

**dsgd 100 project series**

Visual Communication and Process  
San José State University  
Fall 2016

The goal of this course is to contribute to the student’s discovery and understanding of the basic objectives, principles, and methods used in graphic design.

The four projects described here have been conceived to help beginning students develop the compositional and problem-solving skills employed by designers. In the process of completing these projects, students will be challenged to determine goals and to make observations and decisions that result in concise, informative, and engaging visual statements.

Acquire all three of the objects represented below and bring them to class for the beginning of this project series. After initial studies of each object, you will select one of them to represent throughout all four projects in this course. Throughout the semester, you must research and collect reference material on the nature of your object in order to inform and support the concepts you present.

- hose clamp (stainless steel #12 or #20)*
- safety goggles (basic chemical impact)*
- tomatillo (with whole or partial husk)*



**project one: object exploration and representations**

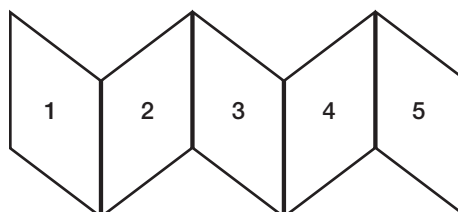
Begin by creating a series of photographs and detailed analytical hand drawings of the objects. The initial drawings should be realistic renderings with full tonal values, progressing toward more exploratory reductive interpretations based on these studies. Throughout this process, explore varied light and dark surfaces and reflections, organic and geometric forms, the relationship between thin line and massive solid, as well as other contrasting or harmonious forms. As you narrow your choice to one object, refine and reduce the complexity of your representations with the objective of arriving at dynamic, simplified visual descriptions of the object. You must determine the essential aspects of this three-dimensional object, which you will use in order to clearly communicate its nature in two-dimensional reductive representations.

Present five final images, each representing the object in its entirety, in black and white tones as specified for each representation, within 7 inch squares mounted together in an accordion-folded presentation as diagrammed below:

- 1: a black and white continuous tone photograph of the object
- 2: scan of a full-tonal value rendering in pencil on white paper
- 3: scan of rendered highlight (white) and shadow (black) on midtone (gray) paper
- 4: solid black and white reductive representation drawn in vector-based application
- 5: an icon-like hyper-reductive representation drawn in vector-based application

For rendering number 3, use charcoal paper (or equivalent) in storm gray, velvet gray, or blue gray; and pastel pencils (or equivalent) in white, gray white, gray, and black.

Present a high quality print or prints discreetly hinged together (clean image edges without pixilation; rich, even black; bright white), folded and cut precisely and cleanly with sharp squared edges exactly as specified:



square, 7 inch panels, in accordion fold  
panel 1 (photograph) facing out  
your name on back of last panel

*“The question is not what you look at, but what you see.” Henry David Thoreau*

## typography

Projects two, three, and four introduce type in combination with image. Choose type from the **Helvetica** or **Helvetica Neue** families only—no substitutions—unaltered in proportion or design (only 100% vertical and 100% horizontal scale with no skew, blur, or other effects), and only from the range of faces represented in this document.

Note that the Helvetica and Helvetica Neue families do not include other type families with coincidental names such as Helvetica Rounded, Helvetica Inserat, or Helvetica Narrow. Note also that the Helvetica Neue selection allowed does not include the “outline” typeface.

## project two: compositions with type and with color

Using your compositions 4 and 5 from project one for reference and inspiration for further development (not limiting yourself to the same final renderings), create four reductive compositions on two 17”x 11” sheets, each composition with one or more representations of your object:

black-only compositions with type:

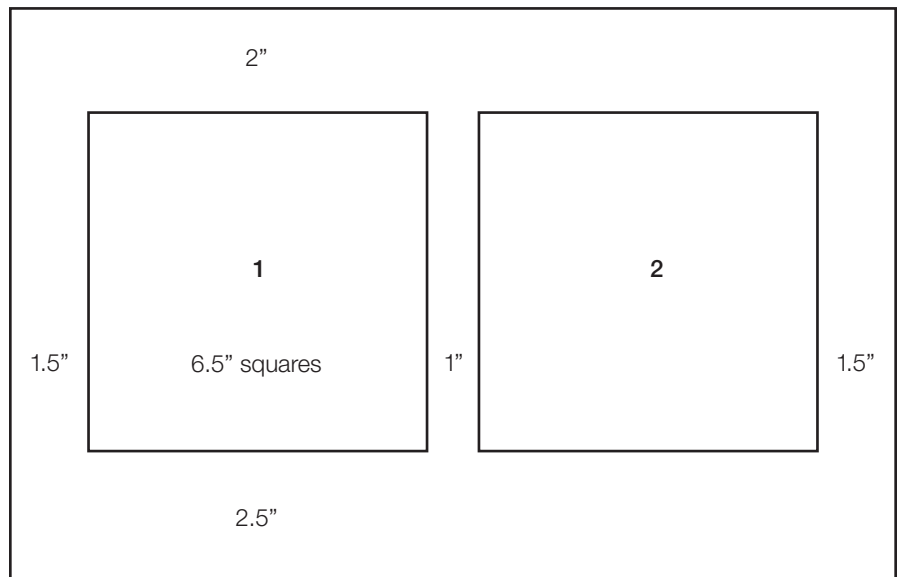
- 1: solid black and white composition combining type and object to communicate one aspect of the object, and in which type is the hierarchical focal point
- 2: the same as 1, above, but with the object as the hierarchical focal point, communicating the same or another aspect of the object

compositions in shades of black and in colors:

- 1: composition in three solid shades of black (three percentages of black from 1% to 100% density—no transparencies) and with no type, communicating the same or yet another aspect of the object as above
- 2: composition in three solid colors other than black (such as Pantone solid colors set to 100% density—no tints or transparencies of colors) and with no type, communicating the same or yet another aspect of the object

Within each sheet, relate the two compositions to one another as an overall integrated layout. In the compositions with type, you may use any appropriate word or words other than the name of the object itself (descriptive adjectives, modifiers, etc.), that communicate an aspect, or multiple aspects, of the object. Explore dynamic contrast, rhythm, and balance, while clearly maintaining the recognizability of the object. You may use a hairline around each composition to distinguish it from the white background.

