

INSTRUCTOR
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ABOUT THIS STUDIO

The meaning of form implies that there is a communication process between designer and user. Designers imbue objects with meaning, and people interpret these objects in a context of use.

There are at least two significant facets to this communication process, described here as *functional* and *expressive* meaning.

First, the user must understand what the product is, and will be provided with descriptive cues about how to use it. This information will include fundamental aspects of ergonomics and operation such as how to hold or place the object; which parts to touch or otherwise interact with (and which to avoid); how to engage with various object elements to manipulate it, turn it on and off, open and close it; whether to push, pull, turn, click, roll or swipe its features; how it works within an environmental system; and how it may be used with other objects. In other words, the product answers for the person using it: what is this, what should I do with it, what *can* I do with it, and how does it work? This information can be relatively simple or extremely complex, and interpretation may occur on a conscious or subconscious level.

Simultaneously, these same design elements establish a dialogue between designer and user on a subtle level of aesthetic, interpretive meaning. Certain forms and features may be more or less appropriate for any given context, culture, user group or individual. This accounts for personal style and taste, and is therefore highly subjective. The information communicated through objects at this level is influenced both in design intent and user interpretation by factors such as time and place, philosophy and ideology, trends and preferences. Subtle design manipulations may affect how objects are perceived in terms of quality, status, value systems, and even gender, and ethnicity.

Both functional and expressive meaning are communicated through the subtlety of shape, scale, proportion, line, color, texture, material, labels, display, movement, and sound. The communication established between the decisions made by designers, and the interpretations made by users, constitute the meaning of form.

This studio course will help you establish a basis for understanding the meaning of form through creative exploration and decision-making, by providing project experiences with both functional and expressive design requirements, and contextualizing your ideas in a process that anticipates and realizes the human interpretation and response to design.

STUDIO OBJECTIVES

Each assignment will have a unique set of goals communicated to you in the form of a project brief.

This studio should build cumulatively on your design thinking and skills established in your prior and parallel studios and classes. Course objectives include your ongoing, integrated development of the following abilities:

Process

- Develop design ideas through iterative sketching, sketch-modeling, and prototyping
- Explore a range of design ideas to establish a breadth of possibilities, and design details for depth of resolution
- Reflect critically on design decisions to progress creative ideas
- Engage in dialog with instructors, peers and professionals about your work, absorbing feedback to advance your ideas
- Organize a coherent narrative of your design process leading to your final outcomes

Resolution

- Express an integrated balance of functional and expressive product attributes in design outcomes
- Produce well-crafted physical models representing product form
- Communicate design ideas using hand and software generated visuals, including both aesthetic/illustrative renderings and technical specifications
- Make informed decisions about best means of design communication
- Present your design process and final work using an integration of articulate speech, high quality visuals, and well-written text

Professionalism

- Meet professional standards of on-time attendance, preparedness, and engaged participation in all studio activities

STUDIO REQUIREMENTS

This studio will require familiar expectations of professional conduct, prompt attendance, adherence to schedules, respect for faculty, staff, and fellow students, maintenance of your studio and work space, the safe and responsible use of tools, machines, and materials, and a positive attitude.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Each project will be issued with a written description of requirements and a schedule of due dates in a detailed design brief. While some deliverables will vary with each project, the following will be typical requirements:

Process books. Process books or other organized documentation of ideation sketches, drawings, and notations.

Process models. Sketch models, mock-ups, and iterative prototypes as appropriate.

Finished models. Final physical models, crafted as specified and appropriate for each project.

Technical drawings. Orthographic or specification drawings with sufficient product views and dimensions using appropriate software.

Digital renderings. Digital renderings to communicate material finishes, surface details, and context using appropriate software.

Digital documentation. Digital photographs and other digital files documenting completed work.