Course Companion

Name: _____

Learning is an act of construction, not a matter of downloading. These questions will help you approach and process the readings, films, and other media that we'll cover in this course. Speaking more broadly, there are a few central questions in the course that are worth thinking about at the beginning, throughout, and particularly at the end. • **What are the central themes of design and how do they relate?** • **How does design shape both daily life and interconnected global systems?** • **How am I a participant and agent in the creation of the designed world?** • **Why does a better future depend on a holistic and democratic approach to design rather than a fragmented and concentrated one?** • **How can one person advance change through design? How does society do it collectively?** This document is not required, collected, or graded, but why not do it anyway? Your responses will help jumpstart the class discussion and help when you prepare to write your essays.

"Mathematics of Communication"

Think of a basic form of daily communication you have and then apply Warren Weaver's model.

Type of communication: _____

☐ → ☐ → ☐ → ☐ → ☐

Describe its noise source: _____
_____
_____
_____

"When People Talk with People"

If Weaver's theory was purely about the transfer of information, how is John Condon's theory of communication different? Of the two theories, which one is more relatable to you?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

"The Magical Number 7 ±2"

Say you were designing a web site, Meeting of the Minds poster, or a complex user interface, how might this theory apply to the choices you make about content strategy and information architecture?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

A Designer's Art
pages xii–13

Draw a symbol that is currently in sight from wherever you are. What are its parts and what meaning do those contain? What meaning is represented by the whole? e.g., a screen icon, a coin, an image in a magazine advertisement, a logo. Don't know? See if there are answers online.

"Period Styles"

Where do you see graphic imagery that reminds you of Otto Neurath's ISOTYPES on the last page?

Make some drawings!

Slides: Print Media and Graphic Design Through the Ages

What are some of the techniques used by visual communicators to overcome noise?

Were there examples in the slides that were particularly effective?

Beautiful Evidence pages 125–139

"The life of a designer is a life of fight. Fight against the ugliness," famously said Massimo Vignelli.

How might Edward Tufte respond to this statement?

Film: *Objectified*

Jonathan Ive said that a product testifies to the values of its designer. What in a MacBook speaks of its creator, Apple, or Mr. Ive? What might it say of its owner? What does it say about our time?

Hello World pages 45–60

What is "good," according to Rawsthorn?

What might make an object of design a "classic"?

"Omit the Unimportant"

Pick a mass-produced object that you own, a device of some kind, an appliance, or a tool.

What aspects of it communicate its function? What are its emotional qualities? How might Dieter Rams critique it?

"Psychopathology of Everyday Things"

What in your current proximity has an affordance to use (other than a door)?

What are its signifiers?

How well does it perform?

Why Architecture Matters pages 1–40

"Because architecture is omnipresent, it obliges us to stop seeing it," writes Goldberger. Write a few sentences about a building or architectural feature that you appreciate in Qatar. If nothing comes to mind, study the designed landscape when you walk or drive to school tomorrow.

Film: *How Much Does Your Building Weigh, Mr. Foster?*

Favorite building featured in the film? You may refer back to this in the next response.

Film: *A Strong Clear Vision*

Briefly compare and contrast the work and philosophy of Norman Foster and Maya Lin.

"Having an Experience"

Make a list of personal experiences that come to mind and try to break them down into the component principles that John Dewey theorizes.

"Designing Interactions"

Consider any electronic device you own (not an Apple product). How well does the hardware and software blend together? Does it function as one total design or is it disjointed?

"Interaction Ritual"

Draw a storyboard depicting Goffman's theory of social interaction. List a few examples of specific social engagements for each period.

Inauguration	Maintenance	Leave-Taking

"Thoughts on Interaction Design"

"Interaction design is a dialogue," writes Kolko. What happens to your storyboard above when a piece of technology is introduced? What's an example of technology in your life that facilitates a dialogue between you and someone else, visible or invisible?

