

# QUEER TYPOGRAPHY:



# LETTERS AS LIBERATORY PRACTICE

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Rhode Island School of Design  
Department of Graphic Design

Fall 2021, Thursday, 11–4 pm  
GRAPH-3327, 3 Credits

Design Center  
Room 206

# QUEER TYPOGRAPHY

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

What values underlie “good” graphic design? How does graphic design maintain unjust systems and unfair power structures? Can typography invert, subvert, and supplant these?

This course pairs readings in queer theory and typography with type-focused projects in order to trouble classical principals of graphic design. Lecture, discussion, and readings prompt critical engagement with topics such as legibility, hierarchy, accessibility, and beauty. Students will read and discuss texts by authors such as Judith Butler, Andrea Long Chu, José Esteban Muñoz, and view work by graphic designers such as Be Oakley, Nat Pyper, and Dan Rhatigan.

Students in the course will be introduced to typography fundamentals and classical type design exercises—with an eye toward their subversion. Close analysis of traditional and experimental typefaces will reveal cultural significations and associations. In the culminating projects, students will design their own queer typeface, with atypical, experimental, and exploratory forms as a significant consideration.

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3 Credits

Open to juniors and above;  
non-majors and Brown students with Instructor permission

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## COURSE GOALS

To learn typography and queer theory

To explore typography and its relationship to language, culture, and politics

To apply critical theories to graphic design

To challenge normative values embedded in traditional graphic design, and;

To speculate alternative values, systems, or practices that could replace those values

## COURSE OUTCOMES

Learn typographic and type design fundamentals like hierarchy, legibility, and type anatomy

*5% of grade*

Exercise typography in a range of forms

*20% of grade*

Survey historical and contemporary queer theory

*5% of grade*

Critically analyze typefaces and typography

*10% of grade*

Articulate a perspective on typography in discussion and writing

*15% of grade*

Apply experimental form making to traditional applications and systems

*20% of grade*

*25% of grade is attendance and participation. See page 07.*

## ‘MY’ EXPECTATIONS

Students are required to attend class regularly and on time in accordance with RISD’s attendance policy. Students will be responsible for completing outside work and managing the deadlines for projects. In class, students are required to participate in discussions and critiques.

Instructors and students are expected to respect the ideas of their peers and engage constructively with the work of others. Students should feel welcome to express themselves while also respecting their classmates’ identities, pronouns, boundaries, etc. There are readings to help with critique in the readings folder.

In this course, good communication is highly valued. The instructor is expected to clearly state deadlines, requirements, schedules, and so on. Students are expected to communicate any concerns, confusions, conflicts, and so on. We will only be successful if we understand and appreciate our mutual goals.

An “A” student will be on time, present in class, and ready to engage in the subject matter. They will challenge themselves during class time and in-class exercises. Their attention in class along with personal commitment to the subject matter and making will be noticeable in their presented work. Ultimately, they will present a final project that displays an understanding of class concepts and be prepared to discuss their work knowledgeably.

An “A” instructor will be on time and enthusiastically facilitating students’ learning. They will effectively respond to student concern and modify the course where appropriate to address students’ needs. They will grade objectively and consistently. They will accommodate differences in students’ learning.

## ‘OUR’ EXPECTATIONS

On the first day of class, we will spend time develop a ‘code of conduct:’ expectations, goals, ways of communications, or other rules that we want to guide our behavior—faculty and student—in the classroom.

This is an opportunity to expand or challenge the expectations provided on the left. You can locate the ‘code of conduct’ here: [bit.ly/3ygb5Ts](https://bit.ly/3ygb5Ts)

# GRADING

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## DESCRIPTION

- A Excellent in all areas. Deliberate sincere work, process demonstrates risk taking and experimentation, receptive to criticism, articulates individual perspective, contributes to classroom community, good communication, identifies and progresses toward personal goals, full attendance and participation.
- B Good, proficient. Positive attitude toward learning and classroom community. Work meets requirements and is good, proficient—occasionally exceptional—but may lack refinement such that the final outcome does not adequately represent its ideas, intentions, or ambitions.
- C Acceptable, gets by. Meets project requirements but work shows minimal experimentation, complexity, refinement, or quality of craft.
- D Poor, inadequate. Fails to grasp the basics, does not meet all project requirements, or struggles to complete work, attend class, or participate.
- F Failing. Incomplete and missing work, multiple absences, limited participation.

