



# Hist. 697 CREATING HISTORY in NEW MEDIA

**Creating History in New Media  
History 697  
Spring 2004  
Fine Arts B202  
TH 7:20-10:00**

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Thursday,  
January 23

- Housekeeping & Introductions  
Discussion:  
Practicum: Structuring a Document

## **ATOMS**

Thursday,  
January 29

- Reading:  
Zeldman, *Designing with Web Standards*  
Internet Visits: CSS Tutorials  
[Designing with CSS in Macromedia Dreamweaver MX 2004](#)  
[Woven with CSS: Quick Draw MacFly](#)  
[CSS Zen Garden](#)  
Practicum: Standards-Based/CSS Design

Thursday,  
February 5

- Reading:  
Spiekermann & Ging, *Stop Stealing Sheep*  
Internet Visits: Typography  
Erin Kissane, [Typography Matters](#)  
Jenny Lyn Bader, ["Forget Footnotes, Hyperlink"](#)  
Gertrude Himmelfarb, ["Where Have All the Footnotes Gone?"](#)  
Jean Baptiste Piggen, [Macro-Typography: A Style Guide](#)  
Practicum: The Problem of the Footnote  
**CSS PAGE DUE**

Thursday,  
February 12

- Reading:  
Mark Meadows, *Pause & Effect*  
Internet Visits: More Standards-Based/CSS Design  
Jakob Nielsen, [Differences Between Print Design and Web Design](#)  
CSS-Discuss [Three-Column Layout](#)  
CSS-Discuss [How Do I Size Fonts](#)  
Max Design [Listutorial](#)  
Max Design [Floatutorial](#)  
Practicum: Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)

Thursday,  
February 19

- Presentations: Type Assignments  
**TYPE ASSIGNMENT DUE**

Thursday, February 26	—	Reading: Edward Tufte, <i>Visual Explanations</i> Internet Visits: Color Ideabook, <a href="#">Tip Sheet: Color Strategy</a> Luke Wroblewski, <a href="#">Natural Selections: Colors Found in Nature and Interface Design</a> Clagnut, <a href="#">Compendium of Color Tools</a> Sherwin Williams <a href="#">Color Preservation Palette</a> Practicum: Photoshop/Colorizing
Thursday, March 4	—	Reading: Katrin Eismann & Steve Simmons, <i>Photoshop Restoration and Retouching</i> Practicum: Photoshop/Engravings
Thursday, March 11	—	<b>NO CLASS-SPRING BREAK</b>
Thursday, March 18	—	Presentations: Image Assignments <b>IMAGE ASSIGNMENT DUE</b>
<b>BITS</b> Thursday, March 25	—	Internet Visits: Accessibility Joe Clark, <a href="#">How Do Disabled People Use Computers</a> Human Factors, <a href="#">How a Blind Person Will “See” Your Web Page</a> Disability Rights, <a href="#">Inaccessible Website Demonstration</a> Mark Pilgrim, <a href="#">Dive into Accessibility</a>
Thursday, April 1	—	Reading: Steve Krug, <i>Don't Make Me Think</i> Internet Visits: Design Ideabook, <a href="#">A Graceful Palette</a> Luke Wroblewski, <a href="#">Visible Narratives: Understanding Visual Organization</a> Carole Guevin, <a href="#">Visual Architecture: The Rule of Three</a> Douglas Bowman, <a href="#">A Design Process Revealed</a> <a href="#">Compendium of Design Examples</a>
Thursday, April 8	—	Reading: Jay Bolter & Richard Grusin, <i>Remediation: Understanding New Media</i> Internet Visit: <a href="#">Second Story</a> <a href="#">Terra Incognita</a> Practicum: Interactivity
Thursday, April 15	—	Presentations: Design Assignments <b>DESIGN ASSIGNMENT DUE</b>
Thursday, April 22	—	Practicum: <a href="#">The Lost Museum</a> Discussion: <i>Civilization III</i> , <i>realMyst</i> , Text Games
Thursday, April 29	—	<b>PRELIMINARY WEB ASSIGNMENT DUE</b> <b>PRESENTATION OF ASSIGNMENT SITES</b>