Starbucked
pages 86–110

Revisit the conundrum posed in class: can experiences be designed? What are the touchpoints that Starbucks has designed to shape the service experience?

"Five Key Terms of Dramatism"

Choose either an airport or hospital. What are the components that make up the five acts?

Act	Agent	Agency	Scene	Purpose
Process ↓	People ↓	Performance ↓	Place ↓	Product ↓

Slides: Designing for Interaction

What is a service designer considering that sets him or her apart from a user experience designer?

Film: Ric Burns' *New York*

Robert Moses was a great designer. Respond.

The City Shaped

pages 43–93

Which neighborhoods, areas, and districts in Qatar are…

Planned:

Organic:

How is this dichotomy an unfair characterization of the reality of urban environments?

"Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning"

Based on our study of urban design, urban planning, and the urban experience, pick one challenge that meets criteria number 1: "there is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem." Then list all the associated matters, both causes and consequences that are part of this interrelated web of intractability. For example, if I chose poverty in New York as an issue that is tough to frame (we might not agree on what it means, its causes, solutions, or even that it's a problem to begin with), I would expand it by listing public policy (Housing Act of 1949), urban sprawl, social safety nets, economic systems, primary and secondary education, political corruption, policing, public health, etc. Pick something local and immediate to you, an example where you can feel your way through its associated issues. • Your Issue →

Causes →

Consequences →

The Web of Life

"…the taste of sugar is not present in the carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen atoms that constitute its components" (Capra, 28). Without being reductive in saying "these are the parts and these are the wholes," create a linear scale of relationships starting with you, moving up through the university, the country, your culture, all the way up a chain of relationships until at some point you're in a strata of emergent whole entities that no longer resemble their constituent parts.

you.

Cradle to Cradle page 17–44	What products or environments around you were made from the antiquated one-size-fits-all or brute force approach? (this should be easy)

"The system of nature, of which man is a part, tends to be self-balancing, self-adjusting, self-cleansing," wrote E. F. Schumacher in *Small is Beautiful*. "Not so with technology." Think about the place you live. What technological systems in your living space could be reconfigured to be self-sustaining and balanced with their surroundings?

"Ten Thousand Years"

How do the four orders of design appear in the design proposals of the waste burial sites?

Communication:

Construction:

Interaction:

Integration:

"Design Ethics"

Four dimensions of ethics and moral conduct:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Three dimensions of product integrity:

"Human Dignity and Human Rights"

What amendments would you add to your own country's constitution to make it more human-centered? What priorities would these amendments have? Or would you simply start over, how and why? Think carefully about how you articulate your ideas and the language you choose.

Conclusion

"I came up with this word 'scenius' — the intelligence of a whole operation or group of people," wrote Brian Eno. "I think that's a more useful way to think about culture, actually. Let's forget the idea of 'genius' for a little while, let's think about the whole ecology of ideas that give rise to good new thoughts and good new work." What gives rise to your ideas? How do you bring these ideas to reality through practice, thus contributing to the 'scenius'? How active are you at shaping your own world or do you simply let the world shape you?

Reading Charts

	What	How	Why
argumentative reading →	*is the central argument?*	*is it supported?*	*might it matter?*
explanatory reading →	*is being presented or discussed?*	*does it function or connect?*	*is this important?*
Coleman	•	•	•
Weaver	•	•	•
Condon	•	•	•
Lupton & Miller	•	•	•
Tufte	•	•	•
Alexander	•	•	•
Rams	•	•	•
Ekuan	•	•	•
Norman	•	•	•
Foster	•	•	•
Goldberger	•	•	•
Lin	•	•	•

Dewey	•	•	•
Moggridge	•	•	•
Goffman	•	•	•
Kolko	•	•	•
Shariat	•	•	•
Clark	•	•	•
Burke	•	•	•
Burns	•	•	•
Kostof	•	•	•
Rittel & Webber	•	•	•
Capra	•	•	•
McDonough & Braungart	•	•	•
Buchanan	•	•	•