

In an age in which you can use virtually any form of media to communicate data, ideas, and stories, how do you decide what media to actually use? How do multiple media types effect our understanding of data and information structures? Does content favor one media over another? Does one media distort another? When content changes media, what do we need to know about the relative fluency of our sometimes multiple audiences? How can user interaction affect empathy? Can interface reflect a neutral point-of-view? You will investigate these and other questions in your first project, *Million-Dollar Murray*.

## project one — million-dollar murray

<b>semester</b>	spring 2009
<b>web site</b>	tba
<b>professor</b>	joseph a. quackenbush
<b>office hours</b>	tuesdays 1:30 – 3:00 by appointment
<b>office</b>	tower 607
<b>office phone</b>	617.879.7682
<b>studio phone</b>	781.740.0644
<b>studio fax</b>	781.740.0645
<b>e-mail</b>	joe@jamdesign.com
<b>web</b>	www.jamdesign.com

**overview**

In the February 13 and 20, 2006 edition of the *New Yorker*, *Tipping Point* and *Blink* author Malcolm Gladwell writes in “Million-Dollar Murray” about a statistical theory called the “power law” distribution as a way of better understanding complex social and political problems.

Gladwell marshals a variety of written communication tools to tell his story: simile; analogy; metaphor; and hard data. He even builds his article around a central character, Murray Barr, a chronic alcoholic homeless man in Reno, Nevada. There are no graphs, no charts, no illustrations, no diagrams, and no pictures. As the article is printed on paper, there is no sound, no animation, no motion, and no interactivity.

**the project**

Your project is to translate Gladwell’s article into four distinct deliverables:

- 1) A poster visualizing your analysis of the various data sets.
- 2) A PowerPoint or Keynote presentation.
- 3) A prototype interactive application.
- 4) A book summarizing your research and design process.

**research and analysis**

Your first task is to make sense of the multiple data sets presented in the article. While you will not necessarily be working with each set in the end, you always want to start your exploration wide. Consider some of the following issues:

- + Gladwell references many types of data — financial, economic, social, statistical, psychological, and geographical. What are they specifically and what is the larger context of that data?
- + What human or biographical data does Gladwell reference?
- + What is the narrative data structure of the article? What are the different examples of the power law distribution theory that he uses and how do they relate to one another.

**what to do for next week . . .**

Among the items I expect to see next week:

- + Clear verbal presentation of your understanding of the article, the data, and your point-of-view.
- + Rough visualizations of data types.
- + Mind maps illustrating significant relationships.
- + Diagrams that organize the data in logical ways.
- + Data and visual references that might be beyond the article’s primary sources.

*Finally, marker and newsprint sketches only for next week. No computer work please.*

# design studio two

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MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

## proposed schedule subject to change

**semester** spring 2009  
**web site** tba  
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**office hours** tuesdays 1:30 – 3:00  
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**office phone** 617.879.7682  
**studio phone** 781.740.0644  
**studio fax** 781.740.0645  
**e-mail** joe@jamdesign.com  
**web** www.jamdesign.com

kat  
kent  
david  
audrey  
kyoung  
dennis

week	date	tuesdays
<b>week 1</b>	<i>january 27</i>	<i>project 1: million-dollar murray</i> + course overview + project discussion + fidelity project lecture
<b>week 2</b>	<i>february 3</i>	<i>project 1: million-dollar murray</i> + research and analysis critique + information design and visualization lecture
<b>week 3</b>	<i>february 10</i>	<i>project 1: million-dollar murray</i> + poster critique + information design lecture
<b>week 4</b>	<i>february 17</i>	<i>project 1: million-dollar murray</i> + PowerPoint and interface critique + interface and sequential design lecture
<b>week 5</b>	<i>february 24</i>	<i>project 1: million-dollar murray</i> + final critique
<b>week 6</b>	<i>march 3</i>	<i>project 1: million dollar murray</i> + final presentations + mid-term review discussion