

## Overview of the Design Admission Process, Curriculum and Program

**Admissions:** One year's prerequisite studio art coursework in the department (or in transfer) is required prior to applying to the B.F.A. Design major itself. In order to have access to the prerequisite studio art courses in our department, you will first need to be admitted as a pre-design or studio art major for the fall semester, complete prerequisites, and then apply to the Design program in the following spring semester. If admitted to the Design Program, it takes three years of DES curriculum to complete the degree. It is not possible to complete this degree program any faster. Because of the unique sequencing of the curriculum, those applicants who cannot dedicate a year of prerequisite ART courses and three years of DES courses should consider looking at other Commercial Art, Design, or Visual Communication programs. Interested applicants should make plans to attend the Design Open House event held in the fall semester and the Design Application Meeting held in the spring semester a month before the annual application deadline of March 1. The Design Division typically accepts 18-20 students out of a total of 40-60 applicants.

**The Design program's curriculum emphasizes four interrelated subject areas:**

- 1. Visual Education:** the study of two, three, and four dimensional design practices.
- 2. Design Methodology:** problem delineation, selection of a method of inquiry, validation of results
- 3. Technology:** application of design technologies, including digital, photographic and letterpress, with an emphasis on tracing the historical and contemporary impact of new technologies upon design method, media and production, including digital environments.
- 4. Design History and Theory:** familiarization with history of design, contemporary design discourses, including contributions from the humanities and architecture.

### **Freshman (or first year in the Department of Art and Art History)**

Prior to acceptance as a Design major, students are exposed to a common experience in the studio arts foundation program. Access to the Design curriculum requires the permission of the Design Faculty Admissions Committee via the annual application process.

### **Sophomore Year (or first year in Design curriculum)**

After completing their foundation studies students begin to adapt general visual principles to a specific design practice, while being introduced through a series of courses to theoretical and methodological strategies, design history, visual training, a range of prototyping techniques and design technologies.

#### *Fall Semester*

**DES 310 Introduction to Design:** A rigorous class that introduces three fundamental interrelated questions:

1. What is the relationship between visual form and meaning?
2. How do theory and method contribute to a definition of design?
3. What are possible roles, both economic and cultural, that a designer can assume?

**DES 311J Design Technologies I:** Introduces students to a variety of design technologies, with a focus on basic design methods as well as developing technologies. Projects are intended to encourage students to question how design conventions and technological advancements affect current design methods.

#### *Spring Semester*

**DES 311K Design Technologies II:** Introduces students to a variety of design technologies, with an extended focus on developing digital technologies. Projects are intended to encourage students to question how technology affects design methods.

**DES 312 Visual Syntax in Communication:** This course focuses on the use of fundamental visual elements and their organization, stressing typography: hierarchy and structure (visual and logical) in two and three dimensions, frame, pictorial space, color.

**DES 313 Design History Laboratory:** A workshop/seminar class that elaborates upon historical issues surveyed in Introduction to Design. Lectures emphasize the dynamic relationship between the modern movement and the development of contemporary design. Lecture themes are reinforced by a series of visual and written studio projects that are sequenced to allow students to apply their knowledge from Visual Syntax in Communication and Design Technologies II.

### **Junior Year (or second year in Design curriculum)**

Students build upon basic materials introduced in the sophomore year, considering more carefully methodological strategies, materials, and the context in which they design, while honing design and research skills.

#### *Fall semester*

DES 320 **Design Theory and Method:** Introduces several of the most important design methodologies and critiques the theories from which they were derived. This analysis is applied to studio projects that emphasize the role of context, space, and human scale in applied design problems.

DES 321 **Images in Communication:** Integration of media processes is an important aspect of how a designer creates coherent statements with images. This course focuses on fundamental conceptual questions regarding multimedia image construction.

DES 322 **Design and the Social Environment:** Any method of inquiry must be adapted to the context in which it is applied. This class explores several methods of design problem solving that are exercised through studio projects in complex community contexts.

#### *Spring semester*

DES 340 **Design Systems:** Students analyze an integrated cultural system recognizing the relationship between a primary unit and its cognate parts. The student's investigation will involve collaboration, research, planning, and the design and production of design work that responds to and effects change upon its environment.

