Fall 2018 – Michael T. Swisher

ARCH 4050, 6050-006 – Diagramming the Big Idea
Credit Hours: 3
Tuesday 2:00–4:30
Pre-requisite: 3rd year standing, or 2nd year Graduate standing

Catalog description:
The class investigates the means and effects of graphic and three-dimensional procedures in a collaborative seminar setting.

Premise:
Design in architecture is both visual and procedural. It is also self-reflexive. Materials and means used in investigation and presentation must embrace inherent clarity before addressing other concerns.

Objectives:
The objective of this course is to practice scrutiny of visual form. It focuses on the intersection of particular practices and the possibility of communication. It attempts to address the imperative to ‘Show that you mean it.’ It will broaden students’ awareness of the effect of materials on visual communication. Students will develop the ability to recognize and develop the inherent impact of formal procedures before they attempt to influence outcome. This includes keen observation of visual artifacts and the inquiry possible through intense subtle iteration.

Content:
The content of the course will focus on the following goals:
• Identifying visual artifacts as crucibles for ideas;
• Identifying pathways and procedures for meaningful iteration;
• Exploring visual means that lead to analysis, abstraction, transformation and realization;
• Making connections among visual conventions as a prompt toward intention and meaning;
• Crafting and making relevant notes - visual and verbal – to aid in understanding the problematic and the practical investigation;
• Exploring methods of presentation – formal and casual, public and private – that clarify your purpose.
Method:

Course work begins with crafting and interrogating images, discussing results and identifying possible alternatives. Extensive self-governed exploration, disciplined creative thinking and broad peer interaction should supplement class time.

Images are iterative. Students will engage a critical process that both engages non-linear thinking, toward focused categorical responses. Intentional acts and accidental discoveries will evolve into particular iterative processes. Success will require a strong work ethic.

The course will weave instructor presentations, in-class discussion and critiques will include evaluations with other students in the class. The class meets formally once a week. The work, however, will prompt smaller outside group interactions, organized by the students to observe particular approaches as they develop.

Most class will end with a questions and/or tasks aimed at fostering an adequate work flow. These will begin with a presentation by each student of their evolving efforts. A general discussion and summary will follow. This will be the responsibility of the instructor.

Students will collect all material into a well maintained journal and portfolio. As part of this activity, notes, thoughts, sketches and formal presentations will be present in your journal.

Please note that this is a new course. Some of the methods may shift over the semester to reflect shifts in tactics.

Required texts:

Texts and visual materials will arise for each student as they identify their particular interest. These may be augmented by suggestion by the instructor.

Evaluation:

There are two formal evaluations for the journal. This will occur near review week. The first evaluation occurs at the midterm. The final evaluation occurs at the end of the semester. All of the individual activities and related artifacts contribute to the overall grade. We will have an ongoing discussion about the efficacy of using electronic media for any and all activities.

Evaluation and grading

The general criteria for evaluating cumulative performance takes into account:

• The quality and intent of each artifact – written or otherwise;
• Self-motivation and attitude – levels of interest;
• Craftsmanship, where relevant;
• On time delivery;
• Attendance
• Class participation
• Risk-taking
• Development & progress
Grading criteria:

- **A** = Overall & continual exemplary achievement in all of the above criteria.
  - The ‘A’ project sustains the quality of the best possible, publishable example in all aspects.

- **B** = General excellence and sustained improvement with occasional superior achievement.
  - The ‘B’ project will exhibit some superior aspects while meeting all other requirements at a high level as well.

- **C** = All work completed competently and on time, all classes attended, and a general improvement in performance.
  - The ‘C’ project is complete and meets all requirements competently and on time.

- **D** = Lack of reasonable craft or quality, or inattention to the work, or unresponsiveness to advice, or a lack of development.
  - The ‘D’ project meets only some requirements competently and on time.

- **F** = Consistent inattention to deadlines or the development of the project, late or incomplete work, poor attitude, or insufficient improvement.
  - Tardy, poorly attended or underdeveloped projects risk failure at the discretion of the instructor.

- Other grades used comply with UNC-Charlotte University Catalog policies.

Requirements:

This course strictly follows the requirements and standards set forth in the current edition of the UNCC Code of Student Academic Integrity. All creative work must be the original work of the student – or students, for a group project.

- Any non-excused absence affects your evaluation and grade. More than three non-excused absences constitute grounds for automatic failure of this course.

- Be on time to class. Three late arrivals count as one non-excused absence. You must submit excused absences – medical notes, deaths or family emergencies – to your instructor in writing and include evidence of the specific hardship.

- Students may schedule an appointment to discuss coursework outside of class time by sending an e-mail request to their instructor.

Courtesy requirements:

The following standards of conduct apply to all class times. While they should be familiar, I repeat them for clarity.

- **Do not** listen to music, make Cellphone calls, text, visit Facebook, e-mail, Hulu, YouTube or engage in any other forms of electronic distraction during class hours.
- Please be considerate of the importance of respect. The purpose of the course is to openly discuss work. Idle conversation is a waste of time.