TEACHING STATEMENT

SO-YEON YOON, Ph.D.

Teaching philosophy

The instruction of design and design communication techniques is a unique endeavor combining
the execution of art in both manual and digital media with a sound understanding of the human
relationship to space via a creative and analytical approach. The challenge of teaching design is
one of preparing students for an increasingly diverse range of creative and analytical activities.
Developments in technology have amplified both the challenges and opportunities for today’s
design education. I believe that it is an educator’s mission to teach students to be creative and
inventive problem solvers who are also capable of choosing and using tools accordingly. This is
especially true when teaching design communication techniques as part of the curriculum.

Over the course of my 13 years as a design instructor who specializes in teaching manual and
digital representation techniques for design communication, my teaching philosophy has shifted
from a focus on my teaching, to a emphasis on student learning, and finally to the balance between
the two.

I constantly strive to better facilitate students’ ability to become innovative design problem solvers,
effective communicators, and self-motivated learners. I strongly believe that design and varied
media for design communication cannot be taught or learned merely through lectures and reading. They require completely different strategies—perhaps a different part of the brain—than math, language, or history.

I believe that students learn best when they engage and struggle to make sense of the materials
and tools with which they come in contact. Students become much more efficient in learning
communication techniques, whether in digital or manual media, when the immediate design
problem is presented together as the ultimate goal for the techniques. When introduced at the right
time and seamlessly integrated into design problem solving, digital media boosts students’
creativity and communication skills. Digital media can only benefit students and designers when
used as a means to the goal, not as the goal itself.

It is my firm belief that collaborative learning environments enhance students’ understanding and
broaden their experience and knowledge of design. In my studio teaching, I have been fortunate to
work with groups small enough to engage in collaborative learning with peer critiques and
discussions, which is my favorite form of teaching. Particularly, I enjoy having students teach one
another and share within the group what they learned individually about their problems. I use the
same approach when giving technical tutorials. Everyone has a unique design problem, in the
sense that they may need different techniques or different timing with the same technique. Having
students teach one another is a most effective way to help them gain additional confidence and
comfort in their learning.
It is important to expose students to the underlying principles with an emphasis on relevance to the design problem rather than focusing on the details of the tools and techniques, which are constantly and rapidly changing and could be very different by the time they encounter them in their work. By understanding the underlying principles, students will be able to better migrate toward tomorrow’s tools.

I am a proponent of active learning. Although it is my responsibility to update my knowledge and skills, students are also expected to be active learners who contribute to their own learning. For example, one method that I frequently use in studios and design communication classes is to require students to present unique techniques that can be useful to others. If it is a new rendering technique in SketchUp, students learn how to find and adopt available resources.

As a teacher, I believe that mutual respect and trust foster a learning environment in which students are willing to learn, to participate, and to be creative. It is my goal, therefore, that all my classes feel intimate and that students always find me accessible and approachable, as many students have stated in my course evaluations. Mentoring students is one of the most rewarding aspects of a teaching career and one that will continue to challenge me to grow as an educator.

This relates to another important area of my teaching philosophy. I strongly believe that a teacher must also be a good student and always strive to improve as an educator. I constantly seek to improve my teaching by self-examination, reflecting on my mentors and the exemplary teachers around me, consulting with experienced professors for advice, refreshing my knowledge of the subject being taught, and listening to students.

In summary, I am committed to facilitating a learning environment that is enjoyable and also rigorous, one that allows students as well as the teacher to be motivated learners. I constantly devise various teaching strategies to help students become well-rounded designers and effective communicators regardless of their preferred learning and problem-solving styles. For all my classes, I learn student names in the beginning of the semester and treat each student as an individual. I attempt to personalize instruction to meet the needs of each student with respect but without compromising the standards of excellence. Because students possess different learning strategies and abilities and come from diverse backgrounds, I respect and promote diversity by presenting information in a variety of formats and by playing the role of a facilitator who motivates students to engage in active learning. Above all, teaching students with both heart and knowledge allows the opportunities to make positive impacts on education and the students’ lives as well as my own.
Teaching responsibilities

