

ARTD 445 – MFA Seminar in Design

Stan Ruecker

Wednesday, 9am – 11:40am

Are you afraid of looking like an idiot, being caught with your pants down, getting egg on your face, of not knowing, in short, something so basic that everyone else knows it and assumes that you will too? If so, you are not alone in this postlapsarian world. See what I did there? For those of you who were lost by that word, the world is sometimes described that way because we are no longer, in the Judao-Christian tradition, in the Garden of Eden. We are post-lapse.

But enough. In this class, which is open to senior BFA, MFA, and PhD students, we are going to read some of the basic material that every designer needs to know inside and out, or at least will have read and discussed in grad school. Some of our authors, like Powers or Cross or Owen, are designers. Others, like Polanyi or Geertz or Kahneman, are from other disciplines, but have ideas that are equally important for designers to know.

In addition, however, to scaffolding our constructivist experience through reading, reflecting, and discussing, we have a special treat in store. Each student will be responsible for designing a prototype that will help people reflect on one of the papers we read. Two examples follow.



Xinyue Zhou's nationalistic baby bottles help us think about Langdon Winner's chapter "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" in his book *The Whale and the Reactor*, 1986.



Interested in how knowledge gets downloaded to the environment? Xiaoqiao Tang's drinking game combines colored paper hats, numbers, and words to give you a direct experience of how the perceptual and cognitive aspects of design can make life easier or harder. The paper she was reading?

James Hollan, Edwin Hutchins, and David Kirsh. 2000. Distributed cognition: toward a new foundation for human-computer interaction research. *ACM Trans. Comput.-Hum. Interact.* 7, 2 (June 2000), 174-196.

So come and join us in fall 2017, and design a prototype to help yourself and others reflect on an idea!