

COGNIZANT DESIGN THEORY

TPA 6930

FALL 2025

CON 219

M – 10:40-12:35

Asynchronous via Canvas

INSTRUCTOR: *Jen Dasher*

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CON 221

OFFICE HOURS: M/T 1:00-3:00 or By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Focusing on the intersection of historical, social, and cultural awareness and design, students will investigate critical social movements in design while examining the impact design choice has on the individual and society. Cognizant Design Theory challenges conventional thinking regarding the nature of design and creativity, empowering meaningful representations of cultures and peoples in theatrical design practice.

COURSE GOALS AND/OR OBJECTIVES:

1. **COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:** After completing this course students will:

- be able to have critical and nuanced conversations about history and current social issues.
- understand the intersectionality of design and social environment.
- be able to critically research both in text and visual evidence.
- more fully understand their personal voice.

COURSE POLICIES:

EXPECTATIONS:

- This is a hybrid course. One meeting of this course happens asynchronously as does all homework. Each week that content is available through a canvas module. It is expected that you review all module material in advance of class so that material can be utilized in

class. Modules may contain between 9-12 hours of content for review. Please manage your time accordingly.

- An important component of this course is in class discussion. Topics may be challenging. In order to handle these critical conversations, we will establish community agreements to follow and engage in a circular discussion structure.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Your success in this course relies on on-time attendance, completion of projects and effective participation in all class periods. No absences will be excused without prior notification unless under emergency circumstances. Absences that will automatically be excused are in alignment with UF policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

ASSIGNMENT POLICY : *All assignments will be turned in on canvas. It is expected that these are uploaded in advance of class so that they are accessible to be projected and reviewed during class. No late submissions will be accepted. Instructor is available to work through best practices in managing multiple projects to successful on-time completion.*

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION :

Students are invited to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semesters, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

UF POLICIES:

<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

GRADING POLICIES:

METHODS BY WHICH STUDENTS WILL BE EVALUATED AND THEIR GRADE DETERMINED (REQUIRED): GRADING WILL FOLLOW THE FOLLOWING PEDAGOGY:

- A grade of “C” is average meaning the student has completed all requirements of the assignment satisfactorily. Graduate students receiving a cumulative grade of “C” are automatically placed on academic probation.
- A grade of “B” is good and indicates a level of commitment to the project that goes above the requirements of the assignment between 1-9%.
- A grade of “A” is excellent and indicates a level of commitment to the project that goes above the requirements of the assignment between 10-20%. It is expected that graduate students are striving to meet this expectation consistently through the course of the semester.

Assignment	Points or percentage
Exercise 1: Positionality Statement v. 1	5
Exercise 2: Positionality Statement v. 2	5
Exercise 3: Storytelling Exercise	5
Exercise 4:	5
Participation	10
Project 1: This Is Us	20
Project 2: We Didn't Start the Fire	20
Project 3: Building Equitable Futures	30

GRADING SCALE:

A 94-100 % A- 90-93% B+ 87-89%

B 83-86% B- 80-82% C+ 77-79%

C 73-76% C- 70-72% D 68-69%

E 0-67%

ASSIGNMENTS:

This Is Us

Ancestry: One's family or ethnic or cultural descent

Family: any individual with whom you share a emotional and values based connection and whose actions have shown commitment resulting in your grounding, growth, or transformation.

THIS IS US is a personal exploration of ancestry and the intersection with objects. The goal is to help you answer the question "Who Am I?" by linking yourself to an individual, moment, or period of your ancestry. Each student will select an individual, period, or moment from their own familial history to research the historical, political, economical, and cultural details. Students will then tell the story of their selection visually, verbally, and through writing.

Visual: This can include but is not limited to: design work (rendering/sketching), slide decks, videos, physical objects. Consider how to best tell the visual story and impart emotion, history, and culture through that visual.

Verbal: Utilize storytelling basics to lead us through the story you wish to tell.

Written: 1,000-1,200 word detailed history of time period and culture you are addressing and its intersection with your visual presentation. Eg. costume history, architectural history, furniture history, lighting history.

We Didn't Start the Fire

1. Students will select a verse in Billy Joel's "We Didn't Start the Fire"
2. Students will research the context of each historical marker to answer why the term is historically relevant in its time and what (if any) visual representation triggers us to recognize this historical reference?
3. Students will analyze the historical marker through the following framework:

- a. *demographic trends*
- b. *cultural trends*
- c. *economic climate*
- d. *legal and political conditions*
- e. *specific international events*
- f. *technological change*

4. Building upon this historical analysis, identify any items/trends that are crucial to defining your generation, explaining why they were important and what they portrayed about themselves (significance of events).

