

ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO

Preface

Teaching design and visual communication is not an easy task as it requires a tremendous amount of time, teaching theories, creating good practical assignments and close follow up guiding the students and refining their creative concepts. It involves training students how to; invest, develop and manage their creativity through a number of techniques. The goal of teaching design and visual communication is to teach students how to think critically and learn from their tools and colleagues.

I enjoy teaching graphic design and visual communication as I have always had a deep interest in the industry of Advertising, public information and visual communication process. My interest in the field led me to design, photograph and consult as a free-lancer for a number of advertising firms and companies (please visit my website <http://www.amiribrahem.com/>).

I have been an academic since 1995, teaching a number of introductory and advanced courses including Graphic Design Studies, Introduction to Typography, Computer for Design, Photography, Creative Strategy and others. These classes sometimes included more than 25 students. I have also successfully coordinated several courses, with hundreds of students and several instructors; by structuring the course outline, preparing presentations, and supplying materials to all lecturers to ensure both content and form consistency.

My teaching responsibilities have extended beyond the classroom: as an academic advisor I would guide and advising numerous undergraduates, I've also happily volunteered to support and guide a number of my graduate students through their MA studies. I take pride in my teaching and have enough experience to know what works in the classroom, and I strive to be efficient at my teaching duties outside the classroom. I have always earned my students respect through my wide practical knowledge of the field of design and public communication, my respect of their abilities and needs with patience, humor, and tolerance in addition treating each of them in a fair way.

My active enthusiastic attitude in addition to my practical expertise and my readings about human psychology, semiotics, symbolism and professional knowledge of prepress and printing process in addition to the excellent command of computer graphic software packages, has always enabled my superiors to assign me confidently to numerous administrative and public information tasks related to enhancing the institution identity as a committee member or team leader (e.g. head of quality assurance awareness committee (2010-present), member of design program development committee (2011-present), member of the media committee "Colleges of Applied Sciences Students Forum 2010"...).

Teaching Mission and Methodologies

My mission and as an educator can be described as follows:

- Guiding the students to discover their own unique paths, through exploring their capabilities.
- Navigating between theoretical aspects of visual communication such as; human psychology, semiotics, marketing theories and smoothly blending those aspects within the context of my classes in order to train the students how to follow design briefs and come up with creative visuals that persuades.
- Imparting to each student a working relationship with the course materials and assignments, and an awareness of its usefulness in the field of industry as a designer.
- Instilling commitment, and an ability to cooperate with teammates while raising awareness of ethics and social responsibilities related to the design practice.
- Preparing students to join the design and visual communication industry with professional interactive attributes including the ability to effectively utilize a variety of approaches, and guide them to gain practical knowledge applicable to contemporary problems in the industry.

I adopt the following pedagogical methodologies and approaches in order to achieve my objectives:

- Fostering a good relationship with all students individually by respecting their culture, socio-economic background, and skill level while displaying patience, integrity and demonstrating punctuality, neatness, civility and dependability.
- Maintaining continuous support of students beyond the classroom by being available during office hours.
- Following up with students' during the different stages of the creative process: from idea generation and concept development to design implementation using proper software/s to produce creative applications.
- Involving the students in brain-storming and discussion during class by exposing them to a variety of approaches in order to analyze the concepts, context and different techniques of contemporary designs, illustrations and recent successful design campaigns.
- Educating students to become professional creative leaders not followers, by practicing exploration in experimental pedagogy to adapt changes in tools, media and audiences.
- Committing to reliable teaching strategies, and emphasizing the importance of meeting with deadlines and producing high quality products.

- Extensively preparing for each class session through, well organized course materials and supplements.
- Constructively criticizing students' assignments because criticism is valuable and relevant to the understanding of the course context.
- Setting clear assessment criteria delineated in a course outline , and engaging the students in a self-assessment process to help them become aware of their weaknesses and strengths.
- Maintaining consistent grading standards by rewarding hard work with either a good grade or pointing out specific areas for improvement.
- Adapting information technology and available communication tools offered by the education institution or developed by myself to create an open communication channel which ensures the fast and accurate exchange of information with students.
- Engaging in any available professional development activities.

Based on my pedagogical methodologies and approaches I adapt as teaching strategies; my students have always recognized my deep interest in their course and have responded with a matching level of interest and enthusiasm. As a result, I have always had a high attendance numbers and high student enrollment.

