

Sophomore Portfolio Review 2010

Instructions, Evaluations, Outcomes

Portland State University:
Graphic Design program · MARCH 03, 2010

OVERVIEW

In order to take 300- and 400- level courses in the Graphic Design program, students are required to meet all prerequisite requirements. This includes both those courses which are listed as prerequisites (online at www.pdx.edu/art/graphic-design under the *Major Requirements* heading) and the Sophomore Portfolio Review. If students have not passed the Review, then regardless of experience or class standing they are not qualified to take 300- or 400-level courses. Transfer students who are ready to begin 3rd and 4th year requirements must also pass the Review. The purpose of this Review is to ensure that students are learning the skills required for successful completion of the program.

Portfolios are reviewed by members of the graphic design faculty according to the categories outlined in the *EVALUATION CRITERIA QUALITY LEVELS* (available in this document) and are given scores of: 1-Unacceptable, 2-Sophomore Level, 3-Strong, 4-Advanced, 5-Excellent. (A description of the Review criteria and quality levels is distributed during the Spring term at the Sophomore Review Information Sessions.) The final score determines one of three results: Pass, Deferred, or No Pass.

Do not assume that having received good grades in classes assures a passing score in the Review. Course grades are determined by factors such as attendance, participation, quizzes and tests, reading assignments, process work, exercises, and software skills as well as the creative work. Portfolio pieces for the Review, however, will be judged according to their own merits, without reference to all the factors named above.

This Review is based primarily on creative performance. Supporting documentation such as a writing sample, contextual statements, and process notebook contribute to the evaluation as secondary elements. The focus of the Review is on the totality of the projects presented, with emphasis placed on the ability to demonstrate the expertise needed to be successful in 300- and 400-level courses.

OBJECTIVES / BENEFITS

Students of design gain useful experience by compiling and presenting a graphic design portfolio. Portfolios are the primary tool used in the profession to evaluate and hire graphic designers.

Students will receive feedback regarding their overall body of work. This will be in the form of an evaluation sheet outlining relative areas of strengths and weaknesses, based on the *EVALUATION CRITERIA QUALITY LEVELS* found within this document. This feedback is a very important aspect of the Review, as a student's strengths and areas that need improvement are evaluated best by providing commentary across a body of work. Example: reviewing an entire body of work may demonstrate strong typographic ability, but reveal that similar color and compositional solutions are employed on multiple assignments.

Students work on their critical thinking skills by writing about their ideas and design process with regard to one piece of their own work. This is crucial, as professional designers are expected to communicate effectively both orally and in writing about their work.

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: Registration

Students must register for *ART046: Portfolio Review* in order to participate in the Review. This is a zero-credit section that does not meet as a class, but will indicate on student records (DARS reports) whether the Portfolio Review was passed. The Review must be passed before students can register for 300- and 400 level graphic design courses.

At least two Information Sessions are held prior to the Review to discuss the Review process. All students expecting to participate in the Review must attend one of these Sessions. In addition, at least two voluntary Help Sessions are held to prepare students for the Review. Faculty participate in the Help Sessions and meet with students one-on-one and in groups to assess portfolios and to assist in the selection of work. Notices indicating the place and time of these meetings will be posted inside the Art Building and Annex.

Step 2: Selecting Work

Your portfolio must contain eight projects. The majority of your work will be from 200-level courses with an emphasis on conceptual and creative solutions. In the case of related pieces or campaigns (e.g. letterhead + business card + envelope), the presented work will be considered collectively as one piece. Choose work that best demonstrates your ability to meet Review criteria. Refer to the *EVALUATION CRITERIA QUALITY LEVELS* for requirements and evaluation criteria under the **Process** section. Faculty are available to help in the selection of work.

Include a process notebook for one well-developed project of your choice. Include a contextual statement for each project submitted. These should be **concise** descriptions (no more than two short/medium sentences) of the project's main goals and themes, including your audience and conceptual solution.

Step 3: Writing Sample

Evaluate one of your pieces in a written document (typeset, approximately 300 to 400 words long). Demonstrate your critical thinking skills regarding your work and your ability to address the assignment in a notable way. Refer to the *EVALUATION CRITERIA QUALITY LEVELS* for requirements and evaluation criteria under the **Written Sample** section.

