ABSTRACT
This course is a study of the literate image: the visual and conceptual workings of written communication, from early writing to computer typography.

The course consists of class lectures and short exercises (see below), readings (textbook: Writing Systems, Geoffrey Sampson, Stanford U. Press, in paperback), and an independent study/project. Exercises may use any appropriate media: pencils, pens, cameras, computers, etc. Time permitting, there may also be films (see below).

There will be a mid-term examination based on the lectures and readings. In lieu of a final examination, each student will present an individual project on a subject of the student's choosing, to be presented during the final week(s) of class.

SUMMARY OF TOPICS (subject to occasional change)

Week           Topics

1:              Introduction: “The Forest of Symbols”.
                Exercise: Alphabetic Landscape.

2:              Dawn of Writing.
                Exercises: Colors of speech.

3:              Science of Signs (Semiotics & Semiology).
                Exercises: Icons of daily life.

4:              Evolution of the Alphabet.
                Exercises: Variety of personal literacy.

5:              Writing as Recording.
                Exercises: Graphic diary: “A day in the life of . . .”

6:              Typography: Renaissance faces with 20th–century expressions.
                Mid-term exam

7:              The Marking of Meaning.
                Exercises: Contrast and Harmony.

8:              The Structure of the Page.
                Exercises: Geometry of the page.

9:              Avant–garde Typography.
                Exercises: Concrete Poetry.

10:             Presentations of projects.