

## REGINA GARDNER MILAN

### TEACHING PHILOSOPHY



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*As a graphic design instructor I am passionate about the field of graphic design as an art form that communicates everyday in almost every aspect of our lives. I am especially committed to the undergraduate education that prepares students for professional graphic design practice.*

Design integrates multiple disciplines under one umbrella. Because of this the opportunities for graphic designers have never been greater, nor more difficult to define. Today's students have to deal with a landscape that is changing both technically and sociologically. They will need to continually adjust to be successful and achieve longevity in the field. With my extensive practical experience I teach my students how to navigate this landscape and how to embrace this change as a fundamental part of a designer's career.

Teaching traditional Gestalt principles of design will allow students to develop into visual thinkers. Helping them to conceptualize and develop content to solve design problems is critical. This provides them with strong core skills as they move onto the heavily technical areas of design.

My students develop a critical way of thinking that will help them communicate their strategies and solutions to their clients no matter what the application. They will know how to do research, investigate, visualize, conceptualize and define the problem. I encourage them to investigate user-centered design. Their solutions must solve problems but also excite and stimulate the audience. This may mean familiarizing themselves with new software applications and new design formats. There are times when I will ask them to define the best vehicle for their design solution. This reflects the practical applications they will face. They will need to articulate and deliver a creative brief that defends their choices and decisions, allowing them to explore areas of design and technology that particularly interest them.

In critiques, I balance my criticism with encouragement. Failure is often the forerunner to new and exciting solutions. I focus on design process and problem solving. Reiteration of ideas often takes something that is average into otherwise unexplored territory with dynamic results. I ask many questions hoping to prompt my students to find their own answers to a solution. This will develop skills to critically evaluate their own work and help develop a design lexicon.

Teaching my students the value of design history helps them to understand the culture of graphic design. They need to be able to synthesize that information and decide how it influences their own future artistic and intellectual decisions.

I have high expectations for my students, I know from experience how rigorous the design field is and I strive to prepare them for that. They will learn to multi-task by managing multiple projects at one time. They are taught to write concise and effective creative briefs. But most importantly they learn to apply creative and effective design solutions to their work. Equipping them with these skills will allow them to adapt more easily as design continues to change and challenge them.

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