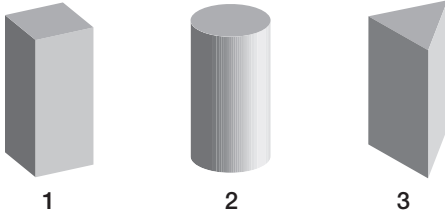
Present each sheet as a high quality horizontal 17”x 11” print, unmounted, arranged exactly as diagrammed:



*“The real voyage of discovery consists not of seeking new landscapes but of having new eyes.”* Marcel Proust

### project three: type and image in three dimensions

Create a series of compositions combining representations of your object with words or phrases that communicate the formal concepts of “repetition,” “transition,” and “opposition” in relation to aspects of your object on all three of the following dimensional forms:



- 1: rectangular form, 5” tall with 2.5” sides
- 2: cylindrical form, 5” tall and 2.75” in diameter
- 3: triangular form, 5” tall with 3” sides

Present one of the formal concepts (repetition, transition, opposition) on each dimensional form. It is up to you to match and integrate each concept to a different form.

Explore how shape, line, and pattern in the type and reductive representations can be used to create interest from all possible points of view around these forms, and how the concepts of repetition, transition, and opposition can create tension and dynamic balance between your three messages. Single or multiple representations of image and type may be used as appropriate. Consider all visible sides of the form in relation to one another and as individual compositions. This is an exploratory project, and is not concerned at all with packaging the objects, or with any preconceptions about packaging. Use any two colors per form (screens of these colors are acceptable) printed on a white surface. You may use the same two colors or different sets of two for each form.

Carefully construct all three forms for final presentation, using high quality color prints as their surfaces. Use the bottom panel of each form for your identification labels.

### project four: interpretive diagrammatic panel

Based on the research and reference material you have collected, and on the studies and compositions you have completed throughout the semester, create a 15”x20” vertical or horizontal composition in which you **diagram how the object normally functions**. To achieve this, juxtapose your object with other graphic forms in order to communicate a greater context and understanding of the object’s functionality, as well as potentially its typical environment, and/or aspects of its social or natural context. Visual representations can be expanded beyond the assigned objects to include any appropriate elements that support the functionality and conceptual context that you are presenting.

The panel must include a minimum of 100 words. In addition, list attributions for all your sources of information in a footnote within the composition. As with any writing, you must use quotation marks and name for any authors or others whose text you might quote. It is otherwise assumed that all writing in the panel is yours.

You may employ any appropriate representation techniques, media, and colors. Present a high quality print, trimmed to size, unmounted.

*“The most fatal illusion is the narrow point of view. Since life is growth and motion, a fixed point of view kills anybody who has one.”* Brooks Atkinson

25 Ultra Light  
 26 *Ultra Light Italic*  
 35 Thin  
 36 *Thin Italic*  
 45 Light  
 46 *Light Italic*  
 55 Roman  
 56 *Italic*  
 65 Medium  
 66 *Medium Italic*  
 75 Bold  
 76 *Bold Italic*  
 85 Heavy  
 86 *Heavy Italic*  
 95 Black  
 96 *Black Italic*  
 27 Ultra Light Condensed  
*Ultra Light Condensed Oblique*  
 37 Thin Condensed  
*Thin Condensed Oblique*  
 47 Light Condensed  
*Light Condensed Oblique*  
 57 Condensed  
*Condensed Oblique*  
 67 Medium Condensed  
*Medium Condensed Oblique*  
 77 Bold Condensed  
*Bold Condensed Oblique*  
 87 Heavy Condensed  
*Heavy Condensed Oblique*

**97 Black Condensed**  
***Black Condensed Oblique***  
**107 Extra Black Condensed**  
***Extra Black Condensed Oblique***  
 23 Ultra Light Extended  
*Ultra Light Extended Oblique*  
 33 Thin Extended  
*Thin Extended Oblique*  
 43 Light Extended  
*Light Extended Oblique*  
 53 Extended  
*Extended Oblique*  
 63 Medium Extended  
***Medium Extended Oblique***  
**73 Bold Extended**  
***Bold Extended Oblique***  
**83 Heavy Extended**  
***Heavy Extended Oblique***  
**93 Black Extended**  
***Black Extended Oblique***

On behalf of its sister company Linotype, the German foundry D. Stempel AG set out to redesign the famous Helvetica family for digital composition, greater consistency, and a larger family of faces, resulting in Neue Helvetica. Compared to Helvetica, the width of numerals and several characters have been increased, the strokes of condensed characters are much more rounded, and punctuation is larger overall. An Extended range along with weights lighter than “Light” were added.

The numbering system is adopted from Adrian Frutiger’s system for the Univers family, with the basic weight 55 at the central point. The first figure of the number designates the stroke thickness, while the second figure designates the width and orientation—3 for extended, 5 for roman, 6 for italic, and 7 for condensed. In addition to the fifty weights represented here, an outlined version of the Bold weight was also produced which will not be used in this course. In 2004 Neue Helvetica Pro, an OpenType version with expanded language support was introduced.