

# chrisgargiulo

---

1133 Waimanu Street #509  
Honolulu, HI 96814  
USA

chrisgargiulo@gmail.com  
<http://chrisgargiulo.com>  
808.285.8399

---

## TEACHING PHILOSOPHY:

“This generation does not care if their work is called art or design. This generation is no longer interested in “media critique” which preoccupied media artists of the last two decades; instead it is engaged in software critique. This generation writes its own software code to create their own cultural systems, instead of using samples of commercial media.

The result is the new modernism of data visualizations, vector nets, pixel-thin grids and arrows: Bauhaus design in the service of information design. Instead the Baroque assault of commercial media, Flash generation serves us the modernist aesthetics and rationality of software. Information design is used as tool to make sense of reality while programming becomes a tool of empowerment.”

- Lev Manovich, *New Media author and theorist*

I am a practical teacher and designer. My approach to teaching is similar to my approach toward my career working in the design industry: be smart, be professional, and have fun. I personally feel that these three pragmatic principles work well within the academic context of teaching new media art and design where students pursue a course of study that is scholarly, practical, and fun at the same time.

The term new media is often referred to as the point where art and technology converge. On the art side, there is a history of academic study consisting of theory and practice. On the technology side, there is a wide range of complex software applications and programming languages used in the industry. One of the greatest challenges as a new media teacher is to figure out how to effectively balance teaching design theory and design technology in such a way that all students, regardless of skill level, background, or experience, will be prepared for a career in the field.

My teaching style is closely aligned with the pragmatic educational philosophies of John Dewey. Dewey was a proponent of learning skills and knowledge via hands-on exercises that can be applied in real world situations. As a practicing designer, I enjoy taking the experiences that I learned while working in the industry and applying them in the classroom. My primary method for doing this is through the implementation of an industry model. Instead of lecturing from the front of the class, I act as a creative director leading a design team of students as if we were all co-workers at the same design company. Most assignments are designed to mimic real world projects found in the industry. This industry model allows for me to introduce the design process and new technologies that students may see in the industry in a controlled academic setting.

To complement the practical industry model, I utilize more traditional educational techniques when teaching design theory in order to help students gain the vocabulary necessary to communicate their designs both verbally and visually. Through readings and lectures I share selected academic resources that provide a background of knowledge necessary to inform each and every design decision that a designer makes. For assessment, I mainly use formal studio art critiques, a popular practice in art education. Formal studio art critiques consist of a student presenter who defends a piece of his or her artwork in front of a panel of critics who analyze the work and comment on its strengths and weaknesses according to a set of guidelines developed for each project. The outcome of this method is that students learn how to solve their own design problems by critically defending and discussing their process in a public speaking forum while witnessing the experiences of others. During each critique I am able to apply Bloom's Revised Taxonomy to measure whether students are *remembering*, *understanding*, *applying*, *analyzing*, and *evaluating* what they have learned while *creating* their own artwork.

Finally, my aim is to make learning fun by motivating students to enjoy being designers. One method for generating interest is to begin each class with an anticipatory set. An anticipatory set is a brief activity at the beginning of a class or lesson that is designed to engage the students' attention and direct their focus on the learning objective for that particular lesson. I usually show examples of art work and designs created by different artists and companies, and then discuss them. This practice initiates dialogue in the classroom and demonstrates how we can learn by looking at existing art, listening to others, and becoming better public speakers with an expanded design vocabulary.

As Lev Manovich stated in the quote above, today's generation of designers incorporate technology into their design process in new and exciting ways. By combining practical and traditional teaching techniques, my aim is to create a comfortable learning environment where students can study both design technology and design theory while having fun at the same time. In this context, the role of the teacher is a co-learner who shares his or her personal knowledge with students in the pursuit of community growth. The role of the student is to listen and learn with others with the goal of becoming a better human being through academic discourse and critical thinking. Ultimately, nothing makes me happier than to see my students make informed design decisions via a critical thought process, justify their decisions by speaking about them in a professional and articulate manner, and get excited about being a designer in today's world of new media.