Step 4: Compiling the Portfolio

Prepare a title sheet that includes your name, your contact information, and student ID#. List all pieces included in your portfolio by number, title, and the course for which it was completed. Include your title sheet, writing sample, and process book in a single binder.

Neatly mount each piece on board and label the back with your name, the piece number (as listed on the title sheet), and contextual statement. Photograph all oversize 3D pieces that do not fit in your portfolio. Oversize printed pieces can be carefully folded and inserted in a pocket mounted on board. Printed comps (book covers, magazines, invitations, brochures, etc.) also may be submitted in a pocket mounted on board or in a folder/sleeve appropriate to your presentation. All work should be presented in a portfolio or protective container/binder of your choice. Label the portfolio with your name on the outside. Include a printed DARS report in your portfolio.

Step 5: Portfolio Submission

Deadline and portfolio drop-off dates are Monday, May 31 and Tuesday, June 1, 2010 (week #10 of the Spring term). Notices will be posted around the Art Building and Annex indicating the place and times for submitting Review portfolios.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES: PASS, DEFER, & NO PASS POLICY

Receiving a Pass

Students who receive a *Pass* may register for 300-level graphic design courses.

Department policies on laptop computer ownership for all upper-division graphic design students have been instated. Students beginning their upper-division coursework in graphic design should be aware that the Art Department requires the ownership of a laptop computer. More information is available on our web site (www.pdx.edu/art/graphic-design) under the *Laptop Policy* heading.

Receiving a Defer

The portfolios of deferred students demonstrate some sparks of ability but are lacking in critical areas. Any student whose portfolio receives a *Defer* is allowed to resubmit an improved portfolio before the Fall term begins for re-evaluation by a minimum of two faculty. The faculty will determine if the portfolio receives a *No Pass*, remains as a *Defer*, or receives a *Pass*. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with appropriate faculty (the Sophomore Portfolio Review coordinator and/or assigned faculty mentors) about the revision process and drop-off dates. If the improved portfolio is not received by the required date the student will be ineligible for 300-level courses.

Students who are deferred are individually advised based on the body of work presented in their portfolio, and are asked to revise and improve specific projects. The projects are chosen to address specific design competencies (e.g., attention to detail, process, concepts, creative thinking, typography, design principles, color theory, etc.). A minimum of two to three pieces must be improved, and students are expected to take ownership of their work and to be largely self-directed in facilitating its re-design. Specific notes on required improvements are recorded and copies are made for the office/faculty and for the student.

Receiving a No Pass

No Pass portfolios do not demonstrate critical skills and proficiencies necessary to perform successfully in upper-division courses. Students who do not pass the Portfolio Review are NOT abandoned by the graphic design program, however receiving a *No Pass* does mean that students are ineligible for 300-level courses and that they will be departmentally dropped from 300-level courses in the coming terms. Students who do not pass the Review receive individual advising by faculty based on the body of work presented in their portfolio in order to reassess career goals and to outline courses of action that may be followed in order for these goals to be achieved.

For students deciding to pursue the degree after receiving a *No Pass*, it is recommended that they take or retake specific courses to improve their portfolio. *No Pass* portfolios generally indicate that the student's work will be improved best when supported by class structure and interaction with professor(s) and classmates. *No Pass* portfolios may be resubmitted in a year for consideration during the following Spring Review.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER

- The evaluation each student receives from the Review is a judgment regarding the overall merits of the submitted design portfolio only.
- Outcomes of the Portfolio Review are final. Final Evaluation Scores are not subject to an appeal.
- Portfolios are judged from a holistic perspective considering the range of student work across the curriculum plus the wider body of contemporary graphic design. The department acknowledges that Sophomore work exists at a different level than that of truly experienced practitioners. However, for the sake of providing a realistic assessment of design work to-date, the bar for the Review is intentionally set high.
- There are no quotas involved in determining which students pass the Review. Students are not 'competing' for a finite number of 'slots' within the graphic design program.
- Although classroom grades incorporate aspects such as participation, attendance, etc., the overall quality of each portfolio is gauged according to its own merits. Those characteristics not directly related to the apparent strengths of visuals, concepts, etc. are not taken into consideration.
- Although preparing a portfolio can be very rewarding and enlightening, it is also an extremely labor-intensive endeavor. Mastering one's time-management, remaining open to diverse feedback from peers, and taking personal responsibility for one's performance are crucial qualities to foster and maintain throughout the process.
- There are numerous channels and networks through which you can receive advice, feedback, and help. These include: faculty advising appointments; voluntary Help Sessions; online Flickr groups; useful postings at www.commandsave.com; and casual support/feedback from other students, both those going through the Review and those upper-division students who have already passed the Review.
- Although all students may want to pass the Review, it is very possible that not all students will successfully do so. It is therefore both important and healthy to begin thinking about and planning for what next steps you might take in the event that your portfolio does not pass the Review.

EVALUATION CRITERIA QUALITY LEVELS: *Methods*

	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:
<p>Process: Research and Analysis of Information</p> <p>Compilation of relevant data, identifying resources regarding the project</p> <p>Synthesis of the information collected to formulate a deeper understanding of context(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows little or no sense of research Shows little or no analysis of information Shows a very limited collection of materials, and a process comprised of that which is the most obvious, readily available, or supplied/given Demonstrates limited ability to make selections from information gathered for use in work synthesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses readily available research material Uses research and a collection of materials that are of limited quality Demonstrates ability to select and analyze some of the information gathered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extends research beyond sources and information that are immediately available Presents a range of materials Shows thought in selecting and analyzing information gathered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows imagination in research of information Uses a broad collection of materials related both directly and indirectly to the topic Demonstrates care and attention in selecting and analyzing information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows substantial ability in researching and exploring a broad range of information sources Uses a very broad collection of materials related both directly and indirectly to the topic Demonstrates an accomplished ability in analyzing and selecting information
	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:
<p>Process: Generating and Selecting Ideas</p> <p>Generation of multiple alternative solutions</p> <p>Generation of a broad range of visual exploration to mediate ideas</p> <p>Transformation of information into meaningful messages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generates only one or two ideas for selection; may not be able to move past the first or second idea Generates ideas of limited quality Shows very limited judgment in the selection of an idea Shows very limited range of visual exploration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generates only a few ideas for selection; ideas are of limited quality Develops ideas to an obvious conclusion Shows limited judgment in the selection of an idea Shows some range of visual exploration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generates several ideas for selection; some of the ideas are of good quality Develops ideas beyond the obvious Demonstrates judgment in the selection of ideas Shows a range of visual exploration Modifies and adapts research and information to fit the requirements of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generates a substantial number of imaginative ideas Develops ideas to reasonable and imaginative conclusions Uses solid judgment in selecting ideas to pursue Shows experimentation and a very broad range of exploration in developing ideas and visual form Transforms and applies information intelligently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops a very broad range of mature ideas that demonstrate risk-taking imagination, and that are highly memorable Demonstrates an advanced understanding of idea selection and execution Uses multiple modes of experimentation in developing ideas and visual form Uses intelligence and imagination to transform information into meaningful patterns and images

