

proj 3 | ambigram creation and merchandising:  
**overall information**

- materials For all of Project 3, the following will be needed:
- Pencils, sketchbook, eraser
  - white paper of choice (could be sketchbook)
  - black ink pen/marker (OR pencil if a very tight dark sketch can be done)
  - ruler or straightedge
- To mount work for presentation:*
- 18-24in metal ruler
  - X-acto and #11 blades
  - Self-healing cutting mat
  - Roller/burnisher
  - black mounting board - black on all sides > size TBD
  - Spray adhesive (spray mount, not K-77)
  - Time to mount the work correctly

- what is due At completion of Project 3 (A-C), put all of the following in a folder entitled YOUR LAST NAME\_PROJ3
- Raster file of ambigram
  - PSD raster files of Merchandise
  - Flattened files of Merchandise
  - HTML and CSS files
  - Mounted ambigram (hand-rendered) and print of web page.

schedule **MON, Sept. 28th:** Project 2 DUE. Critique. Begin Project 3. Begin Pinterest page: create a Pinterest page entitled “2413: Ambigrams” and start pinning! At least 30 pins. *(Note: you can begin sketching ideas at any time this week!)*

**WED, Sept. 30th, 1:05:** Pinterest page DUE. Do ambigram exercises in class - bring your sketch book, pencil, and eraser to use.

**FRI, Oct. 2nd:** Work day. *BFA Review.*

**MON, Oct. 5th, 1:05pm:** Sketch(es) DUE. At least one successful ambigram sketched with amount of exactness. I should see erases or sketches of multiple attempts. I want to see your thoughts on paper. All will do the same word flipped. Display at least ONE attempt to do different words.

**FRI, Oct. 9th, 1:05pm:** Project 3A DUE. Critique. Scans completed for 3B.

**MON, Oct. 12th:** Begin first part of Project 3B in class together.

**WED, Oct. 14th:** Project 3B DUE. Begin Project 3C in class together

**MON, Oct. 19th:** All of Project 3 DUE. Critique.  
*I will collect the files on a drive when class begins.*

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evaluation Your final grade will take into account how you did on parts of Project 3, giving the most weight to 3A. 3B is a test of basic Photoshop skills and some aesthetic awareness in your design choices. 3C is retyping code accurately - it either works or doesn't.

You will be graded on the following:

PROJECT 3A:

- Directions were followed accurately with absolutely no errors.
- Sketches show thought process, including at least one attempt at the ambigram that uses different words on each side?
- Ideas successfully conveyed per objective via composition and awareness of positive/negative space.
- Ambigram legibility
- Creative use of form.
- Ambition - How much did you challenge yourself? Did you plan your time well?  
>> Same or different words used each side?

PROJECT 3B:

- Directions were followed accurately with absolutely no errors.
- Mock-Ups using provided layered look realistic.
- Mock-Ups using provided flattened file realistic.
- Ambition - How much did you challenge yourself? Did you plan your time well?

PROJECT 3C:

- Directions were followed accurately with absolutely no errors.
- File shows correctly in browser (Safari and Chrome).
- Spelling and grammar are correct.
- Upload time quick (if file saved correctly in 3B, should not be a problem).
- Ambition - How much did you challenge yourself? Did you plan your time well?  
>> Anything included in site that goes beyond the basics for which I asked?

OVERALL:

- Craft in mounting artwork
- Handwriting legible and no misspellings
- Professional Presentation.
- Participation in critique.
- **ALL** deadlines met.

proj 3A | ambigram creation and merchandising:  
**creating the ambigram**

“It is a work of trial and error. It takes knowledge of typography and perception. It is [seemingly] an act of illusion and magic.”

*-[http://www.graphicart-news.com/ambigram-how-to-design-it/#.VgIJ\\_o9Viko](http://www.graphicart-news.com/ambigram-how-to-design-it/#.VgIJ_o9Viko)*

**objectives** The first part of this project asks for an ambigram to be rendered by hand. Creating an ambigram will challenge students to visually problem-solve in a way that is usually difficult at first, but becomes easier as one becomes familiar with the general process. By creating an ambigram, one uses hand-lettering skills and basic Gestalt principles like closure and continuous fate. These skills will be used with further skill developments in typography and design, especially with creation of logos.

