lecture 1_ Introduction to the History of Graphic Design and Illustration?

Course Expectations

— Read, Read, and more Reading
— Study hard for exams
— Engage in in-class discussions
— Take writing assignments seriously
— Do your best to research
— Write, Write and re-Write
— Try to understand why this is important for you to know as it relates to your career as a designer or illustrator
— Spend the time to put the information into historical context
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Why the History of Graphic Design?

—Important to address the designers’ philosophies, the effect their work has on audiences, and the signification of forms and their syntactic relationships.
—New developments have often been spurred by changes in technology, such as the invention of movable type or of lithography.
—One must have a distinctive aesthetic vision, an instantly recognizable visual vocabulary, and a unique approach that transcends the problem-solving process.
—The immediacy and ephemeral nature of graphic design, combined with its link with the social, political and economic life of its culture.
—Understanding designer is heir to a distinguished ancestry. Sumerian scribes who invented writing, Egyptian artisans who combined words and images on papyrus manuscripts, Chinese block printers, medieval illuminators, and fifteenth-century printers and compositors who design early European printed books.

Excerpts from the introduction of “Megg’s History of Graphic Design,” by Philip B. Meggs and Alston W. Purvis
What is Graphic Design?

It is a creative process — most often involving a client and a designer and usually completed in conjunction with producers of form (i.e., printers, programmers, signmakers, etc.) — undertaken in order to convey a specific message (or messages) to a targeted audience. The term “graphic design” can also refer to a number of artistic and professional disciplines that focus on visual communication and presentation. The field as a whole is also often referred to as Visual Communication or Communication Design. Various methods are used to create and combine words, symbols, and images to create a visual representation of ideas and messages. A graphic designer may use typography, visual arts and page layout techniques to produce the final result. Graphic design often refers to both the process (designing) by which the communication is created and the products (designs) which are generated. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphic_design>
What is Illustration?

An illustration is a displayed visualization form presented as a drawing, painting, photograph or other work of art that is created to elucidate or dictate sensual information (such as a story, poem or newspaper article) by providing a visual representation graphically. The earliest forms of illustration were prehistoric cave paintings. Before the invention of the printing press, books were hand-illustrated. Illustration has been used in China and Japan since the 8th century, traditionally by creating woodcuts to accompany writing. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illustration>
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What is Visual Communications?

Is communication through visual aid and is described as the conveyance of ideas and information in forms that can be read or looked upon. Visual communication relies on vision, and is primarily presented or expressed with two dimensional images, it includes: signs, typography, drawing, graphic design, illustration, colour and electronic resources. It also explores the idea that a visual message accompanying text has a greater power to inform, educate, or persuade a person or audience.

The evaluation of a good visual communication design is mainly based on measuring comprehension by the audience, not on personal aesthetic and/or artistic preference as there are no universally agreed-upon principles of beauty and ugliness. Excluding two dimensional images, there are other ways to express information visually - gestures and body language, animation (digital or analogue), and film. Visual communication by e-mail, a textual medium, is commonly expressed with ASCII art, emoticons, and embedded digital images. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual_Communication]
Studying the History of Graphic Design/Illustration—*Visual Communication*?

While Graphic Design as a discipline has a relatively recent history, with the name ‘graphic design” first coined by William Addison Dwiggins in 1922, graphic design-like activities span the history of humankind: from the caves of Lascaux, to Rome’s Trajan’s Column to the illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages, to the dazzling neons of Ginza. In both this lengthy history and in the relatively recent explosion of visual communication in the 20th and 21st centuries, there is sometimes a blurring distinction and over-lapping of advertising art, graphic design and fine art. After all, they share many of the same elements, theories, principles, practices and languages, and sometimes the same benefactor or client. In advertising art the ultimate objective is the sale of goods and services. In graphic design, “the essence is to give order to information, form to ideas, expression and feeling to artifacts that document human experience.” [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphic_design#History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphic_design#History)
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The Importance of Studying the History of Graphic Design/Illustration

— An educated person of any profession should be able to locate himself or herself along a historical continuum.

— Generally the reasons for making art or design are different and require separate narratives to explain them.

— Most graphic design ... is created to satisfy the needs of a client and is usually contingent on the client’s message, which tends to be pragmatic - selling something, announcing an exhibition, providing information. Painting begins with the free choice of the artist to make a statement about anything he or she wishes.

— The difference between art and design has to do with the conditions for making statements.

— Graphic design needs to be seen in its full and complex historical context.

— We need to locate graphic design practice in the historical circumstances of its production and work from there to do formal or textual analyses.

Excerpts from an Interview: Toward a History of Graphic Design with Victor Margolin by Félix Béltran