In the Department of Architectural Studies, my undergraduate teaching responsibilities include teaching 2D and 3D design fundamentals, design studios, and design communication technique. At the graduate level, I teach graduate studios, recent trends in digital media, and theories in design with digital media and human-computer interaction. The variety of courses I teach has allowed me to become familiar with the interior design curriculum as a whole. The following is the summary of courses I taught in both architectural studies at the University of Missouri and the School of Design at the University of Ulsan, Korea.

Architectural Studies (formerly Environmental Design)
University of Missouri

2009-10
Design Communication I (ARCHST 2230, 7232)
Studio I (ARCHST 2811), Interior Studio IV (ARCHST 4814)
Computer Graphic Application for Design II (ARCHST 8230)
Graduate Digital Design Studio II (ARCHST 8830)

2008-09
Visual Design (ARCHST 1110)
Design Communication I (ARCHST 2230, 7232)
Studio I (ARCHST 2811), Interiors Studio IV (ARCHST 4814)
Architectural Studio IV (ARCHST 4824)
Computer Graphic Application for Design I & II (ARCHST 4230, 8230)
[Invited Lecture] Exploring the Digital Globe (Marketing 8100)
[Invited Lecture] Seminar: Game Design and Evaluation (Information Science and Learning Technology 7310/4310)

2007-08
Visual Design (ARCHST 1110)
Studio I (ARCHST 2811)
Design Communication I (ARCHST 2230, 7232)
Computer Graphic Application for Design I (ARCHST 4230)
Thesis Design Studio (ARCHST 4990)
[Invited Lecture] Exploring the Digital Globe (Marketing 8100)

2006-07
Visual Design (ARCHST 1110)
Studio I (ARCHST 2811), Interiors Studio IV (ARCHST 4814)
Design Communication I & II (ARCHST 2230, 7232 & 3230, 8233)
[Invited Lecture] Exploring the Digital Globe (Marketing 8100)

2005-06
Visual Design (ARCHST 1110)

Studio II (ARCHST 3182), Thesis Design Studio (ARCHST 4990)
Design Communication II (ARCHST 3230, 8233)
Computer Graphic Application for Design II (ARCHST 8230)
[Invited Lecture] Exploring the Digital Globe (Marketing 8100)

2004-05
Visual Design (ARCHST 1110)
Studio II (ARCHST 3182)
Design Communication II (ARCHST 3230)
Computer Graphic Application for Design I (ARCHST 4230, 8230)
Recent Trends in Digital Media I (ARCHST 7355)

2003-04
Visual Design (EDN 110)
Design Communication I & II (EDN 221, 322)
Seminar: Design with Digital Media (EDN 410)

2002-03
Visual Design (EDN 110)
Design Communication I & II (EDN 221, 322)
Computer Graphic Application for Design II (EDN 322)

2001-02
Visual Design (EDN 110)
Design Communication I & II (EDN 221, 322)
Computer Graphic Application for Design (EDN 323)

1999-99
Photoshop for Webpages and Visual Portfolios (EDN 355)

Information Design, University of Ulsan

1999-2000
Introduction to Multimedia
Virtual Reality Design
3D Computer Animation I & II
Color Theory and Informatics
Web Graphic Design I & II
Graduate Seminar

I have been coordinating design communication and visual design courses, core courses designed to help students develop their visual design presentation techniques and their understanding of 2D and 3D design fundamentals. Although staying expert in a rapidly changing field is a challenge, I fortunately enjoy working with computers and learning new applications. I constantly participate in on/offline workshops and intentionally explore newer tools to teach myself to use in my design consulting services.
Since I joined the University of Missouri (MU), I have had 15 to 25 undergraduate advisees every year. I have mentored 26 graduate students. The following is the graduate supervision details.

