

*"The question is not what you look at, but what you see."* Henry David Thoreau

*"Do stuff. Be clenched, curious. Not waiting for inspiration's shove or society's kiss on your forehead. Pay attention. It's all about paying attention. It's all about taking in as much of what's out there as you can, and not letting the excuses and the dreariness of obligations narrow our lives. Attention is vitality. It connects you with others. It makes you eager. Stay eager."* Susan Sontag



**Mohsen Garshasby, Ph.D. Student – Instructor**  
Mohsen.Garshasby@asu.edu

*"Year in Ideas" New York Times Magazine 2004*

**Catalogue description**

**ALA 100: An Introduction to Environmental Design** (3 credit hours)

"Survey of Environmental Design: including historical examples, and the theoretical, social, technical, and environmental forces that influence design and shape our contemporary environment. Prerequisites: none. Satisfies General Studies Requirements: HU (Humanities/Fine Arts), G (Global awareness), H (Historical awareness)."

**Course overview**

*"Education is the ability to perceive the hidden connections between phenomena."* Vaclav Havel

Our environment not only sustains our lives, but constantly evolves and is changed through our daily actions or lack there of. Without any doubt all of us are "designers" who shape the future environment that our children will inherit at many scales, whether our natural landscapes, cities, buildings, interiors, virtual worlds, or a cherished gift that we hold in our hand. In this course, we will collectively discover what design is, how design comes about, and why design is important to your life, and our evolving environment. We will strive for a deeper understanding of the major ideas, conditions and forces, which are influencing design today, both locally and globally, and in turn shaping our contemporary global environment. The appreciation of design is not merely the task of leaning facts, historic styles or media fashions, but rather is a matter of developing a consciousness of yourself and your evolving environment, and then taking responsibility for your role as a "designer" to act now to enhance and sustain life every day within our global community.

### ***Instructional objectives***

*"The real voyage of discovery consists not of seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."*

Marcel Proust

We will help you:

- 1) Develop an awareness of what design is, how design comes about, and why design is important.
- 2) Develop an ability to observe and read your environment, not just glance and pass by, but to slow down and open your senses fully to new experiences and opportunities. Our interest is to help you look carefully at the inherent knowledge of your immediate environment - how to perceive it, how to think critically about it, how to represent it, how to use it - and how those readings of a specific environment can inform and enhance your life.
- 3) Develop an awareness and respect for the diversity of global environments, their respective cultures, and designs, which reflect the fundamental beliefs, and values of individuals, families, and institutions within a specific community and place.
- 4) Develop an awareness of how you can act responsibly and become a steward of design and your environment.

### ***Instructional methodology***

*"To improve is to change. To be perfect is to change often."*

Winston Churchill

Our teaching is committed to assisting each of you in your pursuit of mastery, life long learning, that influences how you see, feel, question, think and act - rather than short term performance based education: simply memorizing known facts and recalling them on exams. This course will be challenging and engaging. It will immerse you in the exciting pursuit of ideas and answers to the bigger questions, which are shaping contemporary design, our environment, and your own life. Foundational concepts and their real world applications will be introduced first in our illustrated lectures and supplemented by hearing from a series of Arizona's leading designers, who will be joining us for our Inside the Designer's Studio sessions. Deep personal learning will occur as you apply your new design understanding in our three Collaborative Design Challenges, which will require you to go out into the local environment, and actively see, feel, question, think and act.

*"People learn best when they ask an important question, that they are about answering, or adopt a goal that they want to reach. If they don't care, they will not try to reconcile, explain, modify, or integrate new knowledge with the old. They will not try to construct new mental models of reality. They may remember information for a short period (long enough to take the test), but only when their memory generates questions will it be prepared to change knowledge structures. Only then does it know where to place something. If we are not seeking an answer to anything, we pay little attention to random information."*

K. Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do*.