## PERCENTAGES

- 10% Reading and skill-based learning.
- 25% Participation and attendance: involvement in class activities, peer evaluation, contribution in critiques, weekly progress on projects. Absence or lateness to class will affect grades.
- 25% Completion of research projects: reading reflections, presentations, project proposals, inquiry supporting studio work.
- 40% Studio projects: presentation, documentation of process and final outcome.

**COURSE GRADING RUBRIC**

A exceptional

B, C good, acceptable

D, F inadequate, failing

**PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT**

ATTENDANCE	No unexcused absences. Typically on time and prepared.	At most one unexcused absent. At most late to class twice. Occasionally unprepared for class.	Frequently late or absent without excuse. Frequently unprepared for class.
CRITIQUE	Actively participates, including during peers' critique. Asks meaningful questions. Provides relevant references. Offers descriptive impressions.	Occasionally speaks during critique. Occasionally appears distracted.	Rarely speaks during class. Rarely participates in non-verbal critique. Seems distracted during peers' critique.
DISCUSSION	Actively participates. Contributes perspective and outside experiences. Asks for clarification; poses compelling questions. Demonstrates respect for peers.	Occasionally participates. Rarely introduces outside resources, references, or perspectives.	Rarely speaks during class. Does not post reading questions. Frequently interrupts or is otherwise rude to peers.

**RESEARCH & INQUIRY**

SLIDE PRESENTATION	Presentation is clear and informative. Analysis is thoughtful and organized. Visuals are well-made and support content.	Presentation is clear but missing sections. Analysis is thoughtful but minimal; or analysis thoughtful but narrow. Good but few or helpful but low-quality visuals.	Presentation demonstrates minimal research and little analysis of subject. Visuals are minimal, low quality, or poorly made.
WRITING	Meets or exceeds word count requirements. Writing demonstrates curiosity and contemplation. The reading or questions relevant to the student's work are addressed. Writing asks thought provoking or clarifying questions.	Meets or exceeds word count requirements. Writing is inconsistent, only occasionally engaging the reading or considering questions relevant to the student's work.	Below minimum word count. Writing feels flat and routine. Writing does not demonstrate serious engagement with the reading.

**PROJECTS**

PROCESS	Process demonstrates experimentation and evolution. Concept is richer than at start. Evidence of sketching or other possible forms. Research is thorough and goes beyond material presented in class.	Process shows too narrow focus: much formal iteration but little research and conceptual exploration; or a well-developed concept with no supporting sketching.	Process shows little or no conceptual or visual evolution from beginning concept. Process shows little or no experimentation or iteration. No or minimal research is pursued.
PRESENTATION OF WORK	Presentation of work is well-paced, structured, clear. Presentation explains motivations, references, goals, process, etc. of work. Presentation illustrates concept (its importance and resolution). Audience follows conceptual leaps.	Presentation is compelling but misses crucial points. Overall concept is clear but details or conceptual leaps are confusing. One or multiple of the following are not explained fully: process, references, concept, final product.	Presentation is minimal: narrative is weak, process is absent; if slide show, few or poor images, too much or too little text. Framing is irrelevant to assignment themes or goals. Audience does not understand concept.
FINAL PRODUCT	Meets the project requirements. Outcome is well made, showing care for craft. Outcome is visually exciting and formally interesting. Outcome is grounded in a well-developed concept.	Meets the project requirements. Outcome is sloppy or lacking finish. Outcome is competent but visually uninspired and likely does not demonstrate a response to critique.	Does not meet project requirements. Outcome does not show understanding or proficiency with tools and techniques. Outcome is sloppy, poorly executed, or incomplete. Outcome is ill-considered or irrelevant.

# CRITIQUE STATEMENT

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Critique is a valuable learning for both the critic and the designer. The designer receiving feedback must communicate their ideas, defend their choices, receive and process judgments. The critic providing feedback must articulate impressions, ask relevant questions, imagine alternate choices. Both critic and designer must consider the professional and educational contexts of critique: their trends, vocabularies, stakes, goals. Critique in this course is designed to advance students work, of course, and also designed to exercise the various analytical and communication skills that typify good feedback.