### Graduate supervisions

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### Students in progress

- Oprean, Danielle (Ph.D. Chair)
- Chandrasekera, Tilanka (Ph.D. Chair)
- Alawadhi, Ahmed (Ph.D. Chair)
- Vo, Ngoc (Ph.D. Chair)
- Chen, Aaron (M.A. Chair)
- Jacquin, Kenneth (M.A. Chair)
- Anandan, Swathika (Ph.D.)
- Islam, Zahidul (Ph.D.)

### Completed graduate students

- Reza, Sadeghi (M.S. Chair) The effect of level of detail and navigability on spatial size perception, 2010
- Falk, Bryan (M.A. Chair) Photometric lighting in architectural rendering, 2010
- Cloyd, Chris (M.A. Chair) Stereoscopic image creation with 3D Studio Max, 2008
- Che, Mingh-Chang (M.S.) Mining progressive user behavior for e-commerce using virtual reality technique, 2007
- Anandan, Swathika (M.A. Chair) 2007
- Cagri, Rona (M.A.) 2005
- Klein, Gary (M.A.) 2004
- Han, Kuk-Hee (M.A.) 2004
- Davis, James (M.A.) 2004
- Gonavaram, Shivani (M.A.) 2004
- Tutar, Mustafa (M.S.) 2004
- Senbabaoglu, Bilge (M.S.) 2004
- Seto, Naomi (M.A.) 2004
- Arefeen, Ibrahim (M.S.) 2004
- Yoshino, Naoki (M.A.) 2004
- McGuire, Aaron (M.A.) 2003
- Islam, Zahidul (M.S.) 2003
- Perkins, Richard (M.A.) 2003

### Evidence of teaching effectiveness

Many papers first–authored by graduate students have been accepted in national and international conferences, and many of these students have received research grants. In particular, Swathika Anandan received Young CAADRIAN Award for best presentation at the Computer-Aided Architectural Design Research in Asia [1]. Danielle Oprean received the E-research fellowship (2007) and Ji-Young Cho (2008) received the Interior Design Educators’ Council (IDEC) Graduate Scholarship Award (2008) for research projects worked together with me. More recently, two undergraduate students, Shawn Browning and Karen Tobin, from my studio IV were recognized as the winner and runner-up, respectively, for their MU cornerstone display-case designs.

I have been nominated and selected three times as a finalist for an MU Excellence in Teaching with Technology Award. These awards were established by Educational Technologies at Missouri (ET@MO) as a way to recognize instructors who engage in technological innovations to improve teaching and learning.

A summary of the course evaluation can be found in the appendix.

### Research on undergraduate interior design education

My commitment to interior design education can be seen in my research work that was done to provide opportunities for interior design educators to reevaluate their curriculum and teaching skills. An extension of my professional and academic background as a designer and educator in both Korea and the United States, curriculum analysis is another topic of interest to me [2-3]. The goals
of this area of research are to establish a better understanding of teaching interior design and to provide useful information for interior design educators.

Education is being reshaped by rapidly and continually advancing computer technologies. In interior and architectural design education, technology adoption has influenced a curriculum shift in various courses. I am particularly interested in the manner in which technology is being used in various contexts within design education and students’ perception and acceptance of it [4]. A grant proposal has been submitted and funded to explore innovative and collaborative Internet-based studio environments. This is an effort to understand how and when technology needs to be adapted to effectively support teaching and learning in the field. Interdisciplinary, collaborative experiences between interior design studio and a retail-branding class in textile and apparel management were shared with other educators at an international conference [5].

References


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^Team taught or team taught evaluation.
† This class was team taught with a graduate student due to the Maternity Leave in the first 6-7 weeks of the semester
†† For the first time, Design Communication I and Design Communication II were combined in one course. It was decided that some of course contents will be

+ “All things considered, the instructor taught effectively (new form)” or “The overall teaching effectiveness (old form)”

# Courses taught by full time instructors were reported.