



University of South Australia

Course information

VSAR 2101 (2006)

Contemporary Design Issues

Course Coordinator: Dr. Lycia Trouton

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This *Course information* needs to be read in conjunction with *Extra course information* available at: <http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/extracourseinformation/>. It can also be accessed from the course homepage.

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME

Hello there! This subject unit will extend the grounding gained from history and theory covered in VSAR year 1. It is hoped that this unit will enhance your practical experience, Graphic Design and Illustration, studio 3.

This subject puts a contemporary perspective on some of the key discourses in Western design, with a focus on Australia and America, with a lesser emphasis on European advances. Shifts in design practice will be used to discuss a broader postmodern context of cultural and theoretical concerns.

The assessments tasks are designed to develop your skills in looking, analysing and thinking – through writing, speaking and participatory dialogue in tutorials. To these ends, you will be asked to research topics that draw on a wide range of sources.

My research approach is that of a material culture perspective. I am interested in ideas of speed, memory and erasure in a world driven by data accumulation, design and consumption.

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<http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/Courses/course.asp?Course=012813>

SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS

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COURSE OVERVIEW

COURSE STATEMENT

This course is intended for second year Visual Communication students studying the history and theory of design. It is concerned with aspects and perspectives on current debates in design theory and practice. The focus is upon ethical, social and political relationships to design within the context of global consumerism.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To engage students with the current influences in contemporary design practice.
- To articulate the way meanings are constructed in contemporary design and society.
- To demonstrate an ability to make informed and ethical design decisions.
- To build the research and critical writing skills of students.

PREREQUISITE(S)/ ASSUMED KNOWLEDGE

It is assumed that students have studied design history and theory that concerned itself with issues arising from the medieval period to the end of the twentieth century.

TEACHING AND LEARNING ARRANGEMENTS

This course is taught through lectures and tutorials.

UNIT VALUE OF COURSE 4.5

GRADUATE QUALITIES PROFILE

The following table shows the proportion of UniSA Graduate Qualities applied to assessment in this course.

No.	Graduate quality	Unit weighting
1	Body of knowledge	1.8
2	Lifelong learning	0.5
3	Effective problem solving	0.5
4	Work autonomously and collaboratively	0.5
5	Ethical action and social responsibility	0.2
6	Communicates effectively	0.5
7	International perspectives	0.5
	Total	4.5

LEARNING RESOURCES

TEXT(S)

You will need **continual** access to the following text(s) in order to complete this course.

The library will hold one copy of the nominated text books and therefore you will need to acquire the book(s):

Hollis *Graphic Design Concise History Revised Edition*, Thames and Hudson.

Julier, G. 2000, *The Culture of Design*, Sage, London.

Meggs and Purvis *History of Graphic Design 4th edition*.

Readings, set and recommended for every week (see weekly breakdown of lectures online).

Essential readings for each lecture and tutorial will be available. These electronic readings are listed on the course home page (see below for access).

Please note that the electronic links for the readings are not the only place to access these readings. The best quality text is in the hard copy of the book or journal that the reading is taken from and these can be found in the library.

COURSE HOMEPAGE

<http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/Courses/course.asp?Course=012813>

EXTRA COURSE INFORMATION

This booklet provides important information relevant to the study of all your courses. This can be accessed at: <http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/extracourseinformation/> and from the course homepage.

OTHER RESOURCES

Albrecht, D Lupton, E and Holt, S 2000, *Design Culture Now*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York.

Campbell, C 1989, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumption*, Blackwood, Oxford.

Crowley, D and Heyer, P 1999, *Communication in History*, Longman, New York

Heskett, J 2002, *Toothpicks and Logos*, OUP, Oxford.

Howells, R 2003, *Visual Culture*, Polity, Cambridge.

Papanek, V 1985, *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change*, 2nd edn, Academy, Chicago.

Papanek, V 1995, *The Green Imperative*, Thames and Hudson, London.

Journals

Design Issues (on-line) <http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?ttype=4&tid=19>

Design Philosophy papers http://www.desphilosophy.com/dpp/dpp_journal/journal.html

Design Studies

http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaleditorialboard.cws_home/30409/editorialboard

Please note that these journals are available as electronic resources via the Library catalogue.

ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Form of assessment	Weighting	Due date
Written assignment (research report)	35%	Week 8 tutorial. 13 Sept.
Written assignment (essay)	50%	Week 13 tutorial 1 November
Tutorial presentation based on lecture attendance and reading	15%	Weekly (assigned at beginning of term)

ASSESSMENT DETAILS

Assignments should be submitted to your tutor during your tutorial and will be returned to you by your tutor during the tutorial (for assignment 1) and mailed to you if you produced a stamped (\$1)/ addressed envelope (for assignment 2) within approximately two weeks. Please note that assignments, which are *not* submitted to the tutor, must be submitted to the School of Art Office so that they can be *date stamped* and passed on to the relevant tutor. Do *not* put them into my pigeonhole. It is in your interests to include a stamped envelope for assignment 2 because marked assignments are left unattended in boxes in the foyer of the art school and students who have been awarded Ds and HDs have had their assignments stolen.

