A Model for Liberal Arts
in Design Education:

A presentation by
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A Model for Liberal Arts in Design Education:
An interdisciplinary, two-semester senior level course, dealing with structure of narrative.
Graphic Design Department, College of Art and Design
The University of the Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1. Overview of the UArts Graphic Design Program:

The Graphic Design Program at The University of the Arts guides students through sequential instruction—beginning with the fundamentals of design, letterform design, typography and drawing in the sophomore year, and ending in the application of visual principles and methods to conceptual problem-solving in the senior year. The program equips students to observe clearly, analyze carefully, and think critically and creatively. Students learn how to become successful visual communicators by applying the core principles of graphic design.

2. Senior Design Studio (a core studio class):

Senior Design Studio focuses on the design of narratives. The course develops proficiency in typography, data gathering, organization, exposition, and execution of a project through appropriate means. The course is divided into two assignments, one for each semester. Special presentations are scheduled by the instructors to review the degree project proposals with the students. Writing specialists from the University's Liberal Arts Division and outside critics are also involved in these reviews.

Introductory Project:

The introductory assignment of the fall semester is a short autobiographical story. Students analyze different narrative structures and explore alternative methods of visualizing narration: continuous text, typographic expression, diagrammatic representation, timeline or map composition, and text/image combinations. These initial exercises serve as a testing ground for the second and last project in the final semester which is completed in the second semester, the senior degree project. Students develop topics and conduct research for the degree project throughout the fall semester.

The Degree Project:

The degree project, initiated at the onset of the second semester, is the culmination of all the methods and principles learned through three years of study in Graphic Design. Students are required to select an existing text from any source providing a rich opportunity for visual interpretation. The format for final presentation of this text may be in the form of a book, or in digital or other media. The text may reflect a student's area(s) of interest and is to be investigated broadly for its visual and intellectual scope. Students may also seek the advice or input of outside consultants for the documentary and research phase of this project, providing they are appropriately acknowledged. Students learn how to analyze and gather data, to thoroughly evaluate its visual potential, and to arrive at an appropriate choice of media for interpreting their selected texts.

At the end of the spring semester, a panel consisting of faculty, consultants and outside critics formally reviews the degree projects. All panelists (usually 8-12) are asked to evaluate each project based on the following criteria:

1. The clarity of the communication.
2. The overall spirit, originality and vitality of form and expression.
3. The quality of formal typographic craftsmanship.
4. The overall physical craftsmanship and all material aspects of the final presentation.

In summation, these criteria substantiate the cogent principles of graphic design. Their successful implementation is considered the capstone of the four-year undergraduate program at The University of the Arts.

The syllabus for the above outlined course program was created in 1997 by Hans-U. Allemann and Inge H. Druckrey. Over the past six years, program changes and adjustments have been made based on the teaching faculty's experiences and observations. The course program continues to evolve under the guidance of the present faculty: Hans-U. Allemann, Chris Myers and Kerry Polite.

Note: The complete course syllabus and selected work samples can be found in Steve Heller's recently published book Teaching Graphic Design: *Course Offerings and Class Projects from Leading Graduate and Undergraduate Programs.*

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The senior degree projects class is a one-year course program, concentrating on structure and visual interpretation of narratives. The course allows for broad-based experimentation and explorations across different media platforms. Based on the student's technical proficiencies, the final project may be interdisciplinary and may include print, video, or interactive digital media. The presentation by Hans-U. Allemann, Kerry Politeand Susan Viguers will give a program overview and will feature student work from this capstone course program. The projects presented will include two studies based on an autobiographical text from the Fall semester, and three degree projects (two books and one in digital/interactive form) from the Spring semester.

Bios of Presenters

Hans-U. Allemann, a graduate of the School of Design, Basel, Switzerland, is a principal of Allemann Almquist & Jones, a communication design consultancy based in Philadelphia. He also holds an Adjunct Professorship in Graphic Design at The University of the Arts. As an educator, Hans has been affiliated with this institution for the past 30 years. He has been instrumental in the shaping of the Graphic Design Department's internationally recognized program. His design work has been noted nationally and internationally by major professional organizations and publications. Some of his poster work is included in collections both in the U.S.A. and in Europe. Hans was a founding member of the AIGA/Philadelphia Chapter and is a recipient of the AIGA Fellows Award. In 1998, he was inducted into the Alliance Graphique Internationale (AGI). Hans was the 2005 recipient of the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching.
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Kerry Polite is a principal of Polite Design, a Philadelphia-based graphic design consultancy. He was a printmaking major at the Santa Barbara Art Institute and is self taught in the field of graphic design. The work of Polite Design has been cited by the AIGA Communications Graphics Show, AIGA 50 Books Show, Communication Arts, Graphis, The Mohawk Paper Show, and is included in the permanent poster collection of The United States Library of Congress. Much of his work is informed by his personal experimentation and exploration in photography, book arts, collecting, collage, digital media, and printmaking. He has been actively involved the AIGA Philadelphia Chapter for twenty years. He currently holds an Adjunct Professorship in Graphic Design at The University of the Arts.
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Susan Viguers is Professor at The University of the Arts and Director of the MFA Book Arts/Printmaking Program. For 13 years (until 2004) she was Director of the University Writing Program. She has a Ph.D. in English from Bryn Mawr College and has published extensively—scholarship in the areas of English Renaissance drama, pedagogy, and children's literature, as well as creative non-fiction (With Child, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) and poetry. Her artist's books have been shown in numerous museums and galleries, among them, the National Museum for Women in the Arts, exhibitions of the Pyramid Atlantic Book Fair at the Corcoran, and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (Egypt) and are included in many Special Collections at such institutions as Yale University, Columbia University, University of California at Irvine, RISD, and MICA. She is recipient of the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching.
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Projects Presented
Graphic Design Department, College of Art and Design
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Fall Semester

