

SYLLABUS

GRA3816C: Design Thinking

3 credits | Fall 2025 | August 21st-December 12th, 2023

Instructor:

Walton Dale (Walton)

sketchmo@ufl.edu (prefer emails through canvas)

Office Hours: 8:15-9:15 Tuesdays or by appointment via email

PURPOSE:

Design Thinking is interdisciplinary, human-centered, collaborative, contextual, and iterative. It offers a dynamic framework to approach idea generation, creative investigation, and divergent thinking. In this course, students learn principles of design thinking through exercises, brainstorming, sketching, case studies, and presentations.

This course is studio-based. The goal is to originate and then develop substantial creative projects using design thinking methods. **Design thinking is not about the final product but the process of originating ideas and creative investigation.**

Design thinking is cross-disciplinary in nature, collaborative, iterative, and human-centered.

Core concepts involve empathy, curiosity, imagination, organization, and observation. To support the creative work we will have reviews and feedback, presentations, discussions and in-class exercises.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course students will be able to

- Synthesize and apply previous graphic design learning; integrate typography & visual methods.
- Organize and visually articulate complex information in a meaningful manner around communication and audience objectives.
- Design visual/interactive/environmental systems using design research.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course is composed of 3 core projects; research, creative development, check-ins/feedback, revisions and presentations, design exercises, and content reactions.

This course is scored out of a total of 1000 possible points. The breakdown of the deliverables for this course are as follows:

- projects 600 points (200 points each)
- attendance 200 points
- reactions
 and exercises 200 points (50 each)

PROJECTS

All projects will be scored according to the brief given at the outset of each project, **however participation and meeting all deadlines within a project schedule will be a large portion of each project's final grade.** Projects will consist of research and planning, creative execution, feedback, creative revisions, and final submission.

ATTENDANCE

In class time is critical. This course aligns with the UF attendance policy found [here](#). The expectation if you are going to miss class is that you let me know before or at the time of class, not after the fact, unless there's an emergency which precludes you from notifying me. If you have more than three excused or unexcused absences you will need to setup a meeting with me to discuss your progress and continued participation in class. Attendance grade is scored out of 200 possible points, each class period is 7 points.

Religious Holidays

If you know that you will miss class time due to religious holidays, please inform me before the holiday (whether recognized by the university or not).

Sickness

I do not require doctors notes, but please let me know if you are sick ahead of class, so we can make arrangements.

PARTICIPATION:

reactions:

Throughout the semester there will be content presentations, lectures and guest speakers, after these content-focused sessions students will submit a written reaction, up to one page, with assessment and reaction to the material presented. These will be due the week following the presentation. Additionally, students may be asked to find their own content around specific topics and write reactions to.

design exercises:

Throughout the semester we will dedicate part of class time to design exercises, these will be quick assignments focused on speed and out of the box thinking, most will span one to two class sessions and will be graded on completion of the exercise

classroom engagement:

During the course of the semester, there will be open discussion, full class critiques and feedback sessions. Each student is expected to participate by sharing thoughts, asking questions and engaging with classmates.

GRADING

Your grade in this class is based on earning points through your project score, attendance and participation. There will be feedback from me and your classmates every step of the way. Projects will be evaluated based on research and concept, plan, creative development, conceptual development, attention to detail, and formal resolution.

Scale:

A 100-94	A- 93.9-90	
B+ 89-87	B 86-83	B- 82-80
C+ 79-77	C 76-73	C- 72-70
D+ 69-67	D 66-63	D- 62-60
F 59 and lower		

LATE WORK

Project grades will reflect final deadlines for projects but also for meeting each deadline along the way. Final work must be submitted by the final deadline, failure to meet the final deadline results in an automatic 15% reduction in the project grade. If there are circumstances which will prevent you from submitting final work on time please contact me to discuss plans for an altered timeline before the deadline.

CLASS TIME

Class is every week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:15pm-8:10pm, unless otherwise stated by the instructor.

GENERAL CONDUCT

We are trying to create an open space to discuss issues and topics that matter to each of us individually, and collectively, as people and as designers. We may not always hold each other's views, but we must always hold each other with respect. If you have an issue with or are offended by a certain comment or topic, please come to me and we will work it out together.

