DESIGNING URBAN ECOLOGIES

Instructor
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Office Hours
Wed 3:00-5:00p PST or by appointment
@The Loft (2nd Floor of Price Center) or
via Zoom

Class Meetings
Tues 3:30-6:20p PST
W1 + W2 (remote classroom)
W3-W10 Mandeville B114

COURSE SCHEDULE

W1	**1.4**	Introduction
W2	**1.11**	Subculture Development
W3	**1.18**	Mood Boards + Conceptual Dev
W4	**1.25**	Tourism Campaign Poster 1 R1
W5	**2.1**	Tourism Campaign Poster 1 R2
W6	**2.8**	Tourism Campaign Poster 2 R1
W7	**2.15**	Tourism Campaign Poster 2 R2
W8	**2.22**	Tourism Campaign Poster 3 R1
W9	**3.1**	Tourism Campaign Poster 3 R2
W10	**3.8**	Print Series + Present

AN INTRODUCTION

Most individuals, even the most intellectual, have trouble verbalizing with certainty what exactly the term "urban ecology" means. This is because like "design communication", both *urban* and *ecology* are enormously general and abstract buckets with which we can fill with a number of meanings, understandings, assumptions and potentials. Even the faculty who shoulder a shared responsibility of illuminating ideas on the massive subject will approach it from often wildly different methodologies. And this is a good thing—for like all design thinking and practice, consideration of such broad topics is best experienced as a prism rather than as a one way mirror.

In the most general and traditional sense, urban ecology is typified as "the scientific study of the relation of living organisms with each other and their surroundings in the context of an urban environment." This standardized view of the discipline acknowledges that urban ecologies are made up of infrastructural and interpersonal systems and networks—buildings, peoples, pathways, communications, and, to some degree, the natural world.

Upon closer inspection, though, the organization of these networks and relationships goes beyond the physical mapping of "contents." The connective tissue of "the ecosystem" is a lesser tangible network of political, philosophical, social, economic, technological and cultural complexes that pardons our reliance on "norms" and grants us endless potential in speculative considerations.

DESIGNING URBAN ECOLOGIES

AN ACCUMULATION OF FACETS

Every 'body' is made up of several (even hundreds, thousands and beyond) smaller bodies. The largest body of water, the ocean, is made up of smaller molecular bodies of water, the human body comprised of millions of cellular bodies, the universe housing infinite number of celestial bodies. Every urban ecology is in essence a larger cultural body made up of any number of subcultural bodies. In this way, we can more easily and introspectively access the greater concept of urban ecologies by seeing the whole through the lens of its more distinctive parts, through the territory of subculture.

What is a subculture? The Oxford English Dictionary defines subculture, as "an identifiable subgroup within a society or group of people, esp. one characterized by beliefs or interests at variance with those of the larger group; the distinctive ideas, practices, or way of life of such a subgroup." Historically, subcultures have been viewed as aversion to and subversion of normalcy and often characterized by either deviance, resistance or distinction, i.e., hippies, yuppies, goths, skinheads, trekkies.

In the modern era, we can also consider subcultures to exist in virtual, nano or computational worlds, on other planets and different dimensions or even states of consciousness. For our purposes, we'll adopt an open, speculative mindset that does not limit our thinking to subcultures that are purely oppositional, but rather expand our imaginations to conceiving of them on the basis of future and emerging worlds. In this exercise we are not concerned with the rational, realistic, or probable; but rather, the fringe and those ideas just outside of the realm of current possibility.

DESIGN

We can use design not simply as a generator of new stuff, but as a way of looking at the world as a designed place. Urban ecologies and the subcultural components growing out of them are designed phenomena, utilizing platforms of graphical language to express, evangelize and distinguish their ideology from that of the society around them.

You will imagine, invent (or modify an existing) and script a subculture. We will visualize your subculture and its "ecology" through the vehicle of a tourism board promotional campaign where you will connotatively address its demographics, philosophy, values, participants, data and any other characteristics or traits that are apart of its dynamic and paradigm—its system of being.

