

**Syllabus**

Fall 2025

GRA4196c Design Futures

TR 8-10 / 316 FAC

TR 5-7 / 314 FAC

University of Florida

School of Art &amp; Art History

Prof. Brian Slawson

**Course Description:** This is a studio-based design course where we will make creative projects. To generate a conceptual framework for these communication design projects, we will use Design Futures methods for envisioning plausible, probable, possible or preferred future scenarios. Beyond the usual creative work, the course activities will involve on-going feedback/critique from the instructor and peers, project presentations, and readings/discussions.

**Note:** This course has been “Ideas & Styles” that was focus on exploring design history through making creative work. Our program now has two dedicated design history classes, so the old course content is very redundant and we are adjusting the curriculum – toward “design futures”.

**Course Topics:** This class will provide opportunities to engage with the following topics: design thinking, futures thinking, collaboration along with individual work. gathering academic research and visual inspiration, problem identification, idea-generation, iterative concept development, creative thinking, critical thinking, strategic thinking, using design tools/technologies to make communication design artifacts, and generally using your “muscles” of imagination, curiosity, and insight.

**Office Hours:** Wednesday Afternoons, 3-4pm. As always, you can also talk to me during, outside of class, or via Zoom.

**Contacts:** You can email me at – [slawson@ufl.edu](mailto:slawson@ufl.edu) – or even better post an email directly through Canvas e-Learning. The SAAH office telephone contact is: 352-392-0201. My Zoom details: <https://ufl.zoom.us/my/brianslawson>

**Weekly Schedule:** See the Canvas e-Learning site for a detailed day-to-day calendar. But, in general the first three weeks course includes two small exercises and a discussion. The remainder is dedicated to two longer projects, one is a group collaboration and the other solo. Canvas is also used to submit all assignments and make announcements.

**Grading and Evaluation:** It is crucial to understand the grading process for any of your classes. For this course, the two exercises and one discussion are averaged for 20% of the final grade. The two projects are the remaining 80%. Each project has a set of submission requirements listed on Canvas, and if you fundamentally meet these goals the project is awarded full points. The grade is derived from

completing activities (example: documenting your process, turning things in on time, presenting your work for feedback, posting and sharing your work in the hallway, and so on). Essentially this works similar to a pass/fail mechanism. This process is very performance-based as opposed to subjective.

**Attendance and Participation:** Remember that the most important feedback comes during the in-progress critiques from your instructor and peers. Engagement with the studio learning environment is vital for success: learn from others and likewise contribute to the community of learners in the studio. Attendance is assumed necessary to complete all of the project requirements. Excused absences follow standard university policy (including illness, religious holidays, athletic competition, jury duty).

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

**Official UF Grading Policy:** You can view the UF letter grade to GPA structure here...

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

For a class in your major the final grade of C or better is required for it to count toward your program. Here is how to convert points to a letter grade for this class...

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	Not Passing
93-100	90-92.9	87-89.9	83-86.9	80-82.9	77-79.9	73-76.9	Less than 73

**Accommodations for students with disabilities:** Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

<https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>

**Textbooks, Materials:** There is no textbook for this class. Lab fees cover the basic use of design area printing and production facilities. As always you may need to supplement the provided materials depending on your specific project needs.

**Technologies:** Access to a computer and Adobe Creative Suite is required for this class. We may use other services usually provided for free through UF (such as LinkedIn Learning, Navigator AI).

**Technology Help:** If you need assistance with technology access or support you can ask the instructor for advice, talk with our teaching lab specialist, or contact the UF Help Desk.

<https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/> or call 352-392-4357

**Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals (in Canvas). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens.

<https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>

**Honor Code and Classroom Behavior:** A reminder that we must act professionally and practice collegiality in our shared studio community. You can review the student conduct and honor code at this link: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-%20code-student-conduct-code/>

**Online Course Privacy:** If we use Zoom video, the instructor has the capability to record meetings. There are no plans for our class sessions to be audio-visually recorded. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

## **HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

<https://umatter.ufl.edu/>

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

<https://counseling.ufl.edu/>

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need. <https://shcc.ufl.edu/>

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies). <https://police.ufl.edu/>

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608.

<https://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center>

## **ACADEMIC SUPPORT**

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu)

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services. <https://career.ufl.edu/>

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. <https://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

## **LINKS TO OFFICIAL UF POLICIES**

Absences, Religious Holidays, Illness, 12-Day Rule.

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Students with Disabilities Office

<https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>

General Grading System for Calculating GPA

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Gator Course Evaluation System

<https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>

Student Honor Code

<https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/4-040/>

Disruptive Student Policy

<https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/1-008/>

And finally the required syllabus contents, in-class recording policy, a variety of academic assistance links, and campus health & wellness resources

<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>