DESMA 104 Spring 2014 Mid Term Take Home

Please double space and use margins so that you average close to 250 words per page. You may include illustrations if you choose (making the page count increase accordingly). Following this schema, the mid term should be between seven and twelve pages. Please indicate by number which question you are answering and include a bibliography at the end in Chicago/Turabian style [see https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/PDF/chicago_turabian_uwmadison_writingcenter_june2013.pdf for reference].
You MUST turn in a paper copy at the Hammer next week AND send your TAs an e-copy.

SHORT ANSWERS: Choose three out of the following four short questions. Please answer each in at least 250 words and no more than 500:

1. Do you think Bruce Mau’s napkin sketch about the expanded power of design is accurate? Please support your argument, either pro or con, with reference to class discussions and at least two of the authors we have read so far.

2. How can we relate the production of design to the structures of the economy? Choose two writers we have read this term and discuss how they see culture work and its relation to the marketplace.

3. John Heskett writes of the difference between the utility of design and the significance of design. What does he mean by this distinction and do you agree or disagree with his assessment. Make reference to the debates over form and function as well.

4. When we think about relational aesthetics, we tend to concentrate on fine art. Can Nicolas Bourriaud ‘s concepts apply to the realm of design as well?

SHORT ESSAYS: Choose two out of the following three short essays, and please answer each with a minimum of 500 and a maximum of 750 words:

5. The readings and class discussions have offered alternate arguments about design as styling, surface, and marketing. How do the readings from Susan Sontag, John Heskett, Hal Foster, and Denise Gonzales Crisp alternately celebrate or critique concepts of design as decoration and culture as style.

6. Susan Sontag claims that “any sensibility which can be crammed into the mold of a system, or handled with the rough tools of proof, is no longer a sensibility at all. It has hardened into an idea.” How can her comments be seen as liberating? On the other hand, what aspects of the discussion of taste and sensibility do you think might limit an artist, designer, or curator? Please make reference to MOMA’s Design and the Elastic Mind show and website and Blobjects & Beyond.

7. For those of you interested in expanding the discussion outside of the realm of the class so far, read Nathan Jurgenson’s short essay, The IRL Fetish [http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/the-irl-fetish/]. Can his observations about social media and “the ease of digital distraction” making “us appreciate solitude with a new intensity” be applied in any way to the development of new models of design and culture work? Please be specific and refer to actual designs, designers, artists, programmers, apps, and technologies.