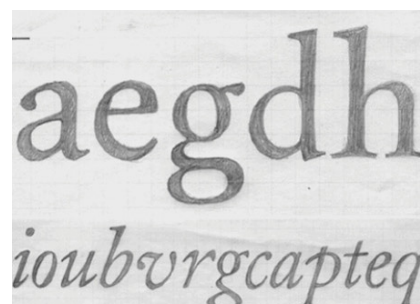


# EXPERT CLASS

## TYPE DESIGN 2017–2018

The Expert class Type design (EcTd) course comprises ten lessons in the auditorium of the Museum Plantin-Moretus over a period of roughly three quarters of a year. The purpose of the course is to facilitate students' exploration and analysis of the historical and technical (production) aspects of type and typography, to teach them how to design type into detail, to help them to develop an in-depth insight in the process of digital font production, and to support them to gain control over related software.

An important aspect of the course is the direct exchange of knowledge and experience between the students. This exchange is stimulated by a type-revival project on which the students have to work together. The revival is always based on unique historical material from the renowned collection of the Museum Plantin-Moretus. Besides taking part in the revival project, each student personally has to design a new typeface, whether completely from scratch or being a revival that, for example, is also based on



The student exhibition of 2018 is special because it will coincide with the international ATypI-conference in Antwerp (September 2018).

material from the museum's collection. The course culminates in an exhibition that yearly takes place at the Museum Plantin-Moretus, or occasionally at an exquisite location elsewhere in Belgium or the Netherlands.

The EcTd course is taught by type designer, font producer, software developer, and Senior Lecturer Dr. Frank E. Blokland.

## Requirements and admission

The EcTd course is targeted at graphic designers who have a great interest in type and typography. The course is very much internationally oriented and the students come from all over the world. Hence the lessons are taught in English. For entering the course, experience in graphic design, combined with basic drawing skills and knowledge of graphic-design software such as Adobe Illustrator, are considered a prerequisite.

The course provides a good alternative for people who do not have time or the opportunity to follow, for example, the Type & Media master course at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague (KABK) or the master course in type design at the University of Reading. However, in the course of time a number of students who already hold a Master degree in type design from aforementioned institutes joined the EcTd course.

## Program, end terms, and diploma

During the first half of the course the students work together on a revival based on the invaluable historical material, i.e., punches, matrices, foundry type, and prints, from the collection of the Museum Plantin-Moretus. This revival forms the basis for an intensive exchange of insight, perception, and technical know-how between the students, often via closed groups on Facebook and Google.

During the second half of the course the students have to design and to technically develop a new typeface. Initial sketches and proposals are usually already made and discussed during the first half of the course. The joined revival and the personal typeface have to be presented in two different booklets with an accompanying text on the process and progress. Evaluation criteria for the personal project are: the depth of the study, the insight in the matter, the aesthetically and technical quality of the produced type, and the originality of the design project.

Students who positively complete the course obtain an officially recognized post-college certificate.

## Subjects investigated

### – with related research questions

#### 1 *Type, typography, and conventions:*

What are the restrictions of the systems inherited from the times of foundry type, i.e., with characters on solid rectangles? What do we know about the factors that influenced the proportions and details of the archetypal roman and italic type models? What is the relation between letterforms and typographical conventions? Where do the conventions for present-day digital typography come from?

#### 2 *Form, proportions, construction, contrast-sorts, and contrast:*

What forms the origin of the proportions, shapes, and details of the historical and modern typefaces that are in use today? Why and in what respect do characters from the style periods differ? What is the relation of type and typography to architecture, sculpture, painting, and music? Which methods can be used to classify type? How and to what extent are the type classifications of, for example, Maximilien Vox and Gerrit Noordzij comparable and overall useful? What is the relation to matters such as contrast-sort and contrast of, for example, serifs?

#### 3 *Type design, idiom, and revivals:*

What distinguishes one type designer from another? Why and by what features do we recognize and distinguish the type designs of, for example, Garamont, Granjon, Eric Gill, Hermann Zapf, and Jan van Krimpen? What is a revival exactly? How should historical prints be interpreted? How and to what extent should a revival be standardized and adapted to present-day digital technology?

## Digital technology: matters and software discussed (summary)

- 1 Manual conversion of analogue drawings with a digitizer/lens cursor (IKARUS format) or via autotracing, versus direct drawing on screen.
- 2 Contour description and font formats: the IKARUS format, cubic Bézier curves (PostScript Type1 / OpenType CFF) and quadratic Bézier curves (TrueType / OpenType TTF).
- 3 Font-production tools: Glyphs, RoboFont, FontLab Studio, FontForge, FoundryMaster, OTMaster.
- 4 Glyph databases: development of the glyph set. The construction of character sets. The support of multiple codepages. The (auto) spacing of type.
- 5 Data management: (batch) enhancement of the glyph set and related file management.
- 6 Quality control: checking and improving the consistency of font data.
- 7 Font-format processing: the (batch) generation of kerning, OpenType Layout features, and hinting.
- 8 Font generation: batch production and related scripting.

## Required equipment

EcTd students are expected to bring with them a laptop running macOS, Windows, or Linux. They are provided with font production software in the form of demo and open-source versions. Furthermore some analogue equipment is required: drawing and tracing paper (A4 – 120 grams), propelling pencil (maximum 0.5 mm) with hb or b leads, an eraser, black felt-tip pens (round head, various thicknesses), Stanley knife cutter, adhesive tape, 30 cm ruler (0.5 mm increments) and a broad nib (preferably a Parallel Pen with a 6 mm nib).



*Lessons are in English*

**Lecturer:** Dr. Frank E. Blokland

**Calendar:** Ten Wednesdays: November 15 and December 13, 2017, January 10, January 31, February 21, March 7, March 28, April 18, May 16 and June 13, 2018. From 10.00 till 16.40 h.

**Location:** Museum Plantin-Moretus, Vrijdagmarkt 22, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium

**Enrolment fee:** €1750

**Enrol** by sending an email to [plantin.instituut@stad.antwerpen.be](mailto:plantin.instituut@stad.antwerpen.be)