EVALUATION CRITERIA QUALITY LEVELS: *Methods*

	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:
<p>Written Sample</p> <p>Contextualization, critical thinking, self-evaluation, reflection</p> <p>Ideation process, creative thinking, design vocabulary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents mere sequences of events and is generally descriptive • Neglects certain required component(s) • Demonstrates little or no insight or self-reflection • Lacks insight on how best to improve work • Demonstrates poor writing skills in terms of editing, spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation) • Uses graphic design vocabulary inconsistently or fails to use proper terminology altogether 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses the required components only minimally • Shows limited insight into the personal creative process • Shows limited evidence of consideration for one's own work in relationship to that of others (peers, professionals, etc.) • Provides at least one insightful point on how to improve work • Demonstrates adequate writing skills; graphic design vocabulary is employed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows insight regarding one's own work and creative process; addresses all required components • Provides description and some analysis of one's own work in relationship to that of peers, professionals, etc. • Outlines at least some insights on how best to improve the work; insight into strengths and weaknesses of one's own work is shown • Uses graphic design vocabulary with competence and skill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates mastery in critical self-reflection • Provides insight into conceptual problem solving and ideation; uses methods, concepts and theories in new contexts • Provides interpretation and critical analysis of the work in relation to graphic design history and contemporary cultural frameworks • Outlines strategies for the improvement of work • Demonstrates a mastery of graphic design vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a very mature level of critical self-reflection • Uses highly imaginative and innovative conceptual problem solving and ideation; shows mature and intelligent uses of methods, concepts and theories in new contexts • Shows a very high level of interpretation and critical analysis of the work in relation to graphic design history and contemporary cultural frameworks • Suggests insightful strategies for the improvement of work • Demonstrates a mastery of graphic design vocabulary
	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:
<p>Conceptual Thinking</p> <p>Creativity, originality, innovation demonstrated in the construction of meaningful messages, symbolic representation, and solutions to communication problems</p> <p>Communicative, memorable, and conceptual solutions that address audiences, contexts, project objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies few to no concepts • Uses concepts of very limited quality that are obvious, surface-level, uncommunicative, and/or ineffective • Identifies solutions that focus mainly on form instead of ideas • Identifies shallow solutions that reflect little to no understanding of project objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies few concepts • Uses concepts of limited quality that are obvious, uncommunicative, surface-level, ineffective, and/or underdeveloped • Identifies solutions that reflect a very limited understanding of how to address project objectives, audiences, and contexts creatively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies good concepts that meet project goals and purposes • Develops concepts beyond the obvious and surface-level • Executes concepts competently; chosen concepts communicate effectively • Demonstrates ability to construct meaningful messages • Addresses audiences and project objectives thoughtfully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies multiple imaginative concepts that meet project goals and purposes • Identifies multiple concepts that are memorable and highly communicative • Addresses audiences, contexts, and all aspects of project objectives creatively • Demonstrates an understanding of both historical and contemporary frameworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates multiple instances of risk-taking • Identifies concepts that are innovative, memorable, and original • Addresses audiences, contexts, and all aspects of project objectives creatively within each concept employed • Demonstrates mature thinking and a highly developed imagination • Demonstrates an understanding of both historical and contemporary frameworks in multiple concepts

EVALUATION CRITERIA QUALITY LEVELS: *Resonance*

	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:
<p>Design Principles</p> <p>Form, scale, weight, texture, emphasis, hierarchy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates little to no compositional skills • Contains no developed hierarchy of elements • Demonstrates little to no understanding of design principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates evolving compositional skills • Employs compositions that are predictable and/or do not address the design problem • Demonstrates a limited understanding of hierarchy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of design principles • Employs compositions that are appropriate for the design problem • Demonstrates a developed understanding of hierarchy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an advanced understanding of principles • Employs compositions appropriate for the problem • Uses well-developed hierarchy • Demonstrates excellent contrast and scale relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an advanced level of understanding • Employs a high degree of imagination in composition and form • Demonstrates risk-taking
<p>Color</p> <p>Selecting colors within work</p> <p>Managing production, printing of colors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses color predictably or inappropriately • Demonstrates a limited understanding of color theory • Demonstrates limited grasp of technical color execution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses colors that are appropriate for the design problem, but unoriginal • Demonstrates understanding of color theory • Demonstrates adequate grasp of technical color execution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates skill in color selection • Uses palettes appropriate for the design problem • Demonstrates competent grasp of technical color execution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses color in exciting and unexpected ways • Uses palettes appropriate for the design problem • Employs a high level of technical color execution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses sophisticated palettes • Uses palettes appropriate for the design problem • Demonstrates risk-taking • Shows masterful technical production and successful color experimentation
<p>Use of Imagery</p> <p>(NASAD / AIGA)</p> <p>The ability to create and develop visual form in response to communication problems</p> <p>An understanding of tools and technology, including their roles in the creation, reproduction, and distribution of visual messages</p> <p>Relevant tools and technologies including but not limited to: drawing, offset printing, photography, time-based and interactive media (film, video, computer, multimedia)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employs images with little or no conceptual rationale and/or those that do not address the design problem • Employs images that are predictable and not creative • Demonstrates limited judgment in the selection of images • Demonstrates a limited understanding of software and tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employs images that demonstrate limited creative thinking and concepts that are obvious • Demonstrates evolving judgment in the selection of images • Uses images that may not be appropriate for the design problem • Demonstrates a basic understanding of software, tools, and technical specifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops image ideas beyond the obvious; concepts address the design problem • Shows ability in selecting images that are successful and appropriate for the design problem • Demonstrates proper use of technology • Demonstrates a skilled use of software, tools, and technical specifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops image concepts that are memorable and appropriate • Uses words and pictures that move from denotative to connotative • Shows ability in selecting memorable images • Demonstrates the creation of original images • Demonstrates an advanced handling of software, tools, and techniques • Considers technical and project specifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates risk-taking and the use of innovative, original imagery • Uses words and pictures that move from denotative to connotative • Shows ability in selecting images that are memorable and sophisticated • Demonstrates the creation of original images • Demonstrates professional experimentation with software, tools, and techniques • Exhibits an understanding of historical and contemporary frameworks