This course will include a variety of critique structures: informal and formal; group and individual; faculty and guest. Compared to faculty, other students may have equal (or even better!) understanding and analysis of the work, and so peer critique will be prominent in this course. Peer critique will be structured to support different types of engagement, such as written and visual feedback rather than just verbal. Critique will often directly address the skills being practiced at that moment; in which case, models and guides will direct students in giving and receiving feedback.

Presenting work for critique is a vulnerable act. Students display their thinking, goals, and skills—and comment on these can feel personal. Risk taking in the classroom is good, but risk implies possible failure; students must feel safe to present unfinished or unresolved projects. Positive experiences in critique require trust, and therefore my goal is to create a comfortable and safe environment that enables good criticism. This begins in the classroom, where we build a community that is committed to one another's success. This extends to the feedback process, where students should feel respected, seen, and heard, even when disagreeing. Students will absorb meaningful yet adverse feedback if they understand it is made in good faith, and the critic will give better feedback if they understand and appreciate the project. Community is a pathway to insight.

## REFERENCES

HowToCrit.com

On Feedback Giving: [bit.ly/3GrWYgG](https://bit.ly/3GrWYgG)

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Rhode Island School of Design is built on what is now called College Hill, part of the ancestral homelands of the Narragansett Nation. Indigenous people from many nations—near and far—live, study and work in Providence today. The amplification of Native voices and histories is crucial to rectifying the many violent legacies of colonialism, and we gratefully acknowledge the ongoing critical contributions of Indigenous people across our state, region and nation.

You are encouraged to read “Regarding Indigenous Land Acknowledgments at Brown University” by Sherenté Mishitashin Harris, Niantic/Narragansett, and Dr. Mack Scott, Narragansett. The authors discuss the history of the Narragansett on the area Brown University now occupies, the role of Narragansett in the construction of Brown University, and the purpose of land acknowledgements.

This course seeks to consider the social structures enforced and reinforced by graphic design. As a class, we shall consider the social structures we are perpetuating through the institution, this class, ourselves. How did RISD and you come to occupy this space? What is the RISD community and who does it include or exclude? How might the institution and this course be perpetuating the inequalities that make Indigenous people generally and the Narragansett specifically marginal higher education? How might this course be perpetuating graphic design concepts that make non-Western forms of communication less visible or less valuable?

You are encouraged to visit the Tomaquag Museum ([tomaquagmuseum.org](http://tomaquagmuseum.org)) to consider the historical and present issues and achievements of Rhode Island’s Indigenous peoples. You are also encouraged to explore the work of contemporary indigenous artists working in Providence, like Yani Smith and Deborah Spears Moorehead. For a list of Indigenous artists working in this region, see the Northeast Indigenous Arts Alliance.

Many of us do not consider Providence home. Please look out this in-progress global map of Native lands by Native Land Digital, an Indigenous-led, Canadian non-profit, with an Indigenous Executive Director and Board of Directors.

## REFERENCES

[TomaquagMuseum.org](http://TomaquagMuseum.org)

[neIndigenousArts.org](http://neIndigenousArts.org)

[Native-Land.ca](http://Native-Land.ca)

“Regarding Indigenous Land...”: [bit.ly/33nhWPY](https://bit.ly/33nhWPY)

Resource List: [bit.ly/3dHWp6c](https://bit.ly/3dHWp6c)

## ACADEMIC POLICIES & STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Your participation and projects must abide by the following:

RISD Academic Code of Conduct:

<https://policies.risd.edu/academic/academic-code-of-conduct/>

RISD Code of Student Conduct:

<https://policies.risd.edu/student-life/code-of-student-conduct/>

Policies as detailed in the current RISD course announcement:

<http://departments.risd.edu/registrar/web/index.html>

An Installation Site Permit is necessary for any projects that require the use of non-classroom space or that could potentially pose a safety risk. A form is available here with further details:

<http://info.risd.edu/environmental-health-safety/>

Projects may not pose hazards that threaten or cause physical harm to yourself or others. Projects may not cause damage to studio, shop, and lab equipment or school facilities.

## PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

The passing off of someone else's ideas, writing, or work as one's own is plagiarism. Appropriate methods and forms of attribution vary by discipline. Some courses will include instruction in appropriate conventions for citation and attribution within the field. Students are expected to seek out relevant guidelines on their own (the RISD Writing Center offers resources and guidance), to ask faculty when in doubt about standards, and to recognize that they are ultimately responsible for proper citation.

You must know what constitutes plagiarism and avoid it. Attribute and cite your sources. All student work is expected to follow RISD's Academic Code of Conduct.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is mandatory. There is not an allowed number of absences. Prompt (on-time) arrival to class is expected. Arriving to class late (tardiness) is not acceptable. Three late arrivals will be considered an unexcused absence. If you must miss a class for any reason, notify faculty in advance and as soon as possible. Should you miss a class, you are responsible for gathering missed material and getting back on track.

Please be aware that if you have 2 or more unexcused absences you may be withdrawn from class. If you are not withdrawn due to absences, you can expect grade reductions. An unexcused absence will result in a 25% reduction in your final grade. This equates to a full drop in letter grade on a 4.0 scale. Please see the full RISD Class Attendance policy at:

<https://policies.risd.edu/academic/class-attendance/>

## DISABILITY SUPPORT

Disability Support Services (DSS) creates an accessible community at RISD that provides all students with the support needed to succeed academically. The office works to accommodate students with cognitive (learning), psychological and/or physical disabilities. See this link for more information:

<https://www.risd.edu/student-life/wellness/>



# RESOURCES

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

The Anatomy of Type: A Graphic Guide to 100 Typefaces, Stephen Coles  
Elements of Typographic Style, Robert Bringhurst  
Thinking with Type, Ellen Lupton  
Queer Theory Now, Hannah McCann & Whitney Monaghan  
The Routledge Queer Studies Reader, ed. Donald E. Hall & Annamarie Jagose  
Transgender Studies Reader, ed. Susan Stryker & Stephen Whittle

## CLASS READINGS FOLDER

Required: [bit.ly/3s1CNIE](https://bit.ly/3s1CNIE)  
Supplemental: [bit.ly/31SVSvk](https://bit.ly/31SVSvk)

## MATERIALS

Materials required for exercises will be required in class. Required software includes Adobe InDesign and Illustrator, which can be downloaded through your Creative Cloud account.

Glyphs is a required program for this course. RISD provides a site license, which can be accessed here: [bit.ly/3dHJlrS](https://bit.ly/3dHJlrS)

Glyphs only runs on macOS. If you need an Apple laptop, you can borrow one for the semester from Media Resources: [mrc.risd.edu](https://mrc.risd.edu)

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## LIBRE & OPEN SOURCE FONTS (A.K.A. LEGAL, FREE FONTS)

Adobe Fonts (with Creative Cloud subscription)  
[fonts.adobe.com](https://fonts.adobe.com)

Beautiful Web Type  
[beautifulwebtype.com](https://beautifulwebtype.com)

Free Fonts by Womxn  
[design-research.be/by-womxn](https://design-research.be/by-womxn)

Free Font Library  
[typotheque.luuse.io](https://typotheque.luuse.io)

Google Fonts  
[fonts.google.com](https://fonts.google.com)

League of Moveable Type  
[theleagueofmoveabletype.com](https://theleagueofmoveabletype.com)

Open Foundry  
[open-foundry.com](https://open-foundry.com)

Velvetyne  
[velvetyne.fr](https://velvetyne.fr)

Collettivo  
[collettivo.it](https://collettivo.it)

Critique is the dominant model for providing feedback in art and design schools. This can sometimes deceive us into thinking the only way of asking for help in the classroom is to seek out criticism. This is not true. The following are a few appropriate ways of asking for help:

I am feeling overwhelmed by this project. Help!

I am frustrated! Help!

I do not think I can finish in the time allotted. Help!

I have not slept in three days. Help!

I do not know how to achieve an effect in this program. How do I do it?

I want to achieve this effect in my physical object. How do I do it?

