It is my firm belief that knowledge acquired through interest and exploration is always better owned by the learner. A teacher puts effort into leading students to the brink of learning, but the true transmission of knowledge only really occurs when the student is open to and engaged in the information. Some of the greatest things I’ve learned in design—and in life for that matter—I’ve acquired through self-directed inquiry. I believe there needs to be room for this kind of activity in the classroom, especially in a major that thrives on problem solving and creativity. This semester you will be allotted time to work on self-directed, hands-on design experiments. Here are the guidelines:

1) All experiments will be typographic in nature. You can involve imagery and format in the equation, but type should always be the emphasis.

2) The activity will be hands-on and not involve electronic devices (i.e., tablets, cell phones, computers, etc). Cameras and scanners are approved for capturing the results of experiments. Lighting equipment is fine too, but the spirit of the activity is to remain unplugged and analog.

3) Avoid any experiments that would put you or others in danger (i.e., toxic chemicals, flame, and other potentially unsafe materials). When you are unsure about an activity, ask.

4) None of the experiments are to be connected with other GPHD classwork or personal side projects.

5) Be 100% present. During research time, you need to be completely invested in the activity. Avoid distractions (i.e., chatting with peers, checking email, etc).

6) Your research needs to have a focus; be thoughtful about your course of investigation. There is a certain amount of stick-to-it-iveness required to really get to the nuances of a topic, so be prepared to spend a minimum of a two weeks on any line of inquiry.

7) Preparation is key. You will be allotted time each week to work independently, so plan in advance on what you will be doing and bring all tools/materials needed to conduct the experiment(s). Ensure there is a focus and progression to your experiments. I will be touching base with each of you during these independent work periods, so be prepared to explain what you are working on.

8) Periodically you will be asked to share your research with the class. Be reflective in your work (note your analysis and observations) and be ready to report on your findings and discoveries.