Assignment 1 — Research report - due week 8

Write a research report in the form of an essay of 1500 words on one of the following topics. The aim of the assignment is to enable you to approach your major essay in a methodical way. Analyse 3 examples of design to support your argument, ensure that these examples are scanned into the document and a list of illustrations is provided. Ensure that the essay is thoroughly referenced and a substantial bibliography is attached. At least 5 books, 3 journal articles and 2 internet sites or e-references should be included in the in-text references.

1. Robert Venturi rephrased the modernist Mies van der Rohe's dictum of 'less is more' into 'less is a bore'. Comment on this in relation to design.
2. Frederic Jameson "suggests that 'pastiche' is the characteristic mode of [postmodern] culture." (Seldon, R 1989, *A reader's guide to contemporary literary theory*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, p.73).
3. How young is too young? Consider the implications of advertising design and the youth market.
4. 'Historical references, decoration, and the vernacular were disdained by the modernists, while postmodern designers drew upon these resources to

expand the range of design possibilities' (Meggs, P 1998, *History of Graphic Design*, John Wiley, New York, p. 432.

Assignment 2 – Essay due week 13

Write an essay of 2500 words on one of the following topics. Analyse between 3 and 4 examples of design to support your argument, ensure that these examples are scanned into the document. Provide a list of illustrations. Ensure that the essay is thoroughly referenced and a substantial bibliography is attached. At least 6 books, 3 journal articles and 2 e-references should be included in the in-text references.

1. Julier writes about design moving 'beyond the object.' Discuss this view of contemporary design. (Julier, G 2000, *The culture of design*, Sage, London, p.10). Discuss.
2. 'The environmental crisis is not only a technological problem, but a cultural problem as well' (Verbreek, P.P. and Kockelkoren, P. 'The Things that Matter', *Design Issues*, Vol 14, No.3, 1998, p.28). Discuss.
3. Consider the implications of 'need' and 'want' within the context of product advertising and present a critical appraisal of four appropriate advertisements.

Tutorial Presentation (7 minute presentation maximum time allowed and 500 word synopsis)

Read and prepare a synopsis of one of the tutorial readings as the basis for leading a tutorial discussion. This will then be presented in class and submitted as a brief paper of 500 words. Your presentation should include support material such as wider reading and visual examples. In the presentation, you should demonstrate a comprehension of the key concepts and arguments of the text and an ability to encourage participatory discussion.

Graduate Qualities: All GQs are relevant

Formatting: Use 12 point text and print on one side of the page only. Ensure that a completed cover sheet is attached to the front. No plastic sleeves or binding please; staple on the top left hand corner.

Marking criteria:

1. Thorough referencing. Please *study* and apply the 'Harvard' or 'The Documentary Note System' both can be found via the Library website <http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learningconnection/students/Lguides/lrngdes.asp#ref>
 - It is your responsibility to study and apply this, if you have difficulty please see a learning advisor at the Learning Connection. Essays that do not have adequate references risk not being marked and given an F2. Web-based references *must* have authors otherwise they are not considered reliable for academic purposes.

2. Ensure that you adhere to the structure for essay writing. This information is summarised below and assignment help is also available on the library home page:

<http://www.library.unisa.edu.au/resources/VL/eass/assignments.asp>

Essay structure

An essay has a beginning (to tell the reader what the essay is going to be about); a middle (to tell the reader what the essay is about); and an end (to tell the reader what the essay has been about). These three parts correspond to the introduction, the body and the conclusion.

The **introduction** contains at least some of the following stages:

- An analysis of the key terms in the topic
- A brief background to the topic
- A statement of your thesis /overall argument and a *brief* justification for this.
- A statement of the stages / sections that your essay will progress through
- A statement of the scope of the essay (e.g. dates, places, cultures/ e.g. 'from 1920-1950' or 'Indonesia only')
- A statement of the methodology used to exemplify your argument; e.g. state the design/art examples that you have chosen and any major theorists that you may be depending upon.
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The **body** contains presentation of arguments to support the thesis /argument with *substantiating evidence*. This evidence must consist of references of other author's viewpoints and design/art examples of works. The reasons for your selection of examples must be made very clear in relation to the essay topic.

The **conclusion** may contain:

- A summary of the outline of the essay
- A restatement or confirmation of the thesis of the essay as a result of the evidence provided in the body.

1. Analysing the essay topic

Most of the assignment topic you will receive will be in the form of

- A command or commands

E.g. *Discuss the influence of culture on visual symbols in late Medieval Europe.*

Or

What is the potential of new technologies on institutions of power?

