

ID 410 - Professional Practice and Ethics

NJIT Fall 2025
CKB Room 226

Instructor: Jose Alcalá
Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:00 AM - 11:20 AM

“Amateurs sit and wait for inspiration, the rest of us just get up and go to work.”
– Stephen King

“If you wake up deciding what you want to give versus what you’re going to get, you become a more successful person. In other words, if you want to make money, you have to help someone else make money.”
– Russell Simmons

“If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else.”
– Yogi Berra

Course Description

This course is an introduction and entry into the seemingly mysterious world of the professional creative. The scenarios, people and places you will be introduced to during this semester will shed light not only on the established procedures, protocols and critical paths taken by the traditional designer but also expose you to the mavericks who, through need, circumstance or personal preference, forged new paths within this evolving industry.

Though not intended as a course on business, marketing, intellectual property, legal rights or professional development, we will need to touch on all of these areas as a means to fully appreciate the complexity of the profession and the challenges confronting the professional designer.

Course Objectives

- Expose you to various professional situations and work environments including freelancing, small / boutique firms, corporate offices, specialized design consultancies, entrepreneurial endeavours and design - fabricate scenarios as well as explore the challenges and rewards of establishing your own practice.
- Examine your personal beliefs against industry standards and developing theories regarding ethics of practice, research and marketing within various social, political and cultural contexts.
- Ask, attempt to answer, debate and deliberate over some of the professional dilemmas, quandaries and procedures that confront the practicing Industrial Designer and its future prospects.
- Cover the general concepts of legal rights, copyrights, responsibilities and obligations of the designer (re: liabilities, contract review, patents, royalties, etc.).
- Cover some of the financial and marketing challenges confronting the professional designer.
- Spend a considerable amount of time setting personal goals, developing strategies for entry into the industry, packaging of your work and marketing your talents.

Your Responsibility

- **Participate in class** discussions. Contribute individual experiences and opinions when relevant to the topic so that others can benefit and learn. This is a big part of the class!
- **Ask questions...** there is no dumb/bad question.
- **Respect** others opinions, and their social, cultural, political, moral and religious point of view.
- **Cell phones should be turned off** at the beginning of class unless you are emergency personnel on-call. Activation or use of a cell phone will be penalized.
- Take **individual responsibility** for completing and submitting assignments on time.
- **Participate in all team-related** activities, homework assignments, presentations and exercises.
- **Check e-mail and Canvas / Kepler4** frequently. Everyone must have an active e-mail address. You can receive a free e-mail address and access to the Internet from NJIT.
- At the end of semester all work produced for this class shall be uploaded to a Google Drive created by the professor. **ALL work shall also be uploaded to Kepler4.** Failure to do so shall result in a failing grade until this requirement has been satisfied.
- **Regular attendance** is expected. When possible, please give advance notice of your absence. NJIT requires attendance for **ALL** students. After 3 recorded absences, your grade will be lowered by one-half () grade point for each additional absence, if you are not carrying a medical, school or religious related excuse. No excuses will be accepted without a written note from the Dean or a doctor. Students with particular needs and foreseen absences should present them to their instructor within the first week of class. Attendance for student athletes: No student athlete may miss any regularly scheduled classes for any practice activities. This means students can neither miss nor leave class early (or arrive late) to attend a practice. While student athletes may miss class when participating in intercollegiate competition, it is the responsibility of the student athlete to proactively inform the instructor well in advance to make appropriate arrangements to complete or make up any assignments or exams in a timely fashion.
- **Lateness** is inconsiderate and disruptive - and will not be tolerated. Five lates will lower your grade by one grade point.
- **Academic Integrity** is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at
<http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu

Grading

Final grade will be based on the following criteria: Level of effort and commitment, quality of work, reading assignment comprehension, class participation, project progress, timely

submissions and subject comprehension as demonstrated by assignments, exams and attendance.

Grade distribution:

- Discussions, participation in class and regular attendance: 20%
- Readings, Assignments, Projects: 50%
- Final Project: 30%

Required Reading

There will be a variety of reading assignments throughout the semester consisting of excerpts from books, periodicals, journals, and on-line articles. Reading assignments will be posted on Canvas weekly. You are expected to check Canvas every week for posted reading material and assignments. Come prepared to engage in a round table discussion for the following in-person class.

Bibliography:

Fisher, T., & Gamman, L (Eds.). (2020). *Tricky Design: The Ethics of Things*. Bloomsbury Visual Arts.

Preddy, S. (2017). *How to Run a Successful Design Business: The New Professional Practice*. Routledge.

Howe, A. (2010). *Designers Don't Read*. Skyhorse Publishing, Inc.

Botton, A. D. (2015). *The Pleasures and Sorrows of Work*. Penguin.

Weekly Course Schedule

The weekly course schedule along with reading assignments and project assignments will be available on Canvas. Schedule and assignments are subject to change so please be sure to check frequently for updates.

Contact Information

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 10:00 AM – 11:00AM. Please make an appointment.