The objective of your campaign is to:
*   Introduce the greater public to your subculture, its participants and its ideology.
*   Provide thoughtful and meaningful 'data points' about your subculture and its ecology.
*   Create a graphical language, (i.e., a typographic and visual design style) that connotatively aligns with the messaging and 'vibe' of your subculture.
*   Establish central themes and motifs help you craft the graphical language as well as the campaign messaging, (i.e., slogans, copy, data points).
*   Design a cohesive, unified but dynamic campaign across three (3) tourism posters.

CAMPAIGN FOR A SUBCULTURE

THE PROJECT

1.   Identify or invent a subcultural group. This should not be an existing, overtly familiar or popularly known group understood by most people today. Rather it should be one you have identified, modified, compiled or invented:

- Don't feel obliged to make your subculture "important" or "impressive." A subculture that seems benign and flat to other individuals can produce a compelling narrative. The choice is not a factor of inherent value, but rather how you uncover value through your project. Avoid overly abstract or conceptual subject matter. For the project to have its greatest impact, consider territories you can investigate with depth and detail.
- Do not disclose anything about yourself you would rather not. The project will not be judged on empathy or radical biography.
- Please don't turn this into a massive research project. You won't be able to cover everything and develop your typographic and design skills, too. That is why you must limit yourself. This is why you should have enough intimate knowledge to be able to jump right into proper source material or at least know where to immediately look.
- Because you will be working with this topic for the full quarter, be sure it is of sufficient interest to you. Otherwise you will be driven crazy by week 5.

2.   Compile a mood board of visual ephemera you can use as research and the inspiration for developing a design language around. Think broadly about this and consider how you would define "design" in terms of what you are examining. Some things to consider:

- Be inspired by and source imagery from all corners of human activity. This includes visual artifacts from but not limited to the worlds of culture (film, fashion, music, social media, literature, art+design), sciences, architecture, technology, geography, the natural world, history, theory, current events + media, etc.
- Include typographic specimens in your collection. Look at various typographic 'voices' and try to locate a style or styles that evoke a sensibility congruent with your subculture.
- Evaluate the profile you have created about your subculture and the mood board you've compiled. What emerging themes and/or motifs can you identify as inherent to this group and its representation? These are recurring adjectives, descriptors and concepts you see as connecting things to one another.
- Begin to consider what content will populate your campaign. What will it highlight about your subculture? How will it highlight this content? What tone of voice is right? How will you "speak" to your audience?

3.   Your final project will be a series of posters promoting tourism in the epicenter of your subculture. In order to succeed with the brilliance to which you are fated to aspire, you must consider all of these factors:

- What sorts of typographic language, imagery and style should you establish to make the campaign connotatively aligned with your subculture and its habitation?
- What kind of messaging, point of view, tone of voice is appropriate to alert the audience to the philosophy and attitude of your subculture?
- Besides visuals and slogans, what other kinds of information might be suitable to describe the urban ecology in which your subculture operates? How might you present this data? What kinds of information graphics can you introduce to help the audience understand your subculture on a deeper level?
- How will your graphical language vary across your three posters? How can you utilize visual contrasts and hierarchy to create a dynamic set and avoid redundancy?

CAMPAIGN OF A SUBCULTURE

THE SUCCESSFUL PROJECT WILL INCLUDE

1. The establishment of new or modified subcultural group and a "narrative" to support the audiences understanding of them, i.e., their name, their epicenter, campaign messaging, a graphical language to deliver supporting content and data.

2. Typographic style and system which aligns with the campaign and ultimately the vibe, intention, and philosophical point of view of the group.

3. Use of imagery and/or image-making which supports the conceptual frame work of the campaign and situates the audience within the emotional and psychological attitudes of the subculture.

4. A cover (save this for week 8 or 9, please).

5. A series of three visually cohesive posters which together embody a clear, compelling and effective tourism ad campaign but are individually dynamic and able to stand alone.

6. **Most importantly, a conceptual framework on which the project rests. You must demonstrate your ability to imply the meaning (and all that entails) of your campaign through the graphical language.**

WHAT THIS PROJECT IS NOT

1. This project is not a tastefully minimal coffee table fine art book. It is not about coming off as cool or trendy. It is about inhabiting a speculative and audacious mindset to imagine fictional worlds and peoples and then mindfully crafting a compelling narrative connecting them to a mainstream audience. In this way, it is not about linking to existing popular visual genres or ideas.

2. This project is not a chance to repeat past successes in typography or design. As in Vis 41, you will be expected to try things that extend past your comfort level. That is the only way to learn and grow. Otherwise, your just marking time. It is my job to be sure that you are challenging yourself.

3. This project is not about experimenting with stuff that "looks experimental" or "feels edgy". It is also not about mimicking tourism media you have seen before or are familiar with, but about working with a graphical language in support of your conceptual framework and of your own imagination/madness.

4. As with your work in Vis 41, this project is not about coming up with a successful or popular idea. It is about developing a process of investigation and analysis that builds toward a satisfying, confident, articulate and compelling final product.

CAMPAIGN OF A SUBCULTURE

INVENTING A SUBCULTURE

As the basis for all design work in this class, the quarter-long project requires the identification and development of a unique subculture as the subject matter.

It is crucial that you are able to be as detailed and specific about the make up of your subculture, to have a somewhat rich understanding of its inner and outer workings so that establishing a conceptual framework with which to inform your design will be both meaningful and as though the "thing designed itself."

You will be responsible for establishing a cohesive design language across multiple design artifacts, so investigating and imaging your subculture with depth and from multiple angles up front will help you make informed and compelling visual choices.

Here are some facets to consider as you identify or invent your subculture:

1. Who are they? What do they call themselves? What defines them? What is their preoccupation? What are their values and beliefs? What is or are the primary common thing(s) that bond them together? What activity or activities are they engaged in? Do they gravitate toward a particular profession or hobby?

2. What is their demographic? Are they gender specific? Do they belong to a particular age group? Do they have a shared ethic or racial attribution? Where do they live/ congregate most? Do they belong to any socio-economic class? Where do they live and how?

3. What kind of aesthetic or cultural affiliations are common to this group? Do they have preferences or alignments with regard to music? To film? To fashion? Do they have political or religious affiliations?

4. What core principle prevails as the defining faculty which distinguishes this group from its parent culture and other subcultures?

5. Write their manifesto. For the purposes of this class, the manifesto should be around five (5) sentences which summarize the doctrine of this group, i.e., a public declaration of their intentions, motives, views or ideas that may seem new to, unique to or oppositional to mainstream and popular culture.

6. How do they communicate with one another? Do they utilize jargon or argot specific to their group? **Jargon** here is defined as: *special words or expressions that are used by a particular profession or group and are difficult for others to understand*. **Argot** is a more systematic and developed language made up of jargon often employed to exclude or mislead people outside a group.

7. Like shared languages, are there any rituals, habits or ceremonial practices the group engages in? Do they exhibit any notable mannerisms, quirks, traits?

8. What visual artifacts are connected to this group? Consider symbolism, found imagery, texts, events, and any other supporting tangible evidence.

SCHEDULE

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

WEEK 01 // 1.4
General introduction and discussion. Presentation of assignment. Examining a few examples, discussion of content generation. Question: How do you start a project?

WEEK 02 // 1.11
Share your newly identified subcultural group. Use the survey in this syllabus to start filling in the details in regards to the who, what, why, where and how of your subject matter. The more specific and expansive you can be, the more source material you will have to pull from in developing a graphical language to represent this group. Be sure to give your group a name and identify the "place" your campaign will encourage tourists. Note: Your subculture will ultimately drive what details can be filled in. Some factors and information gaps may not apply to your group.

WEEK 03 // 1.18
Mood board + conceptual framework. Research and curate an expansive mood board tailored to your subculture. This can include visual artifacts representative of photographic material, symbols, iconography, typographic inspiration, textiles, people, places, environments, patterns, texts, clippings, scraps, sketches; anything which may support positioning your subculture. The more you collect the more connections you can make to inspire a graphical language. Reflection and analysis of your mood board should yield a set of themes and motifs; 3-5 adjectives and/or descriptors which provide a conceptual backbone to your graphical experiments and studies.

WEEK 04 // 1.25
Generate the first poster in a series of three posters promoting tourism to the epicenter of your subculture. Consider connotative typography, meaningful image-making techniques, messaging (slogans and other supportive texts), and any other content/data that supports a campaign about your group and their ecology. Question: How do you move from a series of studies and examples to a well-conceived typographic/graphic language? What is the importance and value of a typographic language? How do you develop a language that is both sturdy and flexible?

