Authority without Authors

Supporting the development of a graduate illustration course
ILLU 790 - Illustration MFA Thesis

- Existing course with online & on-ground sessions
- School-wide effort to improve quality of written thesis component
- Faculty interested in greater library presence in OL course
“Students will choose a particular aspect of illustration discipline and develop an investigative statement that critically examines it in the context of his or her own work and professional aspirations.”
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make something

(do it well)

write something
Rae Cook, *Detecting Gravitational Waves*

helloraerae.com
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helloraerae.com

- Background & development of technology
- Visual analysis
- Investigation of professional priorities and roles
- Visual research
primary sources

secondary sources

creative research (practice-as-research)

secondary/ “library” research

professional skills & practices
project revision:
annotated bibliographies
Authority or Expertise?

- Expertise can be concrete, exist independent of context
  - Technical mastery of a medium, intricate knowledge of processes; “know-how”
- Authority relates to expertise and credibility, but is contextual, linked with specific communities or “spheres of influence” (Wilson 13-14)
Not all experts are authorities; not all authorities are experts.

Lane Wilkinson, “Is authority constructed and contextual?”  
*Sense and Reference*
How do you analyze authority...

For a source used to understand or uncover a process?

For a source which provides evidence or information on a topic or event?

For a source meant to inspire?

For a source meant to inform professional practices?

For a source that contributes non-disciplinary perspectives?

For a source which supports, refutes, or refines an argument?

Brown et al, 155.
Annotated Bibliography

Original Rubric:
- 2+ professional sources (interviews)
- Three internet sources
- Two reference works
- Three library books
- Three periodicals
- Three sources found in other bibliographies

Amended Rubric:
Must identify and include authorship representing:
- Professionals or practitioners
- Academics (scholars)
- Amateurs/enthusiasts
- Laypersons: someone with no expertise, but an appreciation
Standards and Authority

NASAD*
No explicit language related to IL or VL
- “Awareness of current issues and events that are influencing the field of study…”
- “Capacity to be engaged beyond the major specialization […] connect art and design to other fields”

SCAD (institutional)
- “Critically evaluate information & images […] to assess context, perspective, quality, and relevance”
- “Select appropriately from an array of information sources”
- “Recognize and respond to disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and global contexts”
Questioning authority:

- Missing perspectives or voices
- Authority vs. expertise
Critiques of authority (next steps?)

- How is authority granted to an illustrator (or designer) by extension of their client list or other organizations?
- How does the discipline of illustration benefit from perceptions of authority?
- How is design used, or misused, as a tool or signifier of authority?
- What responsibilities does an authority bear in their communities?
Thanks!

Any questions?

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Credits

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:
- Presentation template by SlidesCarnival
- Illustration used with permission from Rae Cook, helloraerae.com

References: