

DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS

COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2026

DD1101: Design History - 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR: Mohsen Ahi Andy
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OFFICE HOURS: Please contact me
to make an appointment

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CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: Design History provides students with an understanding of the history of design and how it is intertwined with cultural histories. This course introduces students to practices and principles of design that evolved over time to create the context for design as a contemporary practice. This course is lecture-based and requires students to conduct research as well as writing.

PREREQUISITE(S): N/A

COREQUISITE(S): N/A

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Meggs' History of Graphic Design, Author: Meggs and Purvis, Publisher: Wiley, Edition: 6th, Year Published: 2016.

The textbook is available electronically through the Northwestern Polytechnic Library via ProQuest Ebook Central and can be accessed using your NWP credentials. Click the link for access:

<https://nwp.on.worldcat.org/oclc/946992970>

Recommended texts:

- Thinking Through Graphic Design History: Challenging the Canon – Aggie Toppin
- Graphic Design Bible: The Definitive Guide to Contemporary and Historical Graphic Design for Designers and Creatives – Theo Inglis
- Graphic Design: A New History, Eskilson, Stephen J. 3rd ed., Yale University Press, 2019.

DELIVERY MODE(S): Lectures, Discussions, Presentations, Documentary screenings, and Research activities

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Acquire an understanding of major movements and figures in design history.
- Develop their vocabulary as it relates to the field and history of design.
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate about design history, theory, and concepts through writing, discussion, and oral presentation.
- Interpret and identify historical design influences in contemporary examples.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.alberta.ca>.

**** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability.**

EVALUATIONS:

Assignment	Value
Essays 1-2-3	15%

Designer/Movement Presentation	15%
Group Timeline Project	20%
Module 1 test	10%
Module 2 test	10%
Final Exam	15%
Class Discussions & Participation	15%

Evaluation Criteria

Students will be evaluated based on the following:

- Understanding of graphic design history, movements, designers, and concepts.
- Ability to analyze and discuss historical and contemporary design examples.
- Quality of research, use of sources, and citation practices.
- Clarity and effectiveness of written and oral communication.
- Participation in class discussions and activities.
- Professionalism, organization, and timely completion of assignments.

Late Assignments

Deadlines must be met to avoid late penalties. Please allow sufficient time to complete, export, and submit your projects. Late submissions will be penalized as follows:

- 5% deduction within the first 24 hours after the deadline.
- 20% deduction for up to one week after the deadline (including weekends).
- 30% deduction for projects submitted more than one week late, up to two weeks past the deadline.
- Up to 50% deduction for projects submitted more than two weeks late, if received on or before the last day of class.

Please note that most institutions will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Grading Chart for courses with Alpha Grading:

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines		Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100		C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94		C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84		C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79		D+	1.3	55-59

B	3.0	73-76		D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72		F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Week	Topics	Readings / Essays
F Sep 4	Course overview, what is Graphic Design History? Art history vs. design history	
M Sep 7	Labor Day- No class	
Module 1: Premodern		
F Sep 11	Ancient Writing Systems, Prehistoric Communication	Megg's. chapter 1
M Sep 14	Alphabets in the Mediterranean world, Classical lettering	Megg's. chapter 2-3 Essay 1 intro.
F Sep 18	Medieval and Gothic handmade books Group Timeline Project intro.	Megg's. chapter 4
M Sep 21	Renaissance to the Enlightenment printing, Garamond and old-style typefaces	Megg's. chapters 5 to 8.
F Sep 25	Baskerville, Didot, Bodoni, Rational typography Students' presentation 1	
M Sep 28	Industrialization and design reform in the nineteenth century	Megg's. chapter 9
F Oct 02	Victorian design, Advertising posters, Decorative typography Students' presentation 2	Gerry Beegan, The Mass Image, chapters 6 & 7 Essay 1 due date
M Oct 05	Module 1 test	
Module 2: Modern		
F Oct 09	Arts and Crafts movement, The Private Press movement and Bruce Rogers.	Megg's. chapters 10-11
M Oct 12	Thanksgiving Day- No class	

F Oct 16	Art Nouveau, Posters and illustration, Alphonse Mucha, Toulouse-Lautrec Students' presentation 3	Silverman, Art Nouveau in Fin de Siècle France, Introduction & C15 Essay 2 intro.
M Oct 19	Pictorial Modernism. Students' presentation 4	Megg's. Chapters 12-14 Johanna Drucker, The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, pp. 105-168
F Oct 23	De Stijl, Constructivism & Bauhaus philosophy Students' presentation 5	Megg's. Chapters 15-16 Helen Armstrong, Graphic Design Theory: Reading from Field, pp.20-31
M Oct 26	European Modernism, The Swiss School, Dutch modernism	
F Oct 30	Dada and Surrealism Students' presentation 6	Megg's. Chapters 13 Clement Greenberg, "Avant- garde and Kitsch". Essay 2 due date
M Nov 02	Module 2 test	
Module 3: Contemporary		
F Nov 06	Propaganda and information campaign	Megg's. Chapters 13 Essay 3 intro.
M Nov 09	Fall Break- No class	
F Nov 13	Fall Break- No class	
M Nov 16	International style Students' presentation 7	Megg's. Chapters 17-19 Maud Lavin, "U.S. Design in the service of Commerce and Alternatives", in Clean New World: Culture, Politics and Graphic Design.
F Nov 20	Documentary screening	
M Nov 23	Visual Identity	Megg's. Chapters 20-21

	Students' presentation 8	
F Nov 27	Postmodern, International modernism and the Postmodern response Students' presentation 9	Megg's. Chapters 23 Helen Armstrong, Graphic Design Theory, pp.70-89 and 102-108
M Nov 30	Digital Age Students' presentation 10	Megg's. Chapters 24 Lev Manovich, "The Language of New Media", pp. 66-114
F Dec 04	Graphic design after Postmodernism, Interactive graphic design	Essay 3 due date
M Dec 07	Final Exam	

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Students are expected to dedicate a minimum of three hours outside of class each week to complete assignments and prepare for exams.

Regular attendance is required, as this course includes ongoing in-class activities, lectures, and tutorials. Information covered in class will not be repeated except under special circumstances.

Absences of up to two classes may be excused in cases such as illness or emergencies; students must notify the instructor as soon as possible in these situations. For each additional absence beyond this limit, a 2% deduction from the final grade may be applied. Consistent attendance is essential to support your learning, participation, and overall success in the course. Students who miss six or more classes may not be able to meet the course requirements and risk receiving a failing grade.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/polytechnic-leadership/policies-directory>.

****Note:** all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

USE OF AI TOOLS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS:



AI is becoming an increasingly important part of the design industry, and we encourage you to approach it thoughtfully and responsibly throughout your studies. In this class we treat AI as a practical tool that can support your work, rather than a separate subject to study, with your own ideas and judgement always at the centre. You're welcome to use AI in your project work, for example to help with idea development, research, or production, as long as you're open about where and how you've used it. We place a strong emphasis on originality, critical thinking, and transparent use, so that AI supports your creativity rather than replacing it.

Note: Specific expectations, guidelines, and permitted uses of AI may vary between projects. The instructor will communicate the appropriate use of AI, including any project-specific requirements or limitations, as part of each assignment.