WEEK 05 // 2.1
Development of poster 1 round 2. Refinement of typographic decisions and their application to the visual campaign. What elements are emerging from the poster that can become common graphical attributes to the whole campaign? How can you start to imagine a series of posters that work in concert with one another but individually toy with layout, hierarchy and density?

WEEK 06 // 2.8
Generate the second poster in a series of three posters promoting tourism to the epicenter of your subculture. What components, methods, ideas, graphical gestures can be carried over from the first poster to alert the audience to their relationship? What components can create variation allowing the series to be dynamic and not redundant?

WEEK 07 // 2.15
Development of poster 2 round 2. Refinement of typographic decisions and their application to the visual campaign. What elements are emerging from the poster that can become common graphical attributes to the whole campaign? How can you start to imagine a series of posters that work in concert with one another but individually toy with layout, hierarchy and density?

WEEK 08 // 2.22
Generate the third poster in a series of three posters promoting tourism to the epicenter of your subculture. What other opportunities are there to describe your subculture to the audience while still paying careful allegiance to the graphical language you've developed. Again, where can you create nuance and commonality between the campaign assets?

WEEK 09 // 3.1
Development of poster 3 round 2. Look across all posters for areas of improvement, refinement. Is it too late to experiment within the sandbox of your graphical language? What are some unusual ways you can promote a subculture and its place of habitation? What clever bits/devices/data can you use to attract an audience in unexpected but meaningful ways to your subcultural universe?

WEEK 10 // 3.8
Print all three posters to scale and pin up in final class exhibition.

COURSE POLICIES

Participation

A significant portion of your grade is based on your participation in section. You are required to engage fully in the crits. Don't be afraid of saying something wrong—being right is not the point and just showing up is not enough. Your overall grade can fall an entire letter because of low participation, even if you got high marks on everything else. This part of your grade is cumulatively evaluated over the duration of the quarter. You will not be given an 80, 90 or 100 in participation for asking 3 questions over the course of three months. You need to be persistently present, not just physically, but wholly with the group. Unapproved absences will lower your participation grade by 5 points.

Assignments

Effort trumps 'good design'. I want to see that you're iterating and testing yourself. You'll be asked to show and submit substantial proof of work each week which will cumulatively contribute to your overall grade. Unlike Vis 41, the intimate setting of this course allows for a bit more flexibility around 'assignment mandatories'.

Late work

In fairness to all students taking the course, late work is never endoursed. However, if there are extenuating circumstances beyond your control or which are causing you undue personal distress, late work will be accepted with a maximum allowable grade of a B+. If you are experiencing any hardship or difficulty that is interfering with your studies on an on-going basis, please reach out to your advisor(s) or Dean of your department for assistance.

CRITIQUE ETIQUETTE

Critiquing Another's Style

Avoid calling into question the legitimacy or favorability of someone's style; your taste for the genre of another's work is not relevant. Instead, help your classmates determine whether the style they are working with is coming across as they intended or whether it's supporting the content they're giving expression to.

Forcing Your Personal Vision onto Someone Else's Work

A primary course objective is to help students identify a pathway to a practice. Since it's almost certain that no two individuals' creative codes are identical, it is of no service to yourself or others to cut and paste your code onto theirs'. Of course, the visual arts breed overlap and intersection between its practitioners, but everyone's path is uniquely their own. In providing feedback, step into the universe of others' work and the laws that apply there—**become a citizen of their study**.

No One is Special

Keep your ego appropriately in check. This is not about accumulating gold stars or gaining some traction in class hierarchy. Success in this course is defined by **your willingness to engage with your peers and dive into honest inquiry about yourself** as a creator, not by 'being the best.'

