BFA in GRD
Application & Portfolio Guidelines
Spring 2018

Portfolio Dropoff
~ May 2 or 9, 2018 (tbd)

Portfolio Pickup
tbd
I. Purpose

Our goal, as we conduct our 3000-level GRD classes and review student portfolios, is to build a community of graphic design students who demonstrate their readiness and preparation for the rigors of the Bachelor of Fine Arts program. In general, a BFA is a professional degree with depth and rigorous classes, which prepares students for professional careers as artists, and for entry into M.F.A. graduate programs.

Strong BFA applicants have a:
- Widely-ranging process of research, exploration, iteration, refinement, and presentation
- Willingness to seek out, offer, and apply constructive and meaningful feedback
- Maturity and accountability to both experiment and then readjust when things don’t go as anticipated
- Focus on graphic design as problem-solving and communication, not just image-making
- Discipline to dig deeper, away from surface level treatments and expected solutions
- Determination to improve, to be unafraid of difficulty, and to see every challenge as an opportunity
- Skillful management of and sensitivity to the details of composition, color, typography, image-making, and craftsmanship
- Passion for subject matter, processes, and media beyond the computer and graphic design

Students who are most successful in the BFA program graduate to become designers at firms, corporations, and other creative entities all over Atlanta and the world. Some of their personal characteristics include:
- Resourcefulness
- Initiative
- Optimism & can-do attitude
- Respect for themselves and others
- Hardworking & smart-working
- Continually asking ‘what if…’
- Recognition that they have more to learn
- Leadership
- Team player
- Community-building
- Professionalism (reliability, accountability, preparedness)
2. Portfolio Dropoff

On the day of GRD Portfolio Drop-off, bring the portfolio and all required forms to the designated room (see cover page; these are not determined until around February/March). On the sign in sheet, choose a number, write your name, Panther ID#, and email address. Then find your corresponding number for your portfolio. Place your forms on top of your portfolio box.

Be on time. Have all forms printed, filled out, and ready to go. Give yourself adequate time to allow for traffic or technical issues. DO NOT wait until the last minute to bring in your work. We will not accept late submissions.

3. The Review Process

Over the years, there are typically 40-60 students applying to the major, with 20-40 accepted.

Over the weekend after dropoff and until the following week, all instructors who have taught an Introductory or Intermediate GRD class have the opportunity to review the portfolios. Reviews are conducted individually by each instructor, with each coming to his or her own conclusions about quality and therefore, the ranking, of the work.

All GRD faculty meet the following week to compare notes and discuss selections. BFA majors are chosen based on not only the strength of the portfolio, but also on a student’s work ethic, attendance, class participation, and a positive, facilitating attitude in the studio. All faculty members’ (including part-time instructors’) voices and votes are heard. It is not uncommon for instructors to weigh in on specific students whose merits, potential, or shortcomings may not be clear from their materials (for instance, a strong portfolio countered by low grades needs explaining).

All applicants are notified whether they have been accepted or not via email, typically sent as soon as the faculty review is completed. Feedback on the portfolios is not provided. Students who would like specific comments should arrange an appointment with one of the GRD instructors in the fall.

4. After the Review

Not being accepted to the GRD BFA does not mean that you are not a designer, or cannot be. It means that, at this time, we do not think that you are sufficiently prepared for the structure, challenges, and intent of our program at GSU.

There are generally three options available to students if they are not accepted into the major. Have a backup plan in mind in case you are not accepted (be positive, but also be prepared). As well as the GRD faculty, College of the Arts advisors are good resources for you to gain some perspective on these options.

Option 1: Reapply the following year

Some students take another year to re-take Intro classes or simply rework projects that could use improvements. This is not a guarantee that you will be accepted the second time around if you go this route; however, some students were accepted the second time, and were glad they had another year to prepare and become a stronger designer.

Option 2: Pursue a BFA in another discipline

You may decide to apply to another discipline. The BFA degree at GSU is “Studio Art with a Concentration in …” (Ceramics, Graphic Design, Interior Design, Photography, Drawing, Painting, and Printmaking; Sculpture, Textiles, etc.). The BFA is considered the professional degree for artists and designers, so it is more specialized (with far deeper expertise) than a BA degree.

Option 3: Pursue a BA Degree

Some students when not accepted into the major decide they are eager to graduate and start looking for a job, so they choose to finish their time at GSU with a BA (Bachelor of Arts) degree. The intent of the Bachelor of Arts in Studio is to have 4 different types of art-making courses represented in the studio coursework (A BFA has focused study in only one area). A BA will not typically alter your anticipated graduation date, or invalidate any of the GRD coursework you have completed. People can still become designers with a BA, but they are not considered GSU Graphic Design majors in the field.
5. Portfolio Formats

The goal of the format for your work is to showcase your work, not distract from it. While divider pages (separating content between classes, for instance) or headers/footers on each page might be useful/helpful, be sure to manage the hierarchy of your information on each page. Be consistent.

Your work needs to stand on its own, so carefully consider how reviewers will understand and appreciate what they are seeing. While a logo is easily recognizable, why is it in that form? What were the project goals? What were crucial aspects of your concept?

Book Format (new)

• We will now accept work presented in book format, at 11x17 or 12x18 size.
• All work should be bound into a single book with a cover page which includes your logo, name, and contact info. Binding should allow the book to open flat. Consider dividing the book into sections by class.
• There are no other stipulations for the book format beyond the content requirements; however, consider how you might present your process or a project brief/overview in context of the project itself.

Mounted/Box Portfolio Format (existing)

• Mounting prints to matboard is no longer required. If mounted, however, prints should be flush mounted, without bubbles or ridges. Be sure the prints do not peel up. Boards should all be the same color (usually black, but other neutrals may be used; chipboard may also be used).
• Place your personal logo label on back of each board. Also include your name, class name, instructor name, and semester on back of each project board. Please be sure labels are straight, adhered well, and cut neatly.
• You may wish to include a project brief on back of certain projects: include it in a sleeve on the back or adhere it directly to the board.
• Your portfolio case can be a simple, clean store-bought case or box from Sam Flax or Binders; it does not need to be custom-made. When in doubt, opt for functional, organized, and clean. The job of the case is to contain, protect, and showcase your work, not detract from it.

6. Required Portfolio Content

Core Design Projects

The portfolio must include all work completed in the three 3000-level Graphic Design courses:

- GRD 3000 (Intro to Graphic Design)
- GRD 3150 (Intro to Typography)
- GRD 3200 (Intermediate Graphic Design).

You should have about 20-25 prints. Prints can be either inkjet or color laser, but evaluate how clearly they reflect your intended colors and small details (esp. typography).

There may be variation between the projects completed for each class, depending upon the instructor. Typically, the format in which your work was presented for the critique is suitable for the portfolio. Adjust artwork size to fit the space as needed, but do not minimize work such that details or typography is lost. (In 3150, for instance, the hand-drawn letters from Project 1 should still be hand-drawn, but scanned in and scaled down slightly to fit all on one page. For Project 2, scale the three panels should similarly be scaled down to fit on one page.)
7. Portfolio Content Checklist

Items marked with an asterisk* may be presented (alone or in addition to a print) as a mockup or dummy in a separate container.

**GENERAL**

- Application to Major Form (2 pages filled out)
- Essay (printed, include your name)
- Process examples for 3–4 projects. Be organized.

**GRD 3000**

- 1. Logo(s) 1-2 prints
- 2. Event Poster(s) 1-2 prints
- *3. Book Cover (or set of 3) 1-2 prints
- *4. Packaging Prototype Mockup

**GRD 3150**

- 5. Hand-drawn Letters 1 print
- 6. Expressive Type Poster 1 print
- 7. Flyer (2 versions) 1 print
- *8. Type Specimen Booklet Mockup

**GRD 3200**

- 9. Logo Redesign 1-2 prints
- 10. Stationery Layout (actual size) 1-2 prints
- *Stationery Prototypes
- 11. Ad Campaign 1-2 prints
- 12. Mailer 1 print
- *Mailer Prototype
- *13. Specialty Item Prototype 1 print

Note that, as of this writing, course content for 3200 has not be re-examined, and may change. This listing reflects the traditional projects for these classes.