

Course Proposal: Sam Fox Commons
April 18, 2011

Course Title: ***Textile Exploits***
Term Offered: To be Determined with 3 yr curriculum assignments
(Instructor flexible)

Level: 200 – Graduate
3 credit hours

Instructor: Robin VerHage-Abrams, Associate Professor
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Course Description

Textile Exploits

The interest in textile is pervasive at WU. I currently teach a course titled *Textile Design*. The course description promises *Textile Design* to be general in nature but warns that the content skews toward fashion design in terms of application of the information. Nevertheless, for the past ten years this elective course typically draws students from *every* undergraduate and graduate discipline in the Sam Fox School except painting (??). Additionally students from the Business school as well as Art-Sci majors in theatre and art education enroll. The past two years have brought engineering students. Most fall semesters when the course is offered the extensive waiting list suggests that we could fill two sections. Students embrace textiles each day when they dress, engage with their homes, and seek to comprehend their surroundings. Undergraduate students in fine art and architecture, and graduate students engaging in both architecture and multi-discipline work find the 21st century terrain of textiles a rich place. Textile is the perfect turf for a SFS Commons course.

With this in mind I have designed a new course that could be a fit for SFS Commons course offerings. More basic than the *Textile Design* class currently offered, *Textile Exploits* delves into textile at its **most fundamental level** with the goal of delivering the world of textile in an elegant and essential way that will ignite students with diverse imaginations and interests. In the fast paced world of established and emerging textiles, sculptors find that the unique structural possibilities, textures, and surface design of fabric can enliven their work. Studying surface design as it is manifested in textile is useful to printmakers and visual communication students for expanding their perspectives on print. Both of these disciplines benefit as well from scrutiny of the rich visual suggestion in the textural dimensions of textiles. Architects have long used textiles to enhance interiors. Now building skins and some structural components are composed of textile as well. The use of newly developed textile technology is a significant emerging direction for the discipline. For centuries painters have used various textile substrates and along with photographers they seek ways to rethink these textile supports as a means to expand their vision.

The dedicated space for SFS Textile Design activities at 6241 Forsyth will be ready for fall semester 2011 as well as recently endowed and installed *Nedgraphics Software* (Whittaker Lab, 14 stations), the industry standard for digital textile design. These two long sought components will be key for bringing textile study at WU into the remarkable world of 21st Century textiles.

Alas, there is not space within the one page application stipulation to include a glossary of terms. Please feel free to contact me for those if they are needed/desired.

Course Schedule

Textile Exploits

- Week 1 Textiles in the 21st Century
Lecture & Demo- Fibers: their role in textile outcome
Fiber discovery lab: burn, dip, dissect
Assignment 1: Explore Relative Flexibility (See Sample Assignment)
- Week 2 Class Presentation and Review of Assignment #1
Lecture & Demo- Yarn construction and the role of yarn in textile outcome
Spinning exercise
Assignment 2: Read Handouts for discussion
- Week 3 Lecture and Demo -Weaving Processes, Woven Structures
Weaving Lab
Assignment 3: Read Handouts for discussion
- Week 4 Lecture and Demo -Knitting Process, Knitted Structures
Lab-Exploration of Knits
Assignment 4: Read Handouts for discussion
- Week 5 Lecture and Demo-Non-wovens and their role in Emerging Technology +
Non- woven processes and resultant structures
Draping Lab
Assignment: Construction Challenge, Solids and Fluids (2 weeks)
- Week 6 Lecture and Demo: Construction Strategies for Textiles
Assignment: Construction Challenge, Solids and Fluids
- Week 7 Class Critique: Construction Challenge, Solids and Fluids
Surface Design- Print, Pattern, and Possibilities
Screen printing Demo and Lab
Assignment: Design Coordinated Prints (2 weeks)
- Week 8 Surface Design Continued- Digital World
Digital Design Demonstrations
Assignment: Complete work on Coordinated Prints
- Week 9 Critique: Coordinated Prints
Textile Textures
Fantasy: "Iron Chef" Textile Texture Tournament! (Trophy Awarded)
Assignment: Design and Execute novel Substrate/Texture combination

Week 10 Critique: Novel Substrate/Texture design

Assignment: Submit outline for individual final project for instructor approval and begin work

Week 11 Guided in class work on final project and additional hours outside of class time as needed

Week 12 Guided in class work on final project and additional hours outside of class time as needed

Final Critique TBA

Sample Assignment

Textile Exploits-Relative Flexibility

Due at the Beginning of Class on 0/00/20XX

The fundamental fact about textile fibers is that they are always significantly longer than they are wide. For this reason, regardless of the construction in which they are employed (woven, knit, nonwoven), they are flexible. Therefore all textiles will bend, drape, and to some degree “flow”.

For this assignment you will explore the attribute of *relative flexibility* in an attempt to learn how broad the spectrum of textile flexibility can be. Your project will demonstrate what you’ve discovered.

Begin by selecting two ½ yard pieces of textile. Select pieces that you perceive to behave very differently from each other. (You may acquire these two- ½ yard examples of textile from the class supply cabinet or from an outside source of your choice.)

Spend some time getting to know the demeanor of your two example textiles- how well does each drape, pleat, fold, gather, deconstruct, etc.? Imagine how the two distinct materials can be used in relationship to each other. How can you exploit each of the fabrics you selected to communicate *essential information about the flexible and inflexible* nature of textiles?

Design any object that can be constructed from each textile. Construct that object twice -- your first chosen textile sample will be used for the first object and your second chosen textile will be used for that object once again.

The presentation of your objects for critique will demonstrate the relative flexibility and the dynamic nature of textile as a media.