Making it Personal vs. Offering Meaningful Feedback

The focus of crits is entirely about honing in on the objective of the work presented. Though content may draw in personal references, do not use crits as an opportunity to personally attack others. Look for insightful and constructive ways to offer meaningful (not 'mean') criticism. To that end, welcome less-than-positive feedback as useful guidance to take your work to the next level, **without taking it personally.**

Arguing with Feedback

If you're doing it right, **you will fail periodically** throughout the course project. Skilled communicators fail fast and fail often. In this way, exploration, investigation and experimentation are guaranteed ways of finding your edge—but some of your iterations are not guaranteed to work. If you argue with feedback because its not a glowing review, you've missed the point entirely.

Being Too Honest or Not Being Honest Enough

Respectful debate is both expected and encouraged. Challenge one another to find the gold in each others' inquiry. When your goal is to uplift your peers to produce honest and engaging work, your approach to doing so will **neither coddle nor cut** them, but elevate, encourage and motivate.

Be Curious and Supportive

The best way to give meaningful feedback is to find a way to **be interested in the work of others**. The best way to be interested is to **be curious**. Approach your classmates' work with a beginner's mind, ask questions and try to locate what's uniquely emerging from their investigation.

GRADE FACTORS

Overall Grade Distribution //

	Grade System		Weighted Grade Scale	
Participation (10%)	Weekly Assignment	A-F	A+	100%
Section attendance, utilizing office hours and participating in	Participation	0-100	A	99–93
discussion boards on Canvas are ways you are acknowledged	Final	A-F	A-	92–90
for participation.			B+	89–87
			B	86–83
Assignments (70%)			B-	82–80
Assignments required by all students to complete weekly proof			C+	79–77
of work submissions. These will either be shared during class			C	76–73
and/or uploaded to Canvas.			C-	72–70
			D+	69–67
Final (20%) March 8th, 3:30p PST			D	65–66
Three (3) printed campaign posters, 24" X 32". Tiled and			F	0–64
trimmed. The final will take place during our last class meeting.				

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Academic Integrity //

Integrity of scholarship is essential for an academic community. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor this principle and in so doing protect the validity of University intellectual work. For students, this means that all academic work will be done by the individual to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. This includes downloading templates or design bundles from the internet to submit as your own creation. **http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2**

Students with Disabilities //

Students requesting accommodations and services due to a disability for this course need to provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), prior to eligibility for requests. Receipt of AFAs in advance is necessary for appropriate planning for the provision of reasonable accommodations. OSD Academic Liaisons also need to receive current AFA letters. For additional information, contact the Office for Students with Disabilities:

- 858.534.4382 (V)
- 858.534.9709 (TTY) - Reserved for people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- osd@ucsd.edu
- http://disabilities.ucsd.edu