EVALUATION CRITERIA QUALITY LEVELS: Resonance

	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:
<p>Expressive Typography</p> <p>Conveying meaning through typographic form</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employs typographic solutions that do not communicate ideas and lack concepts • Employs typographic solutions that are not creative • Demonstrates a limited understanding of typeface selection • Fails to demonstrate ability in regards to scale and contrast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employs concepts or ideas that do not address the design problem • Employs typographic solutions that are predictable • Demonstrates an evolving understanding of typeface selection • Demonstrates ability in regards to scale and contrast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employs concepts that communicate effectively and are developed beyond the obvious • Employs typographic solutions that are appropriate for the design problem • Demonstrates good judgment in typeface selection • Shows successful contrast and scale relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employs concepts that are memorable and highly communicative • Uses concepts that address the problem in unique ways • Demonstrates imaginative typographic forms • Demonstrates good judgment in typeface selection • Shows advanced contrast and scale relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employs concepts that demonstrate risk-taking • Employs typographic solutions that address the design problem in innovative ways • Uses well-developed, creative typographic compositions • Employs metaphor and visual pun • Shows grasp of historical and contemporary frameworks
<p>Typographic Structure</p> <p>Line, paragraph, detail, hierarchy, grid structure, page, technical formatting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits a lack of basic understanding and detail • Demonstrates no grasp of page hierarchy • Uses typefaces that are not appropriate for the design problem • Demonstrates a limited ability to use software for formatting text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits an adequate understanding of typographic usage • Demonstrates an evolving grasp of page hierarchy • Shows limited judgment in the selection and combination of typefaces • Demonstrates a basic understanding of software and text formatting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits a competent grasp of typographic usage • Shows good judgment in typeface selection, page composition, grid structures • Uses appropriate typeface choices and combinations • Uses proper glyphs and expert non-alphabetic characters • Shows proper usage of software to format text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates mature usage of the page and grid • Exhibits unique typeface choices and combinations • Uses proper glyphs and expert non-alphabetic characters • Demonstrates skilled usage of software to format text • Shows proper usage of type-setting techniques • Exhibits high level of typographic usage, attention to detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates masterful typographic usage, attention to detail • Employs unique ways for utilizing the page and grid • Exhibits imagination in choices and combinations of typefaces • Uses proper glyphs and expert non-alphabetic characters • Shows a grasp of historical and contemporary frameworks • Exhibits a professional use of formatting techniques

EVALUATION CRITERIA QUALITY LEVELS: Craft & Production

	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:
<p>Craft & Production</p> <p>Presentation and execution of work, manual production, ability to handle materials, overall polish</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits a poor sense of craft • Demonstrates lack of care and attention to detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits an evolving sense of craft • Demonstrates lack of attention to detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits an evident sense of craft • Uses manual production techniques competently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits a high sense of craft and production • Exhibits attention to detail • Uses care in production and handling of tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits masterful and professional sense of craft, production, handling of all tools • Exhibits attention to detail