## **Evaluation, Feedback, and Grading**

*"One could be sure that in the past when a man would rise to the point of producing work of greater quality, it was not through any conscious attempt to excel but rather because he cared about what work he was doing - he was committed to his work. This has become something rare - because being committed means becoming involved and to become involved means giving something of oneself. It is only the rare ones today who seem to care that much. Yet, that quality that makes for excellence - that commitment- is more important to us today on a daily operational basis than perhaps ever before. At least one of the reasons this is true is quite simple. The nature of the problems we face changes even as we work with them. We cannot tell from what disciplines or from what art of preparation for the next step will come. We cannot fall back on the lore of the art because that lore does not exist. There is however, a tradition that is held in common by natural philosophers, explorers, pioneer woodsmen- anyone who is in his daily life has been compelled to face new problems. That is tradition of respect and concern for the properties and the quality of everything in the world around them. To excel in the structuring of a problem we must be committed to a concern for quality in everything in the world around us. We must learn to care deeply."*

Charles Eames "Excellence, G.E.M." 1967.

Within this course your work will be carefully examined, evaluated and graded. You should not confuse feedback or evaluation with grading. **Feedback** is a process of discussion in which your ideas and observations are themselves modified, corrected, and strengthened. **Evaluation** is a critic of a performance to appraise and mentor a future trajectory of intellectual growth (Mastery). **Grading** on the other hand is an index of a relative standing against a grading standard or norm for a particular peer group (your Collaborative Design Group). Within this course all feedback, evaluation and grading will be done collectively by both your Group and Instructor.

### **1) Time management**

Time management is a well-known problem for 87% of beginning college students. Purchase a calendar and use it – put all our course deadlines and your study times on it today. Keep ahead of the deadlines by **working on this class for one-hour everyday** (the rule of thumb is for each 3 credit course = 6 hours a week of homework), rather than waiting until the last minute to complete poor design challenges, weak videos, or the last minute writing of unprepared answers during the online discussion sessions.

### **2) Attendance and excused absences**

*"Listening does not take place unless you are willing to be changed by who you are listening to."*

Alan Alda, Scientific American Frontiers on Fresh Air, 3 Feb 2005.

As with any high quality professional position, or within any leading edge design practice, your active participation each and every day is mandatory. To succeed you will need to watch and review the class notes for every lecture, to insure you develop an understanding of the ideas and skills you will need to successfully complete the 3 Design Challenges with your Collaborative Design Group and gain full benefits from this course. Also, like working globally today, **you must remain in constant contact EVERY DAY with your Collaborative Design Group members, (via cellphone, text, Google+ hangout, Adobe connect, Skype, and email), because all your assignments are done in Groups** – preparing you for the norm in your future professional career.

Late or incomplete work is never accepted. The only exceptions are: 1) excused absences due to a serious illness under a doctor's care, hospitalization, a family death/tragedy, or another serious life altering event; 2) excused absences related to religious observances/practices that are in accord with ACD 304-04, Accommodation for Religious Practices; or 3) excused absences related to an ASU sanctioned events/activities that are in accord with ACD 304-02, Missed Classes Due to University-Sanctioned Activities. After receiving a pdf documenting your event, an excused absence will be granted and you will be allowed to complete the assignment in the same amount of time you were absent.

### 3) Your required textbook and readings

Leonard, George      *Mastery: The Keys to Success and Long-Term Fulfillment* (NY: Plume 1992).

TED talks              ([www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com) - inspirational talks by really interesting visionary leaders).  
Watch one everyday – your choice of topic

*New York Times*      ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) - worldwide news, design + environmental developments)  
Read it everyday – FREE at <https://lib.asu.edu/librarychannel/newyorktimes>

### 4) Our class web site

To access the site:

- Go to <https://introenvdesign.hol.asu.edu/>
- If prompted, log in with your ASURITE name and password
- You can also find a link to the site on the main Herberger Online site at <https://herbergeronline.asu.edu>

Posted on our class web site are: your syllabus, schedule, lectures, lecture notes, access to your assigned Collaborative Design Group, the 3 Design Challenge assignments, announcements, and your grades. Take the time to familiarize yourself with the location and operation of all of them.

