Course Description: What happens between the first inkling of an idea and its final outcome in published form? And how does what happens along the way affect the look and tone of the finished work? No matter the medium—it might be a CD cover, design for a matchbook, poster, theater program, artist’s book, shopping bag, or a continuously evolving new media platform—every sort of publication goes through a number of essential steps, each building and expanding upon the last until the desired results are achieved. Students in this advanced arts workshop will explore and apply critical thinking to each of these steps through a combination of short-term and in-depth, semester-long projects (one of which will be to create a visual journal), guest lecturers, directed readings, and field trips, and in the process discover some of the many ways in which concepts might be investigated, clarified, and ultimately realized.

Required reading:

- Sagmeister: Made You Look (Abrams), by Stephan Sagmeister, Peter Hall
- Looking Closer 5: Critical Writings on Graphic Design (Allworth Press), by Michael Beirut, William Drenttel, Steven Heller
- Envisioning Information (Graphics Press), by Edward R. Tufte

Suggested text:

- Graphic: Inside the Sketchbooks of the World's Great Graphic Designers (The Monacelli Press), by Steven Heller and Lita Talarico

Course Goals: This advanced arts workshop will employ Gallatin’s multidisciplinary, self-directed approach to learning to enhance students’ understanding of ways in which the exponentially expanding universe of arts publications serves as a vital conduit for ideas about visual art, popular culture, politics, performance, photography, fashion, and products and objects.
ranging from the utilitarian to the fanciful.

Assignments Overview: In addition to short written responses to questions related to reading assignments, project assignments will include several individual and one group project.

Attendance: Attendance is essential. More than two unexcused absences will cost one letter grade. Properly documented absences due to illness, family emergency, etc., will be excused. If you know that you will miss class, make every effort to let me know ahead of time.

Grading standards: Factors taken into account to determine the final grade: attendance (20%), effective participation in classroom discussions (20%), completion of reading and writing assignments (30%), and investment in and completion of the group and individual projects (30%).

Incomplete Requests: If you find that you will not be able to complete the course work by the end of the semester and wish to request an Incomplete, please speak with me before the end of the semester.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website [www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html] for a full description of the academic integrity policy.

Policy on cell phones, tablets, and laptops: tablets and laptops may be used solely for the purpose of taking notes during presentations and discussions and, if necessary, during group work. Cell phones are to remain silenced and out of sight.

About the syllabus: While I will make every attempt to follow the syllabus, small changes may occur as the semester progresses.

Syllabus

Monday, January 28:

• Introductions and areas of interest
• Overview of class content and general structure/expectations/
• Assignment for next class: bring in a few examples, from different disciplines, that illustrate some of the essential steps that occur between the first inkling of an idea and its final outcome

Wednesday, January 30:
• Share examples; discussion
• Reading/response/discussion assignment for next class: Looking Closer 5, Intro and Section 1, what, in a nutshell (2 pages) have your learned about graphic design “as a system”?

Monday, February 4:
• Hand in response/discussion

Individual Project 1: Visual journal. This semester-long project entails the creation of an autobiographical visual journal in any chosen medium that at once explores the medium itself and pushes thematic boundaries. To be discussed and evaluated throughout the semester. Become familiar with Graphic: Inside the Sketchbooks of the World's Great Graphic Designers

*One-page description of Visual Journal due Feb 11
*First look: Feb. 25
*Second look: March 6
*Third look: April 10
*Final presentations: April 29 and May 6

• Reading/response/discussion assignment for next class: Looking Closer 5, Section 2, discuss (2 pages) your impressions/thoughts of graphic design “as culture”

• Review Morgan Library site in preparation for field trip

Wednesday, February 6:
• FIELD TRIP, Morgan Library, tour of The Diary; gather in lobby; tour begins at 2:15
225 Madison Avenue at 36th Street

Monday, February 11:
• Hand in response/discussion
• Discussion of Morgan trip
• Description due, visual journal

• Reading/response/discussion assignment for Feb 20: Looking Closer 5, Sections 3 and 4, discuss (3-4 pages) graphic design as fashion and as politics: how do these roles converge/contradict each other?