This tool does not give the expected outcome. Why? How do I do it?

This method/process is taking a long time. Are there other ways to do it?

I want to use this image/font/program/tool/etc., but I cannot afford/locate it. What are other options?

I do not understand this word. What does it mean?

I do not know this reference. What is it?

I do not know the difference between these two things. What are they?

I do not know with the pieces of a book/website/brand/etc. What are they?

## ACTIVITIES

## ASSIGNED

### CLASS 01 SEP 09

Emerging Outcomes: Learn typography fundamentals; Survey historical & contemporary queer theory

	<i>Cmty.</i> History of Your Name	<i>HW</i> Something Old, Something New (SOSN)
<a href="#">Link to alternative class calendar view</a>	Introduction to course syllabus	<i>HW</i> Seeing Type
<a href="#">Link to Homework Calendar</a>	'Code of Conduct' in small groups	<i>Reading</i> History of Type & Gender: Meggs, Bringhurst, Mientjes;
<a href="#">Link to Presentation Schedules</a>	<i>Lecture</i> Reading and Writing Systems	Foucault, Stryker

### CLASS 02 SEP 16

<i>Due</i> Seeing Type	<i>Cmty.</i> What's in a Name Seeing Type share	<i>P1</i> Writing Bodies <i>due Sep 23</i>
	<i>Lecture</i> Type Anatomy	<i>Reading</i> Anatomy & Bodies: Coles, Yow;
	<i>Exercise</i> Troubling Letterforms	Fausto-Sterling, Kafer
	<i>Tutorial</i> Adobe Illustrator	

### CLASS 03 SEP 23

<i>Due</i> P1: Writing Bodies	<i>Cmty.</i> Visualizing Commonalities Critique Project 1 + <i>self-reflection on P1</i>	<i>P2</i> Body (As) Text <i>due Oct 7</i>
<i>Crit.</i> Gallery-style rotations	SOSN Presentation	<i>Reading</i> Gender & Signifiers: Boulanger, Rushton, Sowersby; Rubin, Sedgwick + <i>reading reflection</i>
	<i>Lecture</i> Type Pairing	
	<i>Tutorial</i> Adobe InDesign	

### CLASS 04 SEP 30

<i>Due</i> Reading reflection	<i>Cmty.</i> Visualizing Yourself SOSN Presentation
<i>Crit.</i> Small group review	Reading Discussion
	<i>Tutorial</i> Adobe InDesign 2

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**CLASS 05** OCT 07      Developing Outcomes: Exercise typography skills in a range of forms; critically analyze typography
 

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<i>Due</i> P2: Body (As) Text	<i>Cmty.</i> Home	<i>P3</i> Tangible Type <i>due Nov 4</i>
<i>Crit.</i> Non-verbal initial critique in small groups, then full class critique	Critique Project 2 + <i>self-reflection on P2</i> SOSN Presentation Reading Discussion	<i>Reading</i> Race & Legibility: Ruder, Kane, Friedman; Edelman, Munoz, Anzaldúa + <i>reading reflection</i>

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**CLASS 06** OCT 14
 

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<i>Due</i> Reading reflection	<i>Cmty.</i> Style Envy	<i>HW</i> Parsing (Written) Language (PWL)
<i>Crit</i> Peer-to-peer critique	SOSN presentation Reading discussion	<i>Reading</i> Performance: Cinelli, Lupton; Austin, Butler, Halberstam + <i>reading reflection</i>
	<i>Tutorial</i> Glyphs	
	<i>Wkshp.</i> Binding Techniques	

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**CLASS 07** OCT 21
 

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<i>Due</i> Reading reflection	<i>Cmty.</i> Life Via Clothing
	Mid-term evaluations
<i>Crit.</i> Questions only in small group	SOSN presentation Reading discussion
	<i>Tutorial</i> Glyphs 2

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**CLASS 08** OCT 28
 

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	<i>Cmty.</i> Dream Activity
	Check ins
<i>Crit.</i> One-on-one	Work time

**CLASS 07** NOV 04*Due* P3: Tangible Type*Cmt.* My History*P4* Queer Typography  
*due Dec 09**Crit.* Peer-to-peer critiqueCritique Project 3  
+ *self-reflection on P3**Reading* Tradition & Normativity:  
Bringhurst, Shaw, Soulellis;  
Berlant, Rich  
+ *reading reflection*

PWL Presentation

**CLASS 08** NOV 11

Advanced Outcomes: articulate a unique perspective on typography; apply experimental form making to traditional applications and systems.

