

Professor: Rebeca Méndez, rebecam\_at\_ucla\_dot\_edu  
Office hours: Tuesdays 5 – 6 in the class meeting room  
Teacher Assistant: Zach Blas, zachblas\_at\_gmail\_dot\_com

**Concepts:**

This course sequence (150A and 150B) focuses on the development of research, strategy, and design in particular, in the areas of organization, culture, and identity. Students will study how complex organizations are defined by their public identities, and how those identities can be strategized and designed. This course is dedicated to the generation of design discourse, and is structured to further the development of design as both an intellectual and a professional discipline.

Original research on the positioning and communication strategy of a given organization will yield a rigorous form of cultural history and analysis. The course interest is not merely to further the practices we study, but to employ design and design research as a means with which to intervene in the social and political life of the organization engaged. Research methodologies are intrinsically critical and will lead us to understandings of considerable intellectual value to those with a stake in study of organizational culture and identity.

**Skills:**

Gain understanding on the multiple phases and skills of brand development, design and integration. Learn to synthesize complex ideas into compelling visual messages and how those messages are appropriately modulated when migrated into various media. Continue to develop a sophisticated and mature design lexicon and presentation abilities.

**Activities:**

The main activity is to develop from beginning to end one single branding project, from concept to design and production. Each student presents their work and receives group critique once a week. Class discussion is of great importance in this course.

**Attendance:**

Classes will start on time at 2:00 pm sharp.  
If you are 15 minutes late you will be marked tardy.  
Every tardy is a half grade point down on your final grade.  
If you are later than 15 min. you'll be marked absent.  
Every (unexcused) absence is 1 letter grade down.  
2 unexcused absences result in failed class. An excused absence is one approved by the TA before class starts.  
It is your responsibility to inform the TA if you are going to be absent.

**Evaluation:**

Each project is evaluated for its concept, aesthetic qualities, execution and presentation. Feedback and a grade will be given weekly. All phases of the project must be completed on schedule in order to receive a passing grade. If the project is turned in late, one letter grade will be deducted each week it is late. Work must be uploaded onto the website prior to the class meeting, otherwise the work will not be considered as complete. Each class you will be evaluated on the following:

- 80% project (all phases)
- 10% presentation
- 10% class participation and concentration

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PROJECT: THE VOYAGER UPDATE PROJECT: BRANDING THE HUMAN SPECIES

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Led by visiting lecturer Benjamin H Bratton, DESMA 150A has conducted extensive research on the subject of ‘Branding the Human Species’ and arrived at four strategic directions for DESMA 150B to take into consideration for the class project and to bring to life through creative direction, design and to propose appropriate media and a comprehensive communication strategy. You should study the research and findings of DESMA 150A this week. You can find the research at: <http://spacecollective.org/projects/The-Voyager-update-project>

The project will culminate in an event where the entire project, together with that of the Space Collective community, will be beamed onto Space. Event Date tbd.

PROJECT PHASES:

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1:	Research	week	1–2
2:	Concept	week	3
3:	Creative Direction	week	4
4:	Design Direction	week	5
5:	Communication Strategy	week	5
6:	Design	week	6 – 7
7:	Production	week	8 – 9
8:	Final Presentation	week	10

SCHEDULE:

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1: Research  
 Read all material from 150A and the links supplied (see attached list).  
 We will discuss your research in class. Your research should be uploaded onto the class website and to the Space Collective Website.

Deliverables: Zach will provide instructions on how to upload your work.

2: Concept  
 Each strategic direction is a pool of visual potentialities. Explore ideas, image what this can be and make notes, both verbal and visual. Ideas are the images of thought. What is the story you will tell? Foster serendipity by exposing yourself to the visualization of your research, to imagining and daydreaming, by trusting your intuition.

Deliverables: Present three different concepts on Tuesday (Week 3). One concept will be selected for refinement and presented on Thursday (Week 3). Present your concepts with as much reference material as needed. Upload your work to both sites according to the instructions.

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3: Creative Direction

In this phase, you define the event and its surroundings, the mise en scène, the ethos — character, mood, feeling, essence, principles, rationale, attitude, voice, looks — of your idea. If in your idea there is a horse, here is where you choose it to be an Appaloosa, for it's semiotics — the signs and the symbols, their use and interpretation. This is when you create mood boards — a physical manifestation of what the research looks and feels like, and of what your thoughts and imagination looks and feels like. Take photographs, video, magazine scraps, draw, collect materials, textures, abstract forms. Literally paste them up on your walls, and you may classify them by kind.

Deliverables and Format: to come.

4: Design Direction:

The creative direction determines an overall direction whereas in this phase, you become more specific. If in your story there is an Appaloosa horse, what color and size are the dots on what tone of light hair of its pelt? Is the typography upfront and severe, or upfront and serene, what font? If the idea is about emptiness, what does that look/feel like? In this phase you edit your mood boards to arrive at the aesthetic you are looking for. You commit to a visual vocabulary. You refine your decisions and you simplify, but make sure you do not weaken the vitality of the idea.

Deliverables and Format: to come.

5: Communication Strategy:

How is the idea going to reach it's audience? How and when will it launch? How will it stay relevant and vibrant? What is the point of enunciation? What is the appropriate media to disseminate these messages, this story, this myth? Is the message to be enacted in an art intervention, or an advertising campaign, or a virus on the internet, or all of the above?

Deliverables and Format: to come.

6: Design:

During this phase you design each one of the elements of your visual vocabulary, from graphic elements — color palette, typography, logotypes, symbols — to photo/videography, illustrations, to installations, products, etc...

Deliverables and Format: to come.

7: Production:

During this phase you will continue to refine the design and you will produce each one of your elements. Most important is to plan ahead and be realistic of the amount of work you can produce with good craftsmanship.

Deliverables and Format: to come.

8: Final Presentation:

Deliverables and Format: to come.