Thursday,  
May 6

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**FINAL WEB ASSIGNMENT DUE**  
**SELF-EVALUATION DUE**

## **COURSE**

This course is designed as an intensive exploration of the adaptation of history to a digital environment. Although the central goal of the course is development of an original, digital history project of reasonably professional quality, the course will also examine “best practices” in digital history, the problems and possibilities inherent in digital history, and issues in information, technical, and aesthetic design. In particular, the course will tackle the problems of creating standards-based, accessible web design. Be aware that this class is both a history and media course. In other words, we will begin by thinking (and writing) about good history and then proceed to learn the tools and techniques to bring history into digital form. Be also mindful that any digital work is a collaborative venture, so be prepared to both aid others and ask for help for yourself. This semester, we are fortunate in having a TAP student who will be on hand to assist students in the class. I’ll explain the nature of the TAP student’s responsibilities during the first class meeting.

## **BOOKS**

The texts (of one kind or another) serve three purposes: 1) to provide you with the background in several areas that might be relatively unfamiliar to historians; 2) to introduce you to some texts that are intended to promote some “left brain” thinking or provide inspiration; and 3) to furnish you with a modest technical, reference library. We will discuss some of the books briefly, some in depth, and some not at all, but they all should be read either in toto or in small bites. In addition, you are required to obtain a copy of *Civilization III* or *realMyst*. Except for *Civilization III* and *realMyst* (which can be obtained at a reasonable cost from an on-line vendor or as a demo download), all the books are available at the campus bookstore. (You might also enjoy one of the old [text games](#) (including a history game, “Jigsaw”) these are free and can be played on line, but you’ll have to telenet.)

Jay Bolter & Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*  
Katrin Eismann, Steve Simmons, *Photoshop Restoration and Retouching*  
Edward Tufte, *Visual Explanations*  
Erik Spiekermann & E.M Ging, *Stop Stealing Sheep & Find Out How Type Works*  
Jeffrey Zeldman, *Designing with Web Standards*  
Mark S. Meadows, *Pause & Effect*  
Steven Heller, *Don’t Make Me Think*

## **SOFTWARE & INTERNET BROWSERS**

Because this course will introduce you to standards-based, accessible design, you will need several browsers to test your web work. This, of course, brings me to the good news and the bad news. Standards-based design is, on the whole, much easier than its predecessor, convoluted table-based design. The XHTML code is much easier to write and cleaner. The bad news is that Internet browsers carry the baggage of the Browser Wars and, as result, interpret CSS, the web presentation language, in a number of different ways. You should download or obtain the several different browsers. Mac people should acquire Safari, Explorer 5.2, Netscape 7.2, Netscape 4.78. Wintel folk should obtain a copy of IE 6.0, Opera 7.23, Netscape 7.1. These are available for free. (The free version of Opera, however, has advertisements.) Mac users face the greatest problem. Mr. Softie discontinued production of IE for the Mac at 5.2 (except for those with MSN accounts); 95% of the world uses some flavor of IE for Windows. For Mac users there is BrowserCam, a friend’s PC, or an email to a classmate requesting a site check.

## **ATTENDANCE**

By its nature, this is a small class and offers the participants a singular opportunity to learn new skills and new ways of thinking about history. The class also introduces its participants to elements of multimedia production. As such, the class asks that you prepare for class and participate energetically. And you cannot participate without attending class. Attendance is especially critical for the software practica in which you will be introduced to useful techniques and strategies.

## **A NOTE ON COMPUTER USE**

Computers are a great boon to historians. But, as with any technology, you must take steps to minimize the problems that computers inevitably cause—and, believe me, in a course like this,

you *will* have problems. Do not expect to get through the semester without having at least one computer meltdown. Prepare for this well in advance. Back up your work and have “plan Bs” for obtaining computer use or software access, if your primary options fail you. I will not accept computer problems as excuses for missed assignments. (Oh, all right, maybe in this course there will be some latitude but not much.) You must also keep backup copies of submitted assignments—either in electronic form or hard copy. You might wish to invest in a Zip drive for the purposes of archiving your material and transporting your projects.