My students are always meeting or exceeding course expectations. (In courses I have taught where there is a common final exam for multiple sections, my students have always performed better on average than students from other sections).

I consider the success of my many students as a graphic designers and art directors a personal achievement of my own.

Courses I Taught

Graphic Design Studies 1

A studio-based course where students: examine the power of form to carry meaning and familiarize them with the semiotics of different design elements; get familiarized with the constraints of a brief and the experience to design through an extensive visual research base; familiarize them with corporate identity structure, and the process of creating, and developing an integrated memorable signature; familiarize students to basic knowledge about printing techniques and materials. The course is in two parts. In part A students experience the task of abstracting complex ideas as a single, powerful mark on paper. In part B students examine different structural modes of organization as a way of exploring the representation and expression of visual content.

Graphic Design Studies 2

A studio-based course where students consolidate their design processes throughout the two parts of the course; part A concentrates on following a

typical design brief, to construct an identity (logo or logotype) for a certain organization, and 2 promotional artifacts (a poster and TV commercial storyboard); part B consolidates the processes via a printed publication layout exercise and well finished folio that includes all the student's work.

Creative Strategy

A practice based course where students are introduced to the theory of advertising creative principles and practice through: exploring the creative challenges; developing the strategy for an advertising campaign; knowing how to meet client objectives and how to prepare creative briefs for a range of media. Students are also directed to increase their cultural literacy through research.

Integrated Marketing Principles

In-depth study of the principles of marketing, providing the students with information on a wide range of topics with a view to explaining their own role in the marketing process. The course focus is on giving students detailed information on current marketing theory.

Photography

An introductory course offering students the basic photographic skills to work competently, taking a key approach of learning through digital experimental practices. Optical, technological theories, and conceptual theories will be explored and analyzed through the taking and making of photographic images. The course supports students in their use of the medium of photography in independent research and practice, and to make connections with the other media of graphic design practice, and prepare students for the more advanced study of creative and conceptual oriented photographic practice.

Photographic Studies

A practical and research-based course focusing on applying advanced digital photographic techniques and critical evaluating skills to develop a self-directed photographic research project. The course supports the students to develop and resolve an advanced creative and conceptually-oriented project. Students are encouraged to research areas of theory and practice that are appropriate and relevant to their chosen content of photographic work, and to work competently towards achieving the graphic communication industry standard.

Introduction to Typography

A studio-based course where students examine typography in both visual and semantic values; its vocabulary of parts; limitations of necessity and potential for expression. Students work with letterforms to learn about type anatomy; with words to learn about typographic form and structure; and with sentences to learn about typographic conventions and compositional strategies. Student will also acquire the correct terminology to discuss and critically analyze typographic work, as well understanding the importance of typography as a graphic element that adds more value to design in different fields in addition to its verbal and communicative value.

Research

Design and Visual communication have become a fundamental human activity due to the complexity of societies, changes of the human behavior, economic and industrial development and the communication revolution that targeted billions of people around the globe. Since my early years of graphic design education, I realized the great impact of visual communication in motivating and directing humans of different races, cultures and environments.

During my postgraduate studies in both my MA and PhD; I focused on the intellectual aspects of visual communication including communication strategies and marketing approaches, and studied its impact on human psychology and behavior when incorporated with creative visual design.

I have been continuously involved in the industry of Advertisement and visual public information. At present I have several major points that I'm in the process of working on as research topics briefed as following:

- Applied researches related to the Research and development of industry and services through (cooperation with Industry Innovation Center in Oman).

Topics of my interest that I plan to work on in the future are as follows:

- The development of visual communication and promotional tools to fit with the rapid development of communication and entertainment technologies.

- Subliminal impact of visual designs the non-verbal language that overcomes verbal language barriers within different societies.

- The criteria and visual structure of international non-profit services campaigns that positively affect different communities with different cultures such as anti terrorism campaigns, conserving the environment campaigns...etc.).

- The impact of the common open sources materials on the internet (e.g. vector elements, brushes, clipart...) on the designers identity and personal touch. Does this has an impact on different cultures and taste? (a comparison between 2 different cultural environments).

Appendices

Available upon request

Academic Supporting Documents

Including: certificates of experience, recommendation letters, time table, students' course evaluation...etc.

Courses Portfolio

Professional Portfolio