



School of Design - Foundation Studies – Studio Culture

Welcome to DAAP

DAAP = College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning. Immerse yourself in the School of Design but make sure to maintain awareness of what is happening elsewhere – DAAP is rich in interdisciplinary opportunities. Your distinctive voice, talents, experiences and potential are important to the creative culture here. Explore, engage and express yourself!

Foundations

Foundations means “essential knowledge.” Foundations studios invite you to be curious about the natural world and designed objects; to learn about design contexts and precedents; to draw upon your deeper intuition, feelings, and self awareness; to engage tools, practices and craft; and to learn about vocabularies of design to expand your ability to communicate visually, spatially and verbally. Be prepared to challenge your assumptions daily, stretch yourself mentally and physically, and be uncomfortable in the unknown. Design is more about questions than immediate answers – your first idea will rarely be your best.

Curriculum

Consider the three studios that make up your first semester in the School of Design as one big foundations course. The work you are doing in one studio will inform your work in the others. The curriculum is set up to help you work across ideas, media and modes.

The Studio

The design studio is not a traditional classroom – it is a workplace at the center of design education. The studio is a safe environment for cultivating your curiosity, taking creative risks and making mistakes. When you are in studio, focus. Turn off your devices, and turn on your attention – towards your ideas and those of others, towards the things you are making and the things being made around you. What happens in studio depends on your ability to initiate and sustain ongoing, self-generated work and engage dialogue with yourself and those around you. When you arrive, begin working immediately – don't wait for your professor or for instructions - you will always have a project underway that requires your attention.

Faculty

The role of your instructor is to facilitate learning and critical inquiry and to help you learn to think for yourself. If you are accustomed to being told what to do and how to do it, you may be frustrated by design education. Ambiguity is inherent in all creative processes, and a diversity of approaches is expected and valued. Each faculty member teaches in a unique way, and different instructional approaches will broaden your understanding of how design can be conceived and produced. Investigate, contemplate and enjoy the variations from studio to studio. You are always welcome to attend reviews and critiques in other studios (including those in other disciplines, just ask!) – doing so will only strengthen your design skills.

Studio Work

Engage your projects deeply, expanding how you see the world and how you make things in response to what you see. Do more than you are asked to do. Invest in your own questions and in the practice of finding answers. Every assignment is a prompt to action, not a set of rigid directions or a recipe to follow. Bring new work to studio every session; avoid showing up with vague ideas about what you might make, and instead bring examples of things you are making to advance your projects. Design process – the moves you make as you practice and evaluate your work towards a design solution – is sometimes more important than the final product. Iterate and reiterate. Each thing you make should be a critique of the thing that came before it. Test

designs and ideas over and over until you find resonance. Work for your work, not for a grade. Critically evaluate your interests and efforts instead of worrying about pleasing your instructor.

Critique

Design is a critical endeavor that requires you to give and receive critique with equal grace and seriousness. Honestly and respectfully react to everything. Have opinions. Be vocal. Evaluate your work and the work of your peers. Engage in the conversation. The more of your work you submit for criticism, the better the critique you receive and the better your design will become. Never take the critique of your work personally. Good criticism is a skill acquired with practice and the critique session, either individual or in a public forum, is one of the most important aspects of your design education. Differing opinions and constructive criticism will be consistently offered – it is your job to reflect upon and synthesize the feedback you receive.

Life

In order to succeed at DAAP and beyond, create life balance. Do your best, work hard, put your heart into what you are doing. Stay healthy – eat well, exercise, get outside and explore – taking care of yourself will increase your creativity and productivity. The creative process includes absorbing experiences and synthesizing them in interesting, beneficial and new ways. Periods of rest and play are required to let your subconscious digest all of the things you are learning. Your first semester will require strong time-management skills. Avoid all-nighters; students who get enough sleep perform best. Build strong relationships with your peers, faculty, and the wider community. Design has never been more of a collaborative enterprise than it is now. Be aware of your core motivations and interests and always keep in mind how you hope to impact humanity through design.