Most, if not all, of the assignments in the course depend on your having access to a computer and an Internet account. Please obtain an internet account at the earliest available moment and become comfortable with the software and protocols. Should you work at home or off campus, learn how to do remote access so that you can be productive no matter your location. Although the university does not require the purchase of a computer, I would encourage you to consider the investment. You might also find a laptop handy if you are accustomed to a particular OS and web editor. Because of the nature of the course, you cannot depend on the university’s public clusters or the availability of software. Your enrollment in the course indicates your interest in computerish things, and your tool set should reflect that interest.

## **GRADES**

Grades, including +s and -s, will be assigned in the following manner. REMEMBER THEY REPRESENT AN EVALUATION, NOT A REWARD. To rephrase Smith-Barney, the investment folk, we do grades the old-fashioned way—earn them.

A—Outstanding work, complete mastery of the material presented, combined with some originality.

B—A solid command of the material with some gaps or mistakes in a basically sound essay or discussion.

C—Some knowledge of the material; mistakes and confusion are acceptable if mixed with some understanding. Not a reward for attendance or effort.

D—An incomplete and minimal knowledge of the material, major confusions and errors.

F—A failure to present the material in a reasonably accurate and comprehensible manner.

I—There are no “incompletes” given in this course except in cases of bona fide and documented instances in accordance with the regulations of the university.

P—For a “pass” a “C” average is required.

The nature of the course suggests that breaches of academic integrity will be difficult to accomplish. If, however, a class member engages in plagiarism or other forms of cheating, he or she will receive a zero for that assignment and an accompanied trip to the Dean’s Office to discuss further academic action.

If you receive a grade or criticism that seems unfair or if you desire further explanation, come and see me. If you come to argue for a better grade, come prepared to present your case in the most coherent and organized manner possible.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

The requirements for the course are as follows: (1) CSS Assignment (15%); 2) Type Project (15%); 3) Image Project (15%); (4) Design Project (15%); (5) Web Project (40%); and (6) a self-evaluation (1 page, typed, single-spaced) assessing your performance in the course (not graded but required).

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

There are four preliminary and one major assignment in the course. All of the assignments should be part of a website (a web portfolio) that includes a home page and navigation to the various assignments. At the conclusion of each assignment, the link to the assignment should be forwarded to the instructor for inclusion on the instructor’s course page. The specific assignments are:

### 1) CSS Assignment (preliminary)

Using "McFly from Project Seven, create a web page that includes your content. Once you have finished, make the following changes:

1. replace the header graphic with one of your own,
2. alter the color scheme,
3. change the content font,
4. change the justification of the text to "ragged right," and
5. add a new DIV with its own CSS style.

Alternately, you can use the Dreamweaver tutorial and make the changes.

### 2) Type Assignment (preliminary)

The goals of this assignment are to demonstrate that you are aware of word processing conventions, CSS, and can use type as both an element in information and aesthetic design. For this assignment, create a web page that includes (or takes into account) the following:

1. title
2. navigation
3. subheads
4. leading
5. line length
6. margins/padding
7. a call out
8. a rule
9. an image
10. endnotes
11. a block quotation

Because this assignment is meant to underpin your final web project, it would be a good idea to think about your project's time period or subject and look for fonts that can contribute to the "look and feel" as well as the "legibility and readability" your project. One "page" of the project should be added to your web portfolio.