MATERIALS & DEVICES

In order for you to fully participate and meet course learning objectives, students taking graphic design courses are required to have appropriate hardware, software and access to the Internet. See this website for more details regarding hardware, software, specifications, and some purchasing options, including discounts for UF students.

Because computer access is an institutional requirement, computer costs are designated as allowable costs for students who qualify for Financial Aid. Accordingly, Student Financial Affairs has added costs for access to a computer into budgets. For more information, contact your financial adviser in the Office of Student Financial Affairs directly.

- Adobe Creative Cloud Suite (UF Student Discount available)
- Laptop that meets the requirements on the SA+AH tech requirements page.
- Webcam (should already be pre-installed on your computer, if not get an external webcam)

There is a classroom printer which is available for **classwork only**.

TEXTS & REFERENCES

There are no required texts for this course. All assigned readings will be provided to you.

PLATFORMS

You will all be required to set up and have immediate access to these platforms during the semester:

CANVAS:

For storing the syllabus, assignments, maintaining student grades, and primary channel for communication.

ALL THE REST

VIDEO POLICY

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. ***Some lectures from either the instructor or guest speakers may not be recorded at the discretion of the speaker.***

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student

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. Click [here](#) for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluer.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](#).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity means that if you use words, images, or ideas that are not your own, you must cite them. Claiming the work of others as your own is a serious breach of professional ethics and will result in a failing grade in this class. The U F Honor Code specifies a number of other behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

ACCOMMODATIONS

I will make every effort to accommodate students who request and require assistance, in accordance with the American Disabilities Act. If you have accommodations through the university, please let me know.

MENTAL HEALTH + WELLNESS

I am here for you! This is a difficult school year for everyone and we are all adjusting. If you need/want to talk about your mental health, please reach out! If you would like to speak with a mental health professional, which I highly recommend for every student, the school information is as follows:

CAMPUS RESOURCES

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

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.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

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; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

Link to UF Official Syllabus Policies:

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

SCHEDULE

August	Week 0	Thurs	8/21	Introduction & Questionnaire
	Week 1	Tues	8/26	Project 1 Kickoff
		Thur	8/28	Project 1 Check-in
September	Week 2	Tues	9/2	Project 1 Work Session
		Thur	9/4	Project 1 Check-in
	Week 3	Tues	9/9	Project 1 Work Session
		Thur	9/11	Project 1 Check-in
	Week 4	Tues	9/16	Project 1 Work Session
		Thur	9/18*	Guest Speaker, content #1
	Week 5	Tues	9/23	Project 1 Final Check-In
		Thur	9/25	Project 1 Due Project 2 KO
	Week 6	Tues	9/30	Project 2 Work Session
October		Thur	10/2*	Project 2 Check-In content reaction #1 Due
	Week 7	Tues	10/7	Project 2 Work Session
		Thur	10/9	Design Exercise #1
	Week 8	Tues	10/14	Project 2 Check-In
		Thur	10/16	Project 2 Work Session
	Week 9	Tues	10/21	Project 2 Work Session
		Thur	10/23	Project 2 Final Check-in
	Week 10	Tues	10/28	Project 2 Work Session
		Thur	10/30*	content #2
November	Week 11	Tues	11/4	Project 2 Due Project 3 KO
		Thur	11/6	Project 3 Check-In Content Reaction #2 Due
	Week 12	Tues	11/11	Veterans' Day NO CLASS
		Thur	11/13	Project 3 Check-In
	Week 13	Tues	11/18	Design Exercise #2
		Thur	11/20	Project 3 Check-In
	Week 14*	Tues	11/25	Thanksgiving Holiday NO CLASS
		Thur	11/27	Thanksgiving Holiday NO CLASS
December	Week 15	Tues	12/2	Project 3 Final Check-In
		Thur	12/4	Project 3 Due
	Finals Week	Thur	12/11	All Work Due

*I will not be in class these days, on 9/18 we will have a guest speaker and a reaction assignment will be due the following week.