the animatic from Part 2, and your four previous exercises from the class.

Examples:

Apple /red	Ketchup
Blood /red	Lard
Charcoal /red-yellow	Marmalade
Danger /red	Nail
Eraser /pink	Oven
Fire /red-yellow	Punch
Gag (someone gags throat) –red	Quail
Heart /red-Pink	Rose
Ivy /reddish plant	Strawberry
Jab	...