DES 341 **Advanced Issues in Visual Syntax:** Studio projects explore the linguistic relationship between contrast and meaning in the construction of typographic, image-based, and multimedia messages.

DES 342 **Design and Persuasion:** Studio projects will exercise the designer's ability to convince and persuade. Topics will include historical models, the role of words, context and audience, and the effect of medium.

### **Senior Year (third and final year in the Design curriculum)**

The senior year affords students an opportunity to apply and refine their skill in a series of thematically based courses that are more self-directed. They are also guided in the development of a portfolio and take part in a monitored internship program, working in local design firms.

#### *Fall semester*

DES 351 **Design Perspectives:** A course that is responsive to faculty interests, student needs, or topics proposed by visiting faculty in order to provide students with alternative perspectives on design.

DES 370 **Senior Project in Design:** Provides a context for advisement and administration of individual design projects. Students are encouraged to internalize their previous coursework and apply their knowledge to independently defined design problems. The senior project requires students to define a topic of suitable scope, plan its execution, locate the necessary resources inside and outside of the University, and produce final work of professional quality.

#### *Spring semester*

DES 350 **Special Design Topics:** A course that is responsive to faculty interests, student needs, or topics proposed by visiting faculty.

DES 371 **Design Practicum:** Bridges the students' University environment with the workplace. The class has three goals: to provide a forum for students to share their experiences during a one semester design internship in a local design environment, to provide students with portfolio criticism in a group setting, to organize, and publicize, an exhibition of their own work from the Design Division (the Design Senior Exhibition).

## **Performance Reviews**

At the end of the spring semester of the sophomore and junior years Design students are required to participate in Performance Reviews. The Design Performance Reviews provide students with an opportunity to receive feedback in one forum from the Design faculty, while allowing the faculty to reinforce its standards of excellence and present its performance expectations. Students are asked to submit a portfolio of work completed during the previous year. Students are reviewed on the work presented in their portfolio as well as performance, participation, process, and effort in class. The review is intended to identify students who have the potential to successfully complete the coming year, and it also provides the opportunity to nominate students for merit scholarships. Students must successfully complete Performance Reviews before they can continue into the following year.

## **Merit scholarships**

Merit based scholarships are offered to undergraduate Design students based on the evaluation of their work and performance in Design Performance Reviews. All design students at the sophomore and junior levels that continue in the design program will be considered for these scholarships. (There is no separate application.)

## **Need based scholarships**

During some years there are limited funds for need-based scholarships made available to the Design Division. All Design students will be considered for these scholarships (there is no separate application), but only students who have applied for financial aid through the University's financial aid office will be eligible.

## **Design Media Center**

The Design Media Center is composed of three different labs. The DESL (Design Computer Lab), the Design Darkroom and Photo Studio, and the Design Letterpress Lab. These labs offer a broad range of both state-of-the-art and historically significant technologies to Design students. Each lab is staffed with a Lab Manager and student proctors that assist Design students with their projects. These facilities are dedicated solely to Design Students. During ALL semesters that students are enrolled as Design Majors they are required to pay the Design Media Center Fee. This includes if a student chooses to not enroll in design classes in a given semester, and if a student chooses to complete University required electives after they have completed the required Design classes.

## **Employment Profile of Design Program graduates**

Students graduating with a B.F.A. in Design from the University of Texas find employment opportunities in a wide variety of creative situations, locally and nationally. Past graduates have been employed by design studios, advertising firms, multimedia and film studios, publishing companies, and university presses; they go on to become art directors, animators, product and package designers, multimedia specialists, web designers, graduate students, and teachers.

## **National Employment**

Alumni are currently working in:

*Atlanta, GA      Austin, TX      Boston, MA      Chicago, IL      Dallas, TX      El Paso, TX  
Houston, TX      London, England      New York, NY      Philadelphia, PA      Rochester, NY      Seattle, WA*

## **Graduate School**

Several past graduates have gone on to top graduate programs: Cranbrook Academy of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, and Yale University.

## **Teaching**

Alumni have gone on to become professors: University of Texas-EI Paso, University of Texas-Austin, University of Houston, NYU, Parsons School of Design, and Wanganui Polytechnic, New Zealand.