**problem** An ambigram is a complex type of typographic art that requires keen awareness of letterform and the limits of legibility. The simplest form of an ambigram is a symbol that reads the same way upside down as it does right side up. (*ambigram by Alex Tass*)



A challenging ambigram to create is one that reads a word the same way upside down as it does right side up. (*ambigrams by John Langdon*)



A more difficult ambigram to create is one that reads something when upside down and something else when right side up. (*ambigram by interact ambigram design*)



This project asks for any of the above mentioned beyond just a symbol. For any of the above choices, there is a minimum of four letters. The more a student successfully challenges him/herself, the higher the grade will be.

- steps**
1. Student will first research and do ambigram exercises in class. Then get out sketchbook and start thinking up ideas. As is explained under schedule for the sketches due: “At least one successful ambigram sketched with amount of exactness. I should see erases or sketches of multiple attempts. I want to see your thoughts on paper. All will do the same word flipped. Display at least ONE attempt to do different words.” In other words, I do not have a number. I want to see attempts and thought process with one final clean sketch.

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steps  
(cont.)

2. Revisions will be made. Student will then create clean tight art in black and white (color optional) on white paper that is close to 8.5in x 11in. If one uses a sketchbook page that is slightly more than this, it is ok. If student would like to use a higher quality paper than what is in sketchbook, he/she is welcome to do so.

Artwork should be finalized in something dark with a very clean edge. This can be pencil if it is dark, though a fine point black marker may be better. The cleaner the artwork, the easier the next part of the project will be.

3. When finished, student should write name lightly in pencil on back of paper. This will be scanned in and the digital file will be used for the rest of the project. Keep the original ambigram as this will be mounted at completion of the project.

tips for ambigrams

The following Top Ten Tips are from a great article online:

<http://ptgmedia.pearsoncmg.com/images/9780321855473/samplepages/0321855477.pdf>  
(see link on FB page).

1. Choices, choices. The success of your ambigram begins with word choice and letterform analysis. Keep in mind that not every word can become a good ambigram.
2. Research. Before you start creating ambigrams, learn about graphic design, typography, and color. Go to libraries and old bookstores to search for visual inspiration. Visit museums and art galleries. Use various online resources. And, of course, research ambigrams to see what has and hasn't been done. *[You will create a Pinterest page. You will also find there are a few alleged "ambigram generators" out there, though many do not work. Though I suggest you avoid them, they may help you to better comprehend how to "flip" letters legibly.]*
3. Simplicity is key. At first, learn how to make a legible and readable ambigram from simple words. Then apply various typographic styles to it so you can learn how they affect the legibility of your ambigram. As your skills improve, progress to more complex words.
4. **Sketch, sketch, and sketch some more.** If you want to create a truly unique ambigram, paper and pencil should be your starting point. Experimenting with different letter combinations and ratios on paper is the only way to account for all possibilities.
5. Function first, style second. The style of the ambigram manifests itself throughout the development process and should never be set in stone beforehand. When you base your ambigram on an existing style from the beginning (be it a certain typography style or even an existing typeface), you trap yourself in a corner if the chosen word requires extensive letter manipulation.
6. Consistency. Use a consistent lettering style, letter spacing, and letter heights to achieve readability. Strive to find letter shapes that are clear and unambiguous. If a particular letter shape just isn't working, consider using an alternate form of the letter.

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- tips (cont.)
7. Don't be predictable. If your ambigram contains predictable letter combinations, take the time to explore other solutions. Context is important, so explore various letter combinations with respect to their location within the word. Even if a certain combination may not work within one word, it may work in a future ambigram. Some letter flips are unavoidable, whereas others offer a lot of flexibility.
  8. Colors, textures, and flourishes—oh my! Only after your design works in black and white should you consider adding color, outlines, shading, and other graphic embellishments.
  9. Take your time. Spend a lot of time on research and sketching. Don't be in a hurry to jump on the computer to digitize your work because that is probably the last 5 percent of the process. *[You will not use the computer at all in rendering the ambigram.]* The initial 95 percent of the ambigram design process is research, sketching, and exploration.
  10. What does that ambigram really “say”? You already know what your ambigram says, so you are not the best judge of its legibility. Show your ambigram to other people to see if they can read it.