RESOURCES

Online //

Adobe Color CC color.adobe.com/

YouTube

Lynda.com (now LinkedIn Learning) www.lynda.com/

Linotype Font Explorer www.fontexplorerx.com/

Typekit typekit.com/

FOUNT fount.artequalswork.com/

Hoefler & Co. www.typography.com/

House Industries houseind.com/

Process Type Foundry processtypefoundry.com/

Fontsmith www.fontsmith.com/

MyFonts myfonts.com

League of Moveable Type www.theleagueofmoveabletype.com

Lost Type www.losttype.com/

Font Squirrel www.fontsquirrel.com/

Google Fonts fonts.google.com/

Transtype www.transtype.com

Fontstand www.fontstand.com

Books on reserve //

Meggs' History of Graphic Design Phil Meggs

About Face: Reviving the Rules of Typography   David Jury

Thinking with Type   Ellen Lupton

Ten Commandments of Type   Phil Meggs

Grid Systems in Graphic Design Josef Müller-Brockmann

Visual Communications Reader Various

Looking Closer: Critical Writings on Graphic Design 1 + 3

It is Beautiful, Then Gone Martin Venezky

Subculture + The Meaning of Style Dick Hebdidge

Making a Splash Various

Pen + Mouse Various

Influences: A Lexicon of Contemporary Design Practice
Anna Gerber + Anja Lutz

Robert Brownjohn : Sex and Typography Emily King

Hand 2 Eye Various

Fashion Illustration Next Various
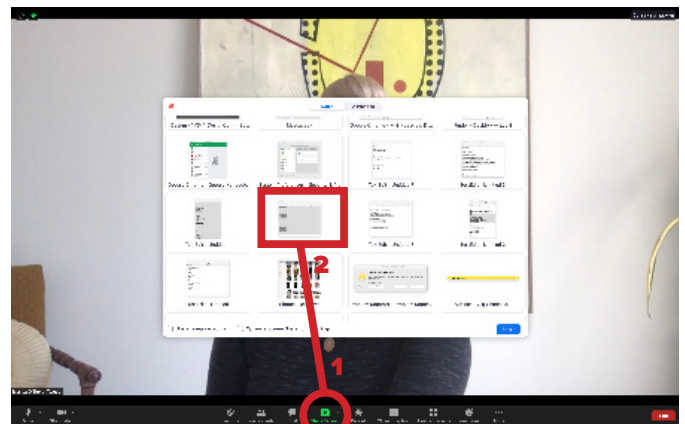
Zoom In-Meeting File Sharing //

Presenters

During section, if you are part of the group that is presenting ROUND 1 work, you will need to share your screen when it is your turn.

1.   Click the 'Share Screen' button on the bottom nav bar of your Zoom window.

2.   Select a screen from your computer to share. This will usually be a PDF in Adobe Acrobat.


SHARE SCREEN   (FOR STUDENTS <u>PRESENTING</u> ROUND 1 WORK)

Non-presenters

During section, if you are part of the group that is **not** presenting but need to share ROUND 2 work, you will upload it to the chat space to make it available for other students to view.

1.   Click the 'Chat' button on the bottom nav bar of your Zoom window.

2.   When the chat window appears, click the 'File' button on the bottom right.

3.   Select the file you wish to circulate to the group.
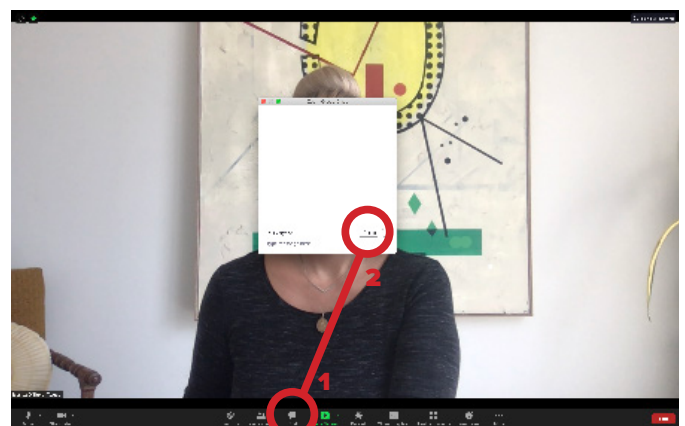
SHARE FILE   (FOR STUDENTS <u>SHARING</u> ROUND 2 WORK)

PRINTING RESOURCES

Printing //

*FedEx Office Print + Ship (recommended)

Located in: Shops at La Jolla Village

Address: 8849 Villa La Jolla Dr, La Jolla, CA 92037

Hours: Open 24 hours

Phone: (858) 457-3775

➤ *Large Scale Black and White Printing:*

Will print a 24x32" (black and white) on bond paper for $5-8

➤ *Large Scale Color Printing:*

Will print a 24x32" (color) on heavyweight coated paper for $27

➤ PROTIP: FedEx provides 10% student discounts!

Wēpa Cloud-based Printers

Printers are no longer available in Visual Arts computer labs. However, you now have access to several cloud-based printers campus-wide. Please see the following link for comprehensive information.

Located in: several locations campus-wide

blink.ucsd.edu/facilities/imprints/devices.html

Print 8.5x11" for tiling

Imprints @ UCSD

Located in: Geisel Library Main floor, east wing

Hours: see website

Phone: (858) 534-2534

blink.ucsd.edu/facilities/services/imprints/locations.html

Typical turnaround time for 24x32" poster is 48 hours

Student Printing Account (optional)

Setting up account with ETS:

https://acms.ucsd.edu/students/print/

[This is another printing resource but is not required for this course or to utilize the other printing resources listed.]

*Don't Wait Until The Last Minute To Print!

FedEx gets inundated by Vis 41 + Vis 101A students printing their posters. Plan ahead and be aware that turnaround times may vary depending on how many students are printing with FedEx. We cannot accept issues with FedEx as excuses for your assignment being late.