

# BENJAMIN R. KIRKLAND | CURRICULUM VITAE

School of Architecture + Design | Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University | Blacksburg, VA 24061  
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## PERSONAL STATEMENT

I am a professional industrial designer and adjunct instructor with an enthusiastic bonsai addiction. I have more than a decade of professional design and design-management experience, and I have expertise working with fabricators, vendors, contractors, and firms in a professional setting. I have built a strong educational video presence on YouTube through my bonsai hobby, Appalachian Bonsai. My academic interests focus on building empathy for the human condition, critical & speculative design thinking, and videography for online learning. I am looking for a place that continues my love of mentoring new talent, and an administration that values the contributions of their faculty toward the education of its student body.

## EDUCATION

**2019** *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)*  
**Master of Science in Architecture**

**2003** *Auburn University*  
**Bachelor of Industrial Design**

## ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

**2020 – Curr.** *Virginia Tech*  
**Adjunct Instructor of Design**  
*Human Factors*

Lecture discussions of ergonomics, anthropometrics, design principles, human development, UX, aging-in-place, ADA, cognition, and emotion as they relate to designed objects, architecture, urban spaces, and user interfaces; taught to a large cross-section of major and minor students

*Industrial Design Lab III (Junior Studio)*  
Introducing working aspects of critical design and corporate branding within a studio environment to reinforce design methods, research, materials & processes, and social/cultural responsibilities; advising on manufacturing techniques and professional development

Industrial Design Lab II (Sophomore Studio)  
refinement of skills; introduction to industry partners; incorporation of human factors into design practice; introduction to design research; deepening the complexity of design process with integration of skillsets, specifically visual & verbal communication of ideas

Summer Studio for Minors  
Online introductory course for interdisciplinary minor students to understand how to work during the coronavirus pandemic; general instruction on design research, sketch ideation, prototyping, and final presentation of ideas; Zoom instruction

Solidworks (CAD)  
Online instruction of the 3D modeling software package Solidworks to sophomore design students, with skills ranging from beginner to intermediate

**2018 – 2019** *Virginia Tech*  
**Graduate Teaching Assistantships**

Responsibilities included grading assignments, recording attendance, lecturing during instructor absences, and acting liaison between remote instructors & students during professor's leave of absence

*Design Visualization*

*Human Factors*

*Design Research*

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 2019**      *Graduate Education Development Institute (GEDI)*  
Training in contemporary pedagogical techniques, use of technologies in the classroom, and inquiry-based learning
- 2015 - 2016**   *Daley Group, LLC*  
Coached in professional career & managerial development; understanding interpersonal relationships in working environments; conflict management; time management

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2016 – Curr.**   *Appalachian Bonsai – [YouTube](#)*  
**Founder & Content Creator**  
Production of online video tutorials about bonsai trees, including tree design, collection of raw materials, seasonal maintenance, care instructions, and soil components; speculative discussion to innovate the art into an American version of a traditional form using native materials.  
80k+ subscribers; 9+ million views (July 2020)
- 2019 – 2020.**   *Virginia Tech – [Living Labs: A Big Sticky Project](#)*  
**Associate Researcher**  
Conducting interviews and producing video content for exhibition & record; aiding in production of ceramic tiles for large architectural installation; promoted efficiency through assembly line production methods; general labor
- 2008 – 2018**   *[Crenshaw Lighting](#)*  
**Lead Designer, Product Designer, Estimator, Fabricator**  
Designed custom architectural light fixtures; restored & replicated historically important lighting artifacts; managed team of industrial designers and mechanical engineers; oversaw production of all submittal and working drawings; formalized design process through communications, checklists, data collection, and hiring of staff; estimated for quotes; consulted clientele; assisted in fabrication, restoration & installation of light fixtures; operated as shop liaison; proficiency in Solidworks 3D modeling software & Photopia optical design software
- Notable Projects with Crenshaw Lighting*  
**[Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Seattle, WA – SkB Architects](#)**  
Facilitated the design of custom ceramic lighting for new headquarters; connected artisans and craftspersons into a cohesive creative unit; converted renderings and mockup visuals into constructive working models for fabrication

**520 Park Avenue, New York City, NY – Robert A.M. Stern Architects**

Detailed quotation of custom lighting; preliminary designs for approval & manufacture; sourcing of custom materials; advisement to engineering and fabrication

**Wyoming State Capitol, Cheyenne, WY – HDR, Plan One/Architects**

Restoration & replication of historic light fixtures; research of historic glass types & methods in the creation of new custom lenses; assistance in complete lighting design package; consultation to ensure historical accuracy of elements

**Minnesota State Capitol, St. Paul, MN – HGA Architects**

Restoration & replication of historic light fixtures; design of new historically-inspired light fixtures; modification of fixtures to modern LED technology; assistance in complete lighting design package; design consultation throughout project development, production, & installation; procurement of custom materials; fabrication of custom details

**United States Supreme Court, Washington, DC – Architect of the Capitol**

Replicated historic elevator light fixture destroyed by fire; enabled in-situ 3D scans & modeling for custom casting; provided on-site consultation; procured custom castings

**Provo City Center Temple, Provo, UT – FFKR Architects**

Designed for manufacture of custom light fixtures for historic temple; assisted in lighting design package; facilitated production & installation

**George W. Bush Presidential Library, Dallas, TX – Robert A.M. Stern Architects**

Assisted in fabrication, finish, transportation, and installation of custom brass and crystal chandeliers; advised on-site labor in troubleshooting install

**United States Capitol Building, Washington, DC – Architect of the Capitol**

Assisted in detail drawings of custom castings and fittings for Room S-238 chandelier; assisted in fabrication & finish of custom details

**Cincinnati Museum & Union Terminal, Cincinnati, OH – GBBN Architects**

Restoration and replication of historic Art Deco lighting; identified key details required for accuracy through old photographs and broken fixtures; created custom lighting inspired from original designs

**Thalian Hall, Wilmington, NC – Hanbury Architects**

Modeled and provided fabrication documents for historically-inspired chandelier; advised on details for accuracy based upon historic sketches and photographs

**The Monroe Building, Chicago, IL – Holabird & Root**

Replicated wall sconce fixtures based upon historic photographs; designed custom elevator call lights; designed office bowl pendants with custom bronze staves

**2006 – 2008 *Dreaming Creek Timber Frame Homes***

**Frame Designer, Timberwright**

Converted architectural drawings into 3D timber models; applied traditional and custom frame joinery; drafted documents for clientele, engineers & fabricators; assisted in production of CNC files for Hundegger K2