Introduction to Semiotics: DSGN 3100

Course Code: DSGN 3100

Course Name: Introduction to Semiotics

Semester/ Year: Fall 2025

Day/ Time/ Room: Wednesday 9:00-12:00, Location: N230

Sept 10 - Dec 17

Instructor's Name: Robert Currie

Instructor's Contact Information: rcurrie@nscad.ca or rcurrie@mac.com

Office Location/Hours: Slack or email

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): 6 LASC credits at the 2000-level

Credit Value: 3 Credits

Class website: http://nscad.geneva9.com/

Course description

This course surveys various theories of signs, especially with relation to problems of visual communication.

Prerequisite: 6 Credits of 2000-level LAS

Learning outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course the student will demonstrate the ability to:

- · Conduct contextual and media research and critically review
- Demonstrate openness to new approaches and ideas during the design process.
- Apply relevant aspects of design process appropriately.
- Demonstrate capacity for taking risks as a means of generating innovation.
- Test, create, and apply appropriate strategies to devise concepts that inform and invent.
- Employ oral and written structured presentations to illustrate their strategy and decision-making.
- Practise oral and written feedback in exchanges with peers, instructors and collaborators.
- Critically analyze and historical, theoretical and practical methods of design practice.
- Demonstrate and articulate how context was analyzed and synthesized into their design concepts
- Identify a problem, dilemma or ambiguity in real / future world scenarios.
- Search, identify and recognize the skill or technique they will learn in order to facilitate self-initiation of professional development.

Course goals

- · demonstrate an understanding of the main schools of thought in semiotics
- identify the types of signs, codes and rhetorical devices
- apply semiotic and rhetorical principles to practical and written work.

By the end of the course, students should be familiar with the context of semiotics as it relates to philosophy, linguistics and contemporary critical theory, and be able to use semiotics as a core design problem-solving skill.

Please note that each learning outcome must be successfully achieved before a final grade for the course is assigned.

Student workload: Total student workload for a 3 credit course is estimated to be 9 hours/week.

Course format: This will be conducted online or in person. Weekly online lectures, readings, class discussion, written and visual design assignments and in-class presentations. Students will be expected to attend weekly sessions, participate in class exercises and discussions. All course projects need to be completed in full by the set due dates.

Course Attendance Policy:

Attendance and participation in class is mandatory and will be factors in your grade. Students who miss more than three online lectures without satisfactory communication and explanation may receive a grade of F, regardless of performance on assignments, guizzes or evaluations. Unexcused absences will result in a lowered class grade.