Students will prepare a 10 min. in-class presentation of their findings.

IMAGING THE FUTURE

See Guidelines in Canvas

MODULES:

Positionality

"Barry." Directed by Vikram Gandhi, Netflix, 2016.

"I Identify." Independent Lens in Beyond the Films. PBS. <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/i-identify-what-forces-determine-your-identity/>

"The Joy Luck Club." Directed by Wayne Wang, Warner Bros., 1993.

"Little White Lie." Directed by Lacey Schwartz, 2015.

Manning, Jennifer. "Becoming a Decolonial Feminist Ethnographer: Addressing the Complexities of Positionality and Representation." *Management learning* 49.3 (2018): 311–326. Web.

Mclaughlin, Sarah. "When I Say ... Positionality." *Medical education* 58.10 (2024): 1149–1150. Web.

ANTHIAS, FLOYA. "Where Do I Belong? Narrating Collective Identity and Translocational Positionality." *Ethnicities* 2.4 (2002): 491–514. Web.

Routledge, Brian. "Who Am I?" *Brain (London, England : 1878)* 147.1 (2024): 2–4. Web.

Storytelling and Humanism

"Inherit the Wind." Directed by Stanley Kramer, Netflix, 1960, streaming on Netflix

Bass, Saul. *Why Man Creates*. 1968. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IT2mqA6UYDw&t=800s>

"Es Devlin." *Abstract: The Art of Design*, directed by Scott Dadich, season 1, episode 4, Netflix, 2017.

Ajour, Ashjan. "Storytelling from the Heart: A Feminist Decolonizing Humanism." *Meridians (Middletown, Conn.)* 24.1 (2025): 137–164. Web.

Guellerin, Christian. "Design, Ethics, and Humanism." *Design Management Review* 32.2 (2021): 44–49. Web.

Rüsen, Jörn. "What Is Humanism?" *Humanism*. 1st ed. United Kingdom: Routledge, 2021. 5–11. Web.

Forlano, Laura. "Posthumanism and Design." *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics and Innovation* 3.1 (2017): 16–29. Web.

Quick American History

The Entire History of the United States | SlideShare." YouTube, uploaded by SlideShare, 16 Nov 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxdSr03ULdM>.

"Roots of American Culture: A Cross-Country Visit with Living Treasures of Folk & Traditional Arts." National Endowment for the Arts, 17 Nov 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLvny5nk0vU>

"Howard Zinn A People's History of the United States." The Documentary Collection, 4 Jul 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j53VI17PQig>.

"History of Theatrical Lighting." , directed by Anonymous , produced by Alexander Street. , Alexander Street, 2017. Alexander Street, <https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/history-of-theatrical-lighting>.

"History of Western Fashion 1700s to 2000s". Catherine Sews, 26 Sep 2000, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiHJku0M7PM>.

Architecture History: All Architectural Styles & Epoches, Complete Overview (University Lecture)". Sebastian von Thaden, 16 Nov. 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHCICthMK-g>.

Dehumanization

Waddell, T. F., Chernin, K., Neimand, A., & Christiano, A. S. (2022). The Effect of Documentary and Fictional Narratives on Dehumanization of Refugees and Stereotype Reversal. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 22(3), 531–544. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2022.2061096>

Haslam, Nick. "The Social Psychology of Dehumanization." *The Routledge Handbook of Dehumanization*. 1st ed. vol. 1. Routledge, 2021. 127–144. Web.

Smith, David Livingstone. "Dehumanization, the Problem of Humanity and the Problem of Monstrosity." *The Routledge Handbook of Dehumanization*. 1st ed. vol. 1. Routledge, 2021. 355–361. Web.

Khatry, Priyanka, Kunalan Manokara, and Lasana T Harris. "Socioeconomic Status and Dehumanization in India: Elaboration of the Stereotype Content Model in a Non-WEIRD Sample." *Social psychological & personality science* 12.6 (2021): 908–919. Web.

Dehumanization In Design

Kaname, Mariko, and Shigeru Maeda. *Dehumanization or Communication: A Design for a "Global Village."* Atomi University; Kyoto Seika University, n.d.