*Due* Reading reflection*Cmt.* Goals*Reading* Trans\* & Variability:  
Hooker, Senger;  
Stryker, Chu, Keegan  
+ *reading reflection**Crit.* Self-directed in small group

PWL Presentation

Reading discussion

Review P4 proposals

**CLASS 09** NOV 18*Due* Reading reflection*Cmt.* Holiday*Crit.* Peer review in small group

PWL presentation

Reading discussion

Work time

**CLASS 00** NOV 25*Fall break**No class**Get plenty of rest ☺*

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**CLASS 10** DEC 02

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*Cmty.* Accomplishment  
PWL presentation  
*Crit.* Optional one-on-one  
Class evaluation & self evaluation  
Check ins  
Work time

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**CLASS 11** DEC 09

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*Due* P4: Queer Typography  
Critique Project 4  
+ *self-reflection on P4*

*Crit.* Semester review, project presentation,  
and self-directed feedback in full class

**FINAL DOCUMENTATION DUE DEC 14**

# MID-TERM FEEDBACK

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## COURSE GOALS

*To learn typography and queer theory.*

*To explore typography and its relationship to language, culture, and politics.*

*To apply critical theories to graphic design.*

*To challenge normative values embedded in traditional graphic design, and*

*To speculate alternative values, systems, or practices that could replace those values.*

## SCALED QUESTIONS

Rate all of the following statements.

*1 means you strongly disagree. 5 means you strongly agree.*

The instructor is approachable with comments and concerns.

1      2      3      4      5

The skill building exercises are relevant and of appropriate difficulty.

1      2      3      4      5

The discussions are engaging and help me to understand key concepts.

1      2      3      4      5

The readings are interesting and relevant to my studio work.

1      2      3      4      5

This course has challenged me to consider new ideas or ways of thinking.

1      2      3      4      5

The work that I am making in the course is interesting and meaningful to me.

1      2      3      4      5

## OPEN QUESTIONS

What are the most helpful or useful aspects of this class? What areas could use improvement (lecture, discussion, critique, exercises, readings, projects)?

How is the course's workload? Are you being asked to do too much or too little? Do you feel overwhelmed or bored? What could be added or removed to improve the workload?

Has the feedback the professor provided on assignments been helpful? Do you have a clear sense of your strengths or what to do to improve?

Evaluate your own work in this course. What have you done well? What could you improve? What are your goals for the remainder of the course?

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# WRITING BODIES

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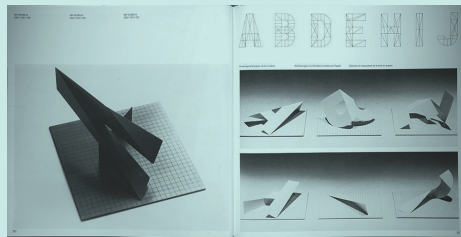
## PROJECT 1: DUE SEPTEMBER 23

*Writing systems vary, but a good page is not hard to learn to recognize, whether it comes from Tang Dynasty China, the Egyptian New Kingdom or Renaissance Italy. The principles that unite these distant schools of design are based on the structure and scale of the human body – the eye, the hand and the forearm in particular.*

— Robert Bringhurst, *The Elements of Typographic Style*

*To understand gender as a historical category, however, is to accept that gender, understood as one way of culturally configuring a body, is open to a continual remaking, and that “anatomy” and “sex” are not without cultural framing.*

—Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*



Takenobu Igarashi, *Environmental Alphabets*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The human body is deeply entwined with our writing systems. The English names of the drawn components of the Latin alphabet are named after body parts: legs, arms, ears, feet, shoulders. The letters in the Korean alphabet, Hangeul, are drawn to resemble the shape of the mouth when speaking. A Humanist\* typeface is one that visually expresses calligraphy—and so the physical human hand engaged in writing – in contrast to the mathematical and mechanical designs of the 20th century. Since at least the 1500s, type designers have attempted to make letters that correspond to ideal human proportions; the letter T should resemble a man with his arms outstretched.

However, in what ways does the concept of an ideal human limit the design of typography? And what values are perpetuated when an ideal human underlies our writing systems? Who and what has been excluded from the category of ideal human body? Caroline Criado Perez in *Invisible Women*, for example, writes that world is designed for the male body and so harms women, such that seat belts are significantly less likely to prevent injury to women. Tactile writing systems, like Braille, were not invented until the early 1800s, nearly four centuries after the invention of the printing press. What other identities, bodies, or senses could be centered in our writing systems?

For this project, you will design and produce a writing system that cites the body. You must produce at least 10 glyphs. The glyphs do not need to be the letters of the Latin alphabet—or even based on any existing system. Document and present your writing system in an appropriate format. This is a short, experimental project. Your approach should be agile and exploratory but also thoughtful.

Your work might consider anatomy, beauty, identity, universality, standardization, and more. Does the writing system reference a body part, the whole body, a bodily function, a bodily (dis)ability, a category of body? How individual or universal should your writing system be? Could your work be anti-system that deliberately works (or does not work) against the body? Does the writing system need to emphasize the human body?

\**Humanism has many (related) meanings in typography. It also describes a specific style of letter that originated in Venice in the early 1400s. Humanism also refers to a philosophical tradition that emphasized human agency which emerged at the same time in Italy.*



## DELIVERABLES

Writing system of at least 10 glyphs

Documentation of process

*demonstrate conceptual and methodological connection to a body*

Meaningful format with which to present your work

*poster, presentation, tool, video, etc.*

## PROJECT GOALS

To begin drawing letterforms

To consider letters as a system

To consider the visual relationship of components in a system

To apply historical context and critical thinking toward letterforms

To relate letterforms, writing tools, and writing systems to the body

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Exploration of varied methods for producing glyphs

*30% of project grade*

Documentation and presentation of process and final work

*20% of project grade*

Research, conception, and production of a final visual piece that connects typography and the body

*50% of project grade*

## ASSESSMENT

### BASIC COMPETENCY

All components are completed: at least 10 glyphs, documentation, and presentation.

### ADVANCED COMPETENCY

Process demonstrates risk taking and experimentation

Final work operates as a system

System exhibits conceptual concern and a particular perspective on bodies



Anthon Beeke, Body Type

## VISUAL REFERENCES

### LETTERFORM AS BODY

Type anatomy

### BODY AS SOURCE & SITE

Humanist letters

Yantra tattoos

First female tattoo artist, Maud Wagner

Takenobu Igarashi, Environmental Alphabets

### BODY AS BRUSH

Yves Klein, Anthropometries

Jarret Key, Hair Painting

Andy Warhol, Oxidation

Helen Chadwick, Piss Flowers

### BODY AS SYSTEM

Geoffroy Tory, Champ Fleury

Mouth shapes in Hangul

Corbusier, contemporary modular

### BODY AS LETTERFORM

Village People, YMCA

Stefan G. Bucher, Letterheads

Rowland Scherman, Love Letters

Emory Douglas, Reparations

## TEXTUAL REFERENCES

Jeanie Dean, A New Alphabet: Embodiment, Language, and Digital Literacy

<http://variants.artbase.rhizome.org/Q3177/localweb/alphabetbodyhtm.htm>

The Funambulist, A Subversive Approach to the Ideal Normalized Body

<https://thefunambulist.net/editorials/architectural-theories-a-subversive-approach-to-the-ideal-normalized-body>

Sair Goetz, Letterforms/Humanforms

<https://letterformarchive.org/news/view/letterforms-humanforms>

Gordon Hall, "Why I Don't Talk About 'The Body': A Polemic

<https://monday-journal.com/why-i-dont-talk-about-the-body-a-polemic/>

The Public Domain Review, The Human Alphabet collection

<https://publicdomainreview.org/collection/the-human-alphabet>

Frank Zöllner, Anthropomorphism: From Human Measurement to the Module of Fascism



Yves Klein, Anthropometrie