1. *Basket Case* (Fall 2003)
    A story about an embarrassing experience on a high school trip to Germany involving a basket and a train.
    Student: Elizabeth Hoffman
    Faculty: Kerry Polite

2. *My Big First Day* (Fall 2003)
    An experience of a young person's preparation for and commute to work on the first day of a new job.
    Student: Andrew Rementer
   Faculty: Hans-U. Allemann

Spring Semester

1. *Krik Krak, Children of the Sea* (Spring 2003)
    A fictional story about a young Haitian couple in which the boy, seeking a better life, becomes a boat person and the girl who stays behind.
    Student: Dorothy Ogé
    Faculty: Kerry Polite

2. *Yukiko* (Spring 2001)
    "The Crane Wife" A Japanese Folk Tale, interpreted through expressive type and symbolic images.
    Student: Sal Nistico
    Faculty: Hans-U. Allemann

3. *Movies within Movies* (Spring 2003)
    An interactive project on the art of movie titles. This project features motion graphics, created by the student, and an interface that allows navigation to information on directors, selected title sequences, and movie clips.
    Student: Michael Feldman
    Faculty: Chris Myers

Elizabeth Hoffman
Basket Case

Fall Semester 2003
Introductory Project
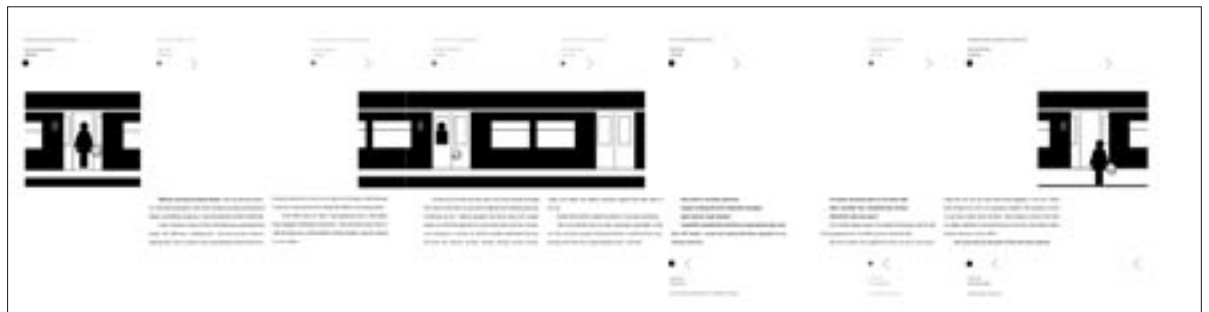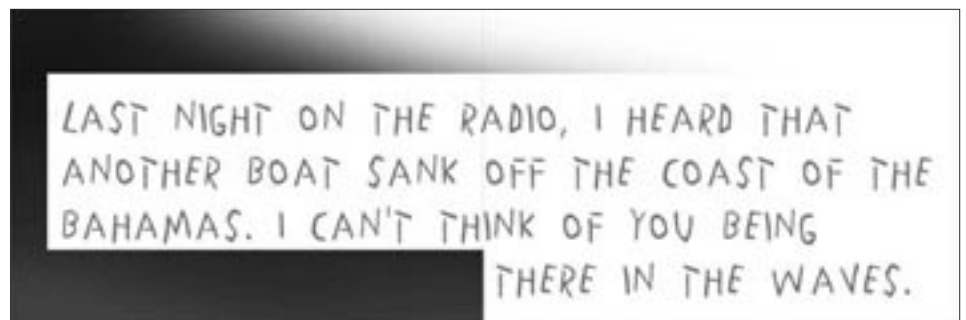
Andrew Rementer
My Big First Day

Fall Semester 2003
Introductory Project

Dorothy Ogé

Krik Krak, Children of the Sea

Spring Semester 2003
Senior Degree Project

LAST NIGHT ON THE RADIO, I HEARD THAT
ANOTHER BOAT SANK OFF THE COAST OF THE
BAHAMAS. I CAN'T THINK OF YOU BEING
THERE IN THE WAVES.

Sal Nistico

Yukiko

Spring Semester 2001
Senior Degree Project

Sal Nistico

Yukiko