Punchihewa, Gehani Chamilka, and Elizabeth Broadbent. "Patient Gowns and Dehumanization During Hospital Admission: A Randomized Clinical Trial." *JAMA Network Open*, vol. 7, no. 12, Dec. 2024, p. e2449936. DOI:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.49936. ([PMC](#))

De Clercq, Rafael. "The Dehumanization of Architecture." *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 56, no. 4, Winter 2022, pp. 12-28. ([Scholarly Publishing Collective](#))

Bernard, Philippe, and Robin Wollast. "Why Is Sexualization Dehumanizing? The Effects of Posture Suggestiveness and Revealing Clothing on Dehumanization." *SAGE Open*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2019, DOI:10.1177/2158244019828230. ([journals.sagepub.com](#))

Here's an MLA citation for "*Humanity Is Not a (shopping) Center You Can Design For*" by Frederick (Fred) van Amstel:

Van Amstel, Frederick. "Humanity Is Not a (shopping) Center You Can Design For." *Frederick van Amstel Blog*, 23 Oct. 2022, fredvanamstel.com/blog/humanity-is-not-a-shopping-center-you-can-design-for. ([Frederick van Amstel](#))

"Hugo Boss Secret Nazi History Fashion At War M2M Exclusive Documentary." *YouTube*, uploaded by M2M, 1 Sept. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTnAaLPIB3A.

Edwards, Jim. "Hitler as Art Director: What the Nazis' Style Guide Says About the 'Power of Design.'" *CBS News*, 15 Feb. 2011, www.cbsnews.com/news/hitler-as-art-director-what-the-nazis-style-guide-says-about-the-power-of-design/. ([cbsnews.com](#))

Opančar, Karlo. "The Dehumanization of Art." *Tvrđa: Theory, Culture and Visual Arts*, 27 Dec. 2022, tvrnja.com/visual-arts/the-dehumanization-of-art/. ([tvrnja.com](#))

Foundations of America

Washington, Margaret, Robert Kenner, and production company WGBH. *American Experience. John Brown's Holy War. Interview with Historian Margaret Washington. 2 of 5*. Boston, MA: WGBH Educational Foundation, 2000. Film.

Broedel, Hans Peter, and Jana Byars, eds. *Monsters and Borders in the Early Modern Imagination*. First edition. Boca Raton, FL: Routledge, an imprint of Taylor and Francis, 2018. Print.

Broedel, Hans Peter, and Jana Byars, eds. *Monsters and Borders in the Early Modern Imagination*. First edition. Boca Raton, FL: Routledge, an imprint of Taylor and Francis, 2018. Print.

Netflix. (2019). *Puritan: All of Life to the Glory of God* [Film]. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10853382/>

Li, Guanghua. The Influence of Puritanism on the Shaping of Traditional American Values. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, vol. 6 iss. 4.

Prime Video (1995). *The Scarlett Letter*.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

ALL MODULES AND ASSIGNMENTS CAN BE FOUND ON CANVAS.

Date / Mode	Asynchronous Content	In Class Content	Homework/ Exercises Due
Aug. 25 – In Person (IP)	In Person 1	Introduction to Course	
Aug. 27 – Asynchronous (A)	Positionality Module		
Sept. 3 - A	Storytelling and Humanism Module		Positionality Statement V. 1
Sept. 8 -IP		Defining Humanism in Design	Storytelling Exercises
Sept. 10 - A	Quick American History Module	Modern American Culture: WDSTF	
Sept. 15 - IP		We Didn't Start The Fire	

Sept. 17 - A	Dehumanization		
Sept. 22 - IP		External Forces	
Sept. 24 – A	Dehumanization in Design		
Sept. 15 - IP		We Didn't Start The Fire	
Sept. 29 - IP		This Is Us In Class Show and Tell	
Oct. 1 - A	Foundations of America		
Oct. 6 - IP		Internalized Forces	
Oct. 8 - A	American Culture 1		
Oct. 13 - IP		WDSTF Presentations	
Oct. 15 - A	American Culture 2		
Oct. 20 - IP		WDSTF Presentations	
Oct. 22 - A	2020: Disruption		
Oct. 27 - IP		Where Are We Now?	
Oct. 29 - A	Equity, Inclusion, Access and Design		

Nov. 3 - IP		Imaging the Future	
Nov. 5 - A	Module TBD Based on Class Progression		
Nov. 10 - IP		Imaging the Future	Positionality Statement v. 2
Nov. 12 - A	Module TBD Based on Class Progression		
Nov. 17 - IP		Building Equitable Futures	
Nov. 19 – A	Module TBD Based on Class Progression		