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SUNY Orange

Arts & Communication Department

Submitted by Michele Farrell

Classroom Observation of Martin Dominguez

On Wednesday, September 24th, 2025, I observed Martin Dominguez's Design 1 class in Harriman Hall, Room 113. When I arrived, nine students were actively engaged and working at their desks. Martin began the session by introducing the day's topic "The Elements and Principles of Design," using a PowerPoint presentation to guide discussion and reinforce key visual concepts.

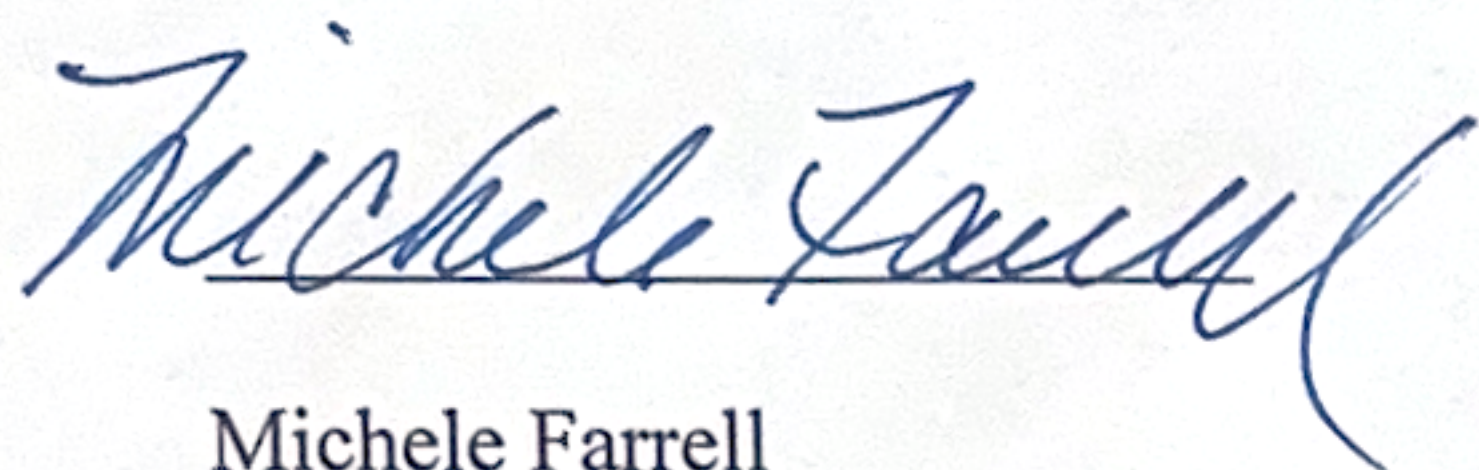
He opened with a clear explanation of the differences between elements and principles, describing elements as "tools" and principles as "ideas." The class then explored several foundational design elements including line, shape, form, texture, size, space, and color. Martin emphasized that a confident, intentional line communicates purpose and guides the viewer, an idea he connected to practical applications in graphic design.

Throughout the lecture, Martin encouraged participation by posing thoughtful questions, prompting students to connect theory with their ongoing projects. His discussion of shape and the psychology of form was engaging as he related geometric shapes such as squares, triangles, and circles to ideas of stability, strength, and community. Martin's approach effectively linked visual design concepts to emotional and psychological responses, helping students think critically about how design communicates meaning. He further illustrated key principles such as hierarchy, emphasis, unity, rhythm, and balance, noting that hierarchy requires visual awareness of size, color, layout, and spacing. His explanations were enriched with historical references, including Piet Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg's movement and Wassily Kandinsky's theories on abstraction and color psychology. These examples deepened students' understanding of how early design theorists continue to influence modern composition.

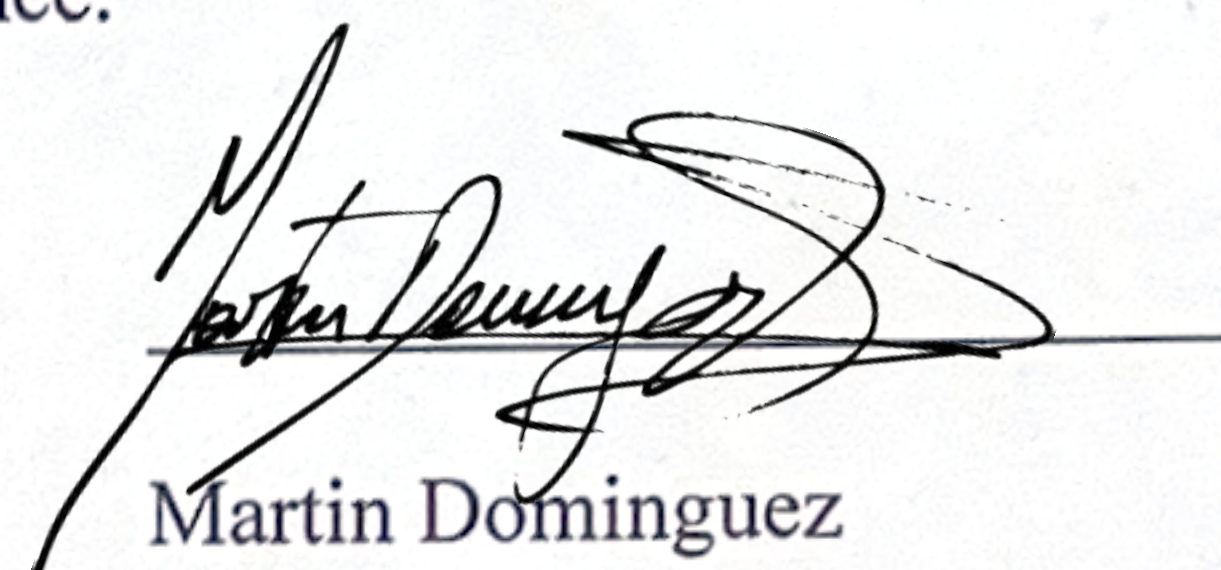
The class was interactive and intellectually stimulating. Martin balanced lecture and discussion, frequently engaging students through questions and visual analysis. His teaching style conveyed both enthusiasm and expertise, creating an inclusive and positive classroom atmosphere. Students appeared comfortable contributing their ideas and demonstrated curiosity throughout the lesson.

After the lecture, students began individual work on an abstract design project using black-and-white sketches. Martin circulated around the room, offering personalized feedback and encouraging students to make deliberate compositional choices based on the elements and principles of design. His feedback was supportive and specific, reinforcing key ideas introduced earlier in the session.

Based on my observation, Martin's Design 1 class was dynamic, well-organized, and highly engaging. He demonstrated deep knowledge of his discipline and skill in fostering critical thinking through both lecture and applied practice. His rapport with students was strong, and he maintained a welcoming and intellectually curious environment. Overall, Martin is an exceptional educator who inspires confidence and creativity in his students. I was thoroughly impressed with his instruction and classroom presence.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michele Farrell", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michele Farrell

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Martin Dominguez