• Review Lustig link in preparation for field trip
Wednesday, February 13:
• Field Trip: AIGA, tour of The Lustigs: A Cover Story; tour begins at 2:15
AIGA National Design Center Gallery
164 Fifth Avenue (between 21st and 22nd Streets)
212.807.1990
Monday, February 18:
• NO CLASS/PRESIDENTS DAY
Wednesday, February 20:
• Hand in response/discussion
• Discussion of AIGA trip
• Reading/response/discussion assignment for Feb. 27: Looking Closer 5, Sections 5 and 6: How do you interpret (3-4 pages) the notions of graphic design as passion and as idea. Do they dovetail? If so, how?
Monday, February 25:
• First look, visual journal, discussion of formats and ways to proceed; second look March 6
• Read/peruse Sagmeister: Made You Look; discuss (2-3 pages) the underlying emotional current that runs through his work. “In general, I am still mostly concerned with design that has the ability to touch the viewers’ heart. We see so much professionally done and well-executed graphic design around us, beautifully illustrated and masterfully photographed. Nevertheless, almost all of it leaves me (and I suspect many other viewers) cold. There is just so much fluff: well-produced, tongue-in-cheek, pretty, fluff. Nothing that moves you, nothing to think about. Some is informing, but still all fluff. Our goal for the future will be to touch somebody's heart with design.” Due March 7
Wednesday, February 27:
• Reading discussion
• Review Canary Project site in preparation for guests
Monday, March 4:
• GUESTS, Edward Morris and Susannah Saylor, The Canary Project
Wednesday, March 6:
• Discuss Canary Project visit
• Second look, visual journal; third look April 10
• Hand in response/discussion (Looking Closer)
• Individual Project 2: Produce a rough prototype that demonstrates how certain formats/mediums—billboards, posters, banners, blogs, e.g.—have the potential to sway public opinion/affect social change. Due April 1 and 3

Monday, March 11:
• Hand in response/discussion (Sagmeister)
• Group Project assigned: Explore the in-between steps involved in the creation/production of a chosen publication medium(s) and develop a prototype(s) that demonstrates how insights into process might be drawn from this most crucial stage. One possible approach: each person in a group will execute a quick response to another group member’s chosen medium via his/her own area of expertise, then pass this response along to another; through this process of “passing along,” you will gain a greater understanding of the original medium and expand the possibilities for its execution and gain an understanding each medium’s unique visual, thematic, and artistic qualities; due May 13

Wednesday, March 13:
• In class group work
• Review Synchronous Objects in preparation for visit

Monday, March 18 and Wednesday, March 20:
Spring Break

Monday, March 25:
• GUEST, Maria Palazzi, director Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design, Ohio State University, co-creative director, Synchronous Objects (“a document of thinking”)

Wednesday, March 27:
• Discuss OSU project
• In class group work

• Read/peruse the Intro and first two chapters of Envisioning Information. From Escaping Flatland: choose one or two of Tufte’s "splendid examples" of ways to escape flatland and discuss what about their "performance" resonates as both information and art. How does their rendering both capture and expand upon the original? From Micro/Macro Readings: Tufte says "the visual task is contrast, comparison, and choice," actions that are simultaneously employed when we confront a successful "micro/macro" design. What and why in your opinion is a current example of a successful "micro/macro" design? 2–3 pages

Due April 10

Monday, April 1:
• Individual Proj 2 presentation ½ class
• Individual Proj 3: Using Synchronous Objects and the readings, etc., create a simple visualize representation of a chosen live medium (music, dance, theater; entirely up to you which one). Due April 15 and 17

Wednesday, April 3:
• Individual Proj 2 presentation ½ class

Monday, April 8:
• Discussion/overview of Ind Proj 2 presentations and questions re Ind Proj 3 (half hour to 45 min)
• Group work: begin production

Wednesday, April 10:
• Hand in reading response/discussion: what ideas from the Tufte book might be applied to your visual journals?
• Third look, visual journals/discussion: come prepared to show work to-date and discuss your theme as well as what you are trying to achieve formally with your format, design, and content. What is your intended overarching message? Make note of comments and suggestions. We will split into groups for this exchange.

• Envisioning Information, chapters 3-4, Layering and Separation: if, as Tufte says, "confusion and clutter are failures of design, not attributes of information," what are a few simple strategies that "reveal detail and complexity"? in reading and thinking about Small Multiples, what are some examples of material the might be well served using this approach? April 24, 2 pages/feel free to use a combination of text and illustration in this response

Monday, April 15:
• Individual Proj 3, ½ class

Wednesday, April 17:
• Individual Proj 3, ½ class

Monday, April 22:
• Discussion/overview of Ind Proj 3 presentations (half hour)
• Group work: peer review and commentary on in-progress work

Wednesday, April 24:
• Hand in reading response/discussion
• Group work
• Envisioning Information, chapters 5-6, Color and Information: Tufte asks, "Can color's inherently multidimensional quality be used to express multidimensional information?" . . . And whether "viewers can understand, or learn to understand such displays."
What is an example of where this approach is successful and where it falls short? This response will include the examples as well as a page or so describing the reasons why. Narratives of Space and Time: here we see lucid examples of how three dimensions can be suggested via two. We also see movement rendered via signs. Discuss the metaphoric as well as poetic implications of these esthetically pleasing methods and vocabularies. 2-3 pages, due May 8.

Monday, April 29:
• Presentation of visual journals ½ class

Wednesday, May 1:
• Group work: incorporation of peer comments, continued work on shaping and refining content

Monday, May 6:
• Presentation of visual journals ½ class

Wed, May 8:
• Discussion of reading and overview of Visual Journals presentations (half hour to 45 min)
• Group work: final session

Monday, May 13:
Presentation of group prototypes