#### **Font Sources**

Adobe

<http://www.adobe.com/type/main.html>

Fonts & Things

<http://www.fontsnthings.com/>

The Font Fairy

<http://www.printerideas.com/fontfairy/fonts.com>

<http://www.fonts.com/uscan/default.asp>

Web Page Design for Designers

[www.wpdfd.com](http://www.wpdfd.com)

Atomic Media (very small screen fonts)

[www.atomicmedia.net](http://www.atomicmedia.net)

myfonts.com

<http://myfonts.com/WhatTheFont/>

t26

[t26.com](http://t26.com)

Pixel Fonts

<http://www.wpdfd.com/pixelfonts.htm>

P22

<http://www.p22.com/>

LTR

<http://www.letterror.com/foundry/fed/index.html>

Walden Fonts

<http://www.waldenfont.com/defaultie.asp>

Scriptorium

<http://www.ragnarokpress.com/scriptorium/>

### 3) Image Assignment (preliminary)

The goals of this assignment are to demonstrate your mastery of image editing skills, color, and composition as well as the use of images to tell or illustrate a historical narrative. The narrative should be an account of the steps that you took to achieve the effects. Note that combining techniques in a single image is perfectly acceptable. For this assignment, create a web page that includes the following:

1. cropped & resized image
2. a restored photograph
3. a hand-colored photograph
4. a vignetted photograph
5. an abstracted engraving
6. a “before & after”

One “page” of the project should be added to your web portfolio.

#### **Image Sources**

HarpWeek (Thomas Nast)

<http://oscr.gmu.edu/sql/subdb.php?Arts & Humanities>

American Memory (pictorial envelopes)

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amhome.html>

National Archives

<http://www.archives.gov/index.html>

New York Public Library Digital Collection

<http://digital.nypl.org/igatedemo/>

Illustrated Envelopes

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/archives/d9755.htm>

iStockphoto (\$ but very good and very inexpensive)

<http://www.istockphoto.com/>

Corbis (\$)

<http://www.corbis.com/>

Mary Evans Picture Library (\$)

<http://www.mepl.co.uk/>

### 4) Design Assignment (preliminary)

The goals of this assignment are to demonstrate your understanding of design and its application to the presentation of history on web. To that end, choose a historical period or topic and develop a web page design appropriate to the period. For example, if you elect to do a colonial site, the fonts, layout, illustrations, colors, and layout should reflect the colonial period. In other words, compose a web page that integrates a design theme into its typography, composition, color, and layout so that it enhances the presentation of the historical content and creates a visual identity for a prospective site. The assignment should also implement correct typography and layout strategies. Once you have finished, add the page to your class web portfolio.

#### **Design Sources**

Posters from the WPA, 1936-1943

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaposters/wpahome.html>

ArtLex

<http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/a/artdeco.html>

Bridgeman Art Library

<http://oscr.gmu.edu/sql/subdb.php?Arts & Humanities>

### 5) Web Site (final)

The overarching goal for the major project is the creation of a modest, reasonably sophisticated history web site. First, the content should be solid and engaging. Second, the site should be clear in its purpose and potential audience. Third, the site should demonstrate standards-based, accessible design (CSS). Fourth, the site's design should also reflect knowledge of typography, layout, color, and graphic design. Finally, there should be some effort made toward interactivity or online community building.

## **SELF-EVALUATION GUIDELINES**

Oftentimes, a letter grade does not reflect the effort that students put into a course, the amount a student has learned, or the skills that a student has acquired. A self-evaluation is one way of remedying this deficiency by illustrating and documenting your participation in the course from your perspective. This is the time to argue for yourself and put your best foot forward. In fact, it is in your interest to do the best job that you can on this assignment. The self-evaluation should be a one-page, typed single-spaced paper in which you address the following topics:

- I. Evaluation of your participation in the class
  - A. attendance
  - B. class participation
    1. in-class contributions
    2. peer work
    3. class preparation
  - C. time devoted to the materials
    1. assigned reading
    2. preliminary assignments
    3. web site
  - D. the ways in which you think you improved or not
  - E. the problems you encountered in your effort to complete the class assignments to your satisfaction.
  - F. what you would have done differently
  - G. some of the skills or knowledge that you acquired
- II. A general assessment of how you will apply what you have gained (or not) from the class in the future
- III. Other activities of a historical or new media nature that you participated in