

ARCH 312 901 Design Journal

In Absentia

Instructor: Professor Frances Downing

Prerequisites: Upper division classification in the BED Architectural Studies Option and concurrent enrollment in CARC 301 or ENDS 494, or other off-campus program. This section is for students completing internships as a requirement for study away.

ARCH 312 Design Journal. (02). Credit 1. Production of a journal, in any combination of physical artifacts or electronic blog, as specified by the instructor, that documents the student's experience on a study abroad program, a professional internship, or other off-campus activity; a journal reflects discipline-specific communication methods for the profession of architecture.

Introduction:

I went to Turkey many years ago and the best thing that happened to me was that my camera broke a few days into the trip. I had a fantastic time, not only because it was fun but because I could visit all the sites and places with all my senses rather than see it through the lens of a camera.



In keeping a notebook we use combinations of representational, abstract, and symbolic messages. This requires our understanding of the basic approach to creating each type of drawing and the ways in which they can be combined. When children draw a person, they draw symbols for all the parts they know must be there to make a human figure. The head is a circle and the body a larger circle below the head. Eyes are represented by two dots; nose, mouth, and hair by appropriately placed lines; arms and legs by single lines emanating from the body circle. Likewise, a house is depicted as a rectangle with a triangle on top of it and a symbolic window with a single crossed division on its facade. Our training in school in mathematics and written language reinforces our tendency toward symbolic drawings.

In her book, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, Dr. Edwards describes the transition from symbolic drawings as a process of limiting the involvement of the portion of our brain which deals primarily with verbal information. Then that portion of our brain which processes visual information can take over. Rather than the drawing comprised of symbolic elements it becomes a composition of shapes which represent the visual likeness of that which we are recording. *Crow & Laseau*

A design journal is ordinarily a very personal thing, it could include notes in a diary form, sketches of places you have been, design sketches of projects you are working on, sketch notes on materials, railing against the world, making a logical argument for your project, or a marriage proposal. For this class I and others must evaluate how well you communicate in written form, however drawings and diagrams are often as important.

Objectives:

The learning objectives for the course are as follows:

- To be able to select the appropriate forms and voice to written communications during each phase of a project.
- To research and apply appropriate precedents in the context of a design project.
- To effectively communicate the characteristics and ideas behind a design at early, middle, and late stages of a design project.
- To be able to evaluate and improve written communications authored by yourself and others.

The W Course Advisory Committee has approved this course as a Writing Intensive (“W”) course. Please visit the OWL the University Writing Center online, use its “how to” information at <http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/how-to/academic/> to assist you.

Instructor Information:

Professor Frances Downing, Ph.D. University of Wisconsin, M.S. & B.Arch
University of Oregon

Office Hours: TTH 2-4 or 979-845-7852

Office: 008B Williams

fdowning@archmail.tamu.edu or fdowning@neo.tamu.edu

Course topics and Calendar:

Week 1: Read “Introduction” and “Tools and Techniques” from *Visual Notes*. Crowe, N. & Laseau, P. Van Nostrand Reinhold, *New York*. Read Chapters 1 & 2 from *Remembrance and the Design of Places*. Downing, F. Texas A&M Press, *College Station*. Is there a relationship between the readings?

Week 2: Read “A Guide to Note-Taking” and “A Journal” from *Visual Notes* and Chapter 3 in *Remembrance*. Explore a small place near your work and use the chapters to explore, order, and detail this place. Use OWL online, there is a section <http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/how-to/academic/> on reviews and critiques to help you analyze the place; also, use their service to critique your paper before you send it to me. Please have your paper reviewed by someone in your firm, or instructor if you are abroad, to check your paper and its structure. Due at the end of the 3rd week, February 5.

Week 3: Read “A Collection of Visual Notes” from *Visual Notes* and Chapter 4 in *Remembrance*. Begin to formulate an argument about a design you want to promote; it can be simple, a bathroom...nothing is too small to design. Use the OWL online to find how you produce a logical, deductive argument and develop a compelling design. Use a “style” of drawing presented in *Visual Notes* if you do not already have a distinctive style.

Week 4: Read Chapter 5 in *Remembrance*. Continue to work on your argument and drawings. Exchange the structured argument with someone else in this class or someone in the firm or instructor. Read “Peer Response on the OWL online site and critique the argument of a classmates, et cetera. Revise your argument.

Week 5: Due Argument and sketches for a design project by February 19. Continue to develop the journal adding to the argument about the design project. Use the examples in *Visual Notes* to adopt a “style” of drawing and notetaking. I learned from Leonardo and Rembrandt one summer.

Week 6: Think about the two books you have read and think about why

I might have put them together...it is rather obvious that your memory becomes an important part of your design reservoir. So, recording the experiences that may prove to be important to your future should be worth learning. Read on OWL the section on Compare and Contrast and following that form critique the books.

Week 7: Due March 5. Send your notes and structure of the essay to someone else in the class. It is their job to critique what you have put together so far, you may also use someone from your own environment to critique your work again.

Week 8: I have sent a first chapter of a book I am writing; in this book I am trying to convey that all senses are involved with our experience of place. Pick a place from your experience and write an essay from this viewpoint. You can be the “character” or you might use a fictional person. Please read “Creative Writing and Thinking” on OWL; think of this assignment as a short story.

Week 9: Spring Break

Week 10: Continue to work on short story, please make drawings sketches and plan for the “place” of your story...enjoy.

Week 11: Continue to work on sketches and story.

Week 12: Complete and forward sketches and story; due by 8 April.

Required Reading:

Crowe, N. & Laseau, P. *Visual Notes*. Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York.

Downing, F. *Remembrance and the Design of Places*. Texas A&M Press, College Station. 2000/2001.

Strunk, Jr., William. *The Elements of Style* 1918. Required.

Some material will be emailed.

Student Responsibilities and Grading

- Grades will be assigned to each written assignment.
- Maintain a journal during the semester.
- Participate in the class.

Important: Final papers that are handed in late without a valid excuse will be marked down by one full grade each week they are late. Any papers that are not turned in at all will receive 0 credits. Each assignment will receive a numerical grade that will then be weighted using the points to arrive at a final score. This final score will be converted into a letter grade as follows: A (<100 and >90), B (<90 and >80), C (<80 and >70), D (<70 and >60), F (<60).

Class participation: Class preparation, contact, and participation are particularly important in this class; we will stay in touch with each other through a google group and by way of email. Students may stay in touch with each other as well as interact with me. Please ask questions if you do not understand what is required of you.

Assignments:

1. Explore a small place near your work and use the chapters to explore, order, and detail this place. Use OWL online, there is a section <http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/how-to/academic/> on reviews and critiques to help you analyze the place; also, use their service to critique your paper before you send it to me.
2. Begin to formulate an argument about a design you want to promote; it can be simple, a bathroom...nothing is too small to design. Use the OWL online to find how you produce a logical, deductive argument and develop a compelling design.

3. Think about the two books you have read and think about why I might have put them together...it is rather obvious that your memory becomes an important part of your design reservoir. So, recording the experiences that may prove to be important to your future should be worth learning. Read on OWL the section on Compare and Contrast and following that form critique the books.
4. I have sent a first chapter of a book I am writing; in this book I am trying to convey that all senses are involved with our experience of place. Pick a place from your experience and write an essay from this viewpoint. You can be the “character” or you might use a fictional person. Please read “Creative Writing and Thinking” on OWL; think of this assignment as a short story.

As you read your assignments please consider these three positions:

Interpretation:

Construction, Signification, Meaning

To interpret a text one must construct it in terms that are understandable to the self. The significance and meaning of the text evolves as each person reads and rereads the material. Interpretation is like making a diagnosis: you read; read “into”; read “between the lines”; “see” in a “special light”; read “in view of”; and “take” an “approach to” (notice that these embodied metaphors are a way of understanding the act of interpretation).

Question:

Inquiry, Investigation, Controversy, Interrogate

To question a text is the simple matter of finding an uncertainty, a point of doubt either about meaning or logic. One can question what is unclear: “pose” or “set” or “propose” or “propound” a question; “bring into” question, interpolate; demand or want to know.

Critique:

Judgment, Merit, Logic

To critique is to give a commentary—an editorial analysis of meaning, significance, or logic. To review and discern perceptively, the quality of the text and the information and “insight” it provides.

On each assignment you will print the following on assignments:

“On my honor, as an Aggie, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work.” [Signature of Student].

You must learn to cite ideas and quotes (use OWL) to choose a method, however I think footnotes work quite well in short papers. Also include, when useful, citations from other work you find kindred to the ideas you are developing, simply cite book, article, press release, conversation, interview...et cetera. You are not limited to what is assigned.

Excused Absences: (this may not seem apropos, however it means you have not been in touch).

Rules concerning excused absences may be found at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule 7.htm> if needed.

In particular, except for absences due to religious obligations, the student must notify his or her instructor in writing (acknowledged e-mail message is acceptable) prior to the (date of) absence if such notification is feasible. In cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g., accident or emergency) the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence. This notification should include an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class. If the absence is excused, the instructor must either provide the student with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other graded activities or provide a satisfactory alternative to be completed within 30 calendar days from the last day of the absence.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that

provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities in Room 126 of the Koldus Building, or call 979-845-1637.

Academic Integrity Statement and Plagiarism:

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do.”

Much of the grade for this course is determined by writing assignments. Plagiarism has occasionally been a problem in some of these assignments. Plagiarism is defined by Texas A&M University as: “failing to credit sources used in a work product in an attempt to pass off the work as one’s own; attempting to receive credit for work performed by another, including papers obtained in whole or in part from individuals or other sources.” Plagiarism is a serious offense, and students who plagiarize will be dealt with according to university rules. For more information on the Aggie Honor Code please see the Honor Council Rules and procedures on the web <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor> .