Caution - using your MyASU blackboard link to our website is not advised, blackboard outages are common, and citing a blackboard outage as the reason for missing a submission is not accepted.

### 5) Your Collaborative Design Group

You have been assigned automatically to a Collaborative Design Group to study and work with to complete your 3 Design Challenge assignments.

How to locate your Collaborative Design Group:

- Log on to the “ALA 100 – Introduction to Environmental Design” web site (see directions above)
- Click on the “My Group” tab.
- At the bottom of that page, you’ll see a list of everyone in your group, email them ASAP get connected and organized.

Given the nature of your Collaborative Design Group’s work on the 3 Design Challenges, you must stay in constant daily contact with your assigned Collaborative Design Group members. Exchange email addresses and cell numbers immediately. **If you choose not to stay in daily contact** (via cellphone, text, Google + hangouts, Adobe Connect, Skype and email) and/or not to work with your Collaborative Design Group in completing any assignment, **then you will automatically get ZERO points for that ENTIRE particular Design Challenge.**

### 6) Our 3 Design Challenges

The real test of whether anyone has really learned and understood a body of newly acquired body of knowledge is to simply ask them to apply it to a real life problem. **You will be working in a randomly assigned Collaborative Design Group on three required Design Challenges.**

You will begin with Design Challenge 1, where you will individually explain your own Mastery through the creation of a YouTube video and summary. In Design Challenges 2 + 3, your Group will be asked to solve two challenging design problems for the lightest cardboard chair and developing a set of new designs with a local, off-campus non-for-profit organization. Each Design Challenge is followed by a group discussion and peer

grading. The details of each of the three required Design Challenge assignments can be found on our class web site.

#### 7) **Your 3 Online Group Discussions**

Following the completion of each Design Challenge, you and your Group members will be required to engage in an Online Discussion about the ideas, methods and significance of the design work you have just completed. On the dates indicated, you will need to participate throughout the day in your Collaborative Design Group's Online Discussion. **Be sure to answer the required questions. In each and every post, thoughtfully respond to your Group member's ideas and observations supported by detailed quoted examples from our lectures, textbook and daily New York Times.** Remember no credit will be given for late postings or missed assignments.

##### **How do I post my Design Challenge Group Discussion?**

- Log on to our "ALA 100 – Introduction to Environmental Design" web site.
- Click on the "My Group" tab.
- Under "Group Discussions" find the entry for the appropriate Design Challenge. If it is before the submission deadline, the discussion will still be open; you will see a link in the Action column labeled "Discuss."
- Click on the "Discuss" link. You should now see the Discussion Area for your group, for this Design Challenge only.
- In the User Agreement, enter your name and check the box labeled "Confirm Your Agreement." When you have done that, click "Enter Assessment."
- You should now be looking at the form for the appropriate Design Challenge.
- In the first box, paste your YouTube URL hyperlink.
- In the second box, type your 200 word summary introduction - remember to always check the grammar and spelling. Think of this more as a term paper than an e-mail, you will be marked down for the use any shorthand (texting) or failure to capitalize. Now read your response out loud.
- Click "Submit"
- If everything worked, you should see a receipt page and a message indicating that the Challenge is complete. You may want to print or screen grab this page for your records.