Or

A quote or statement followed by a question or command:

e.g. *"The mass media spelled the end of high culture." Discuss.*

It is important to analyse the topic carefully to ensure that you focus your essay appropriately and actually answer the question. This can be done by breaking the topic into three parts:

- The **directive** – which tells you the kind of job you have to do
- The **information** – which is what you have to focus on
- The **limits** – which are limits set on time, word length and sometimes the resources to be used.

The directive

In the assignment topic there will be a word or words that tell you to do something – for example, to 'discuss' or 'analyse' or 'explain'. You need to be able to locate all the directive words in your topic as there may be more than one. If your assignment is written as a question it is easier to find the directive word or words by turning the sentence around to make it into a command.

E.g. *What is the potential impact of new technologies on institutions of power?*

Becomes

Assess the potential impact of new technologies on institutions of power.

The information

The information part of your assignment topic is the part which gives you the focus of your assignment – or what or have to apply your directive to. You can identify the information part of a topic by taking the directive word you have identified and asking the question 'what/' after that command.

The limits

There are three main types of limits you will have to take into account in your assignment topics.

These are;

- Time limits
- Word limits
- Any additional instructions.

3. Keep to the topic and ensure correct grammar and spelling.

Re-submission: Assignments may be re-submitted or re-marked in the following circumstances:

Requests for resubmission on the basis of an F1 ONLY must be made in writing to the course-coordinator (not the tutor, guest lecturer or programme director) within 5 working days of return of the assignment. Resubmissions are only graded up to a P2 but the grade may also remain at an F1. Resubmissions may be made only once for an assignment.

TUTORIAL ASSESSMENT

Please note that attendance at both lectures and tutorials is compulsory, each student is graded on the quality of his/her participation in the tutorials. This quality is dependent upon good note taking during lectures and a thorough reading of the set readings. There will also be specific tutorial tasks that your tutor will focus upon; these will include addressing the tutorial question for the week (available in all the course lecture notes on the course home page, on-line resources) and bringing images to discuss in the class.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ALL ASSESSMENT

All students must adhere to the University of South Australia's policies about assessment. Key information can be found in the Assessment section of *Extra course information* at: <http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/extracourseinformation/>

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities may be entitled to a variation or modification to standard assessment arrangements. Policy for students with disabilities is available at: <http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learningconnection/student/defaultdisability.asp>

VARIATIONS TO ASSESSMENT TASKS

Students may request a variance to assessment methods, tasks and timelines based on medical, compassionate or religious observance grounds, or community services. Such variations must be requested before or during the second teaching week or within 5 working days of the distribution of this *Course information*. Variations

requested after this date will need to be negotiated with the Course Coordinator and may not be able to be accommodated.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The university is committed to academic integrity and has policies and procedures in place to ensure academic integrity and manage academic misconduct for all students.

Academic misconduct includes:

- Plagiarism (refer to 9.2.2 of the *Assessment policies and procedures manual*).
- Breaches of the examination procedures in Section 6: Examination Procedures of the *Assessment policies and procedures manual*, presentation of data with respect to laboratory work, field trips or other work that has been copied, falsified or in other ways improperly obtained.
- Inclusion of material in individual work that has involved significant assistance from another person, where such assistance is not expressly permitted in this booklet.
- Falsification or misrepresentation of academic records.
- Other actions that contravene the principles of academic integrity.

Students' work may be checked for plagiarism using a variety of means, including text comparison software. Assignments checked electronically will be held in a database for future matching processes.

More information about Academic integrity can be found in the *Assessment policies and procedures manual* at: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/manual/> or on the Learning Connection website at:
<http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learningconnection/student/studying/integrity.asp>

SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF ASSIGNMENTS

See above under Assessment details.

Refer also to *Extra course information* at:
<http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/extracourseinformation/>

Note: information on submission and return of assignments in *Extra course information* is very important. Please read it before submitting assignments.

COURSE CALENDAR—STUDY PERIOD 5, 2006

Week	Date	Topic	Assessment
1	26 July	Introduction: the nature of the contemporary in a post-modern world. TROUTON	
2	2 August	Memphis and its ramifications for 21 st century design. TROUTON	
3	9 August	GUEST LECTURER Generation X and Y: the youth market and media mass production	
4	16 August	Design and persuasive materialism. TROUTON	
5	23 August	Consumer theories. TROUTON	
6	30 August	Ethics in design practice: morality and ideologies. TROUTON	
7	6 Sept	The role of design in political and social change. TROUTON	
8	13 Sept	Australian design. TROUTON	RESEARCH ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE
	18–29 Sept	<i>Mid-semester break (2 weeks)</i>	
9	4 October	GUEST LECTURER Technology's impact	
10	11 October	Corrective advertising. TROUTON	
11	18 October	Eco-design and sustainability. TROUTON	
12	25 October	Music and image. TROUTON	
13	1 Nov	Conclusion. TROUTON	MAJOR ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE