PROGRESSIVE VARIABLES (seven steps)

The purpose of these exercises is to learn typographic discipline in its basic form. You start designing with just one font size used in only one weight. Each exercise increases the number of variables you are permitted to use. Compelling you to create page layouts using only text focuses your ability to manipulate type as a pictorial element.

For all seven exercises, you will work exclusively in the Helvetica family of type. I provide the fonts you will use. When you learn what is possible with something simple like Helvetica, it will give you more control and discipline with more expressive fonts.

You will be doing one or two exercises per week. It will be due at a designated time during class for critique. I expect you to produce significantly different designs for each step, not just elaborate on a common theme. Look at type examples in your environment and freely liberate the ideas you fancy. All designs are derivative of other work!

The project builds on itself and every step is important. If you miss a day, refer to the order below and come prepared to the next class period.

1. One Size (8 pt); One Weight (regular)
2. One Size (any size); One Weight (any weight)
3. One Size (any size); Two Weights (any weights)
4. Two Sizes (any size); One Weight (any weight)
5. Two Sizes (any size); Two Weights (any weights)
6. Two Sizes (any size); Two Weights (any weights) + Rules & Bars
7. Two Sizes (any size); Two Weights (any weights) + Rules, Bars, & Reversals

For clarification, weight refers to: light, regular (roman), medium, bold, and black. It does not refer to condensed, expanded, or italic (oblique).

You will design a poster using only text, the wording of which is the same as the upcoming International Design Competition, in which you will participate. Remember that each design must be completely different from one another. ***Create 2 for every step.***

Design Specs

Design your posters in a 7" x 7" square printed in the upper middle of a vertical letter-size sheet (8 1/2 x 11). Use a hairline stroke (.5 pt) to indicate the borders of the design. This is black text in a white square, no shapes, lines, tonal variations, gradients, etc. No additional elements are added without permission! (Use provided template.)

List your name, type size(s), and weight(s) in the indicated place of each printed document, *outside* the 7" X 7" square. We will take lab time to work on this during class. Print them out and have them ready for critique by each due date.

All of the text below MUST be used on every design:

Cal State San Marcos
13th Annual International Fair
Thursday April 16
11:00-2:00
Library Plaza
Sponsored by: A Co-Curricular Funding Award, Office of Global Education, ALCI, ASI and SLL
Poster Design: YOUR NAME

Printing

Best to have layouts printed before class, however, you may print the documents using the classroom computer. You will need a print card purchased from the library or other campus location. Critique starts ½ hour (or so) after class begins. Yes! You have to print them out; there are too many to view on screen. Do not print from a raster file, like a JPEG. Text on printouts must be crisp with clear edge detail—no fuzzy text accepted. I would recommend that you print from a PDF that you output from Illustrator. I will collect printouts after every critique.

What You CAN Do

• repeat
• letterspace
• kern
• track
• lead
• shift baseline
• overlap
• reflect
• rotate
• type on a path
• pattern
• design with a bleed (clipping path)

What You CAN'T Do

• use type styles that are condensed, expanded, italic, or decorative
• change letterform shapes (elongate, compress)
• distort letterforms (skew)
• segment letterforms (carve)
• omit/add any text
• use periods/dashes to create lines, shapes, bullets, or backgrounds
• fill in counters
• use a different font
• use gradients
• use tonal changes
• use black backgrounds
• stack text
• use rules and bars (until step #6)
• use reversals (until step #7)
• print from JPGS or other rasterized files (we want a clean, crisp print)
• print on both sides of one sheet

Grading (number of printed pages + quality of work)

variety
adherence to rules (limitations)
overall aesthetic
quality of layout
proficient use of software
print quality