##### **How do I read/respond to other members of my Collaborative Design Group's posts?**

- Log on to our "ALA 100 – Introduction to Environmental Design" web site.
- Click on the "My Group" tab.
- Under "Group Discussions" find the entry for the appropriate Design Challenge. If it is before the submission deadline, the discussion will still be open; you will see a link in the Action column labeled "Discuss."
- Click on the "Discuss" link. You should now see the Discussion Area for your group, for this Design Challenge only.
- Each post by a fellow group member will have a "Reply" button. Click that button to post a reply.
- Enter your response in the "message" box - be sure to read your response out loud and check the grammar and spelling, prior to submitting.
- Finally post it by clicking on "Post Reply"

**For Each Group discussion you need to prepare all your posts a minimum of one week in advance.**

When your group meets to work on any Design Challenge, discuss the content of your upcoming group discussion. Check out the samples posts on the class website located under the calendar. Create a word file a minimum of a week before hand. Email it to all the members, and have each group member write out and share all their thoughtful, well written, 4-5 sentence posts one week prior to the due date. Then on the date of the group discussion, all each member does is cut-n-paste their posts on to the website.

If you encounter any technical problems with our course web site: First, contact Herberger Online Help Desk by email at [holsupport@asu.edu](mailto:holsupport@asu.edu) There is a "Help" tab on the course website that has a link to that address also, as well as a link to an online Help Form. Make sure to provide as much detail as you can about the problem you have encountered – so we can quickly help you.

8) **Special accommodations**

To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the ASU Disability Resource Center (<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/#> ; Phone: (480) 965-1234; TDD: (480) 965-9000). This is a very important step as accommodations may be difficult to make retroactively. If you have a letter from their office indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodations, in order to assure that you receive your accommodations in a timely manner, please send this documentation to Professor Underwood no later than the end of the first week of the semester so that your needs can be addressed effectively.

9) **ASU Student Code of Conduct, academic dishonesty and plagiarism**

Please review the ASU Student Code of Conduct <https://students.asu.edu/srr/code> and ASU policy against disruptive or threatening behavior [SSM 104-02](#) **Any act of academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism, will result in your automatic failure of the course and a final course grade of XE, "Failure due to academic dishonesty," which will permanently remain on your ASU transcript.** Plagiarism is the act of using designs, words and the ideas of others as if they are your own. By citing sources correctly, you give credit to the originator of the words and ideas you are using, you give your readers the information they need to consult those sources directly, and build their own credibility. Young college students sometime get into trouble because they mistakenly assume that plagiarizing and mashing up is ok, it is not. If you are unsure or have any questions, regarding these policies, academic dishonestly or plagiarism, please ask me to explain it.

10) **Grading**

We want to be sure that all grading in our class is fair and equitable. Should you have any questions regarding your grade, please contact the instructor and if necessary we may set up a skype meeting. Next write out the reason for your proposed grade change, send all the supporting materials to the instructor prior to your Skype meeting. Understand that your grade may go up or down based on our re-examination.

**Required**

Design Challenge 1 – One Minute of Mastery, with on-line discussion + peer grading . . . . . 33 1/3  
Design Challenge 2 – Lightest Cardboard Chair, with on-line discussion + peer grading . . . . . 33 1/3  
Design Challenge 3 – Designing with a Non-profit, with on-line discussion + peer grading . . . . . 33 1/3  
(please see the grading rubrics for each Design Challenge) 100 points

A+ 97 % and above	B 84-86 %	D 70-73%
A 94-96 %	B- 80-83 %	E 69% and below
A- 90-93 %	C+ 77-79 %	XE Failure due to academic dishonesty.
B+ 87-89 %	C 74-76 %	

Important notes

- 1) **Remember late work is never accepted and no extra credit will be given for missing assignments.**
- 2) To insure equity and fairness for every student enrolled in this course, we will not round up or down the cumulative final points you earn.

11) **Course drop or withdrawal**

If you wish to drop or withdraw from this course, it is your responsibility to do so by the deadlines. You need to drop before 17 May, and withdrawal before 5 June. See <https://students.asu.edu/academic-calendar> to confirm theses dates and requirements. Any course registration changes are processed through My ASU: <http://my.asu.edu>.

*"It doesn't matter what path we take, we have to remain curious and fearless.  
We have to look at the world and question what we see.  
We have to be unafraid to say no and change what is unacceptable.  
Each of us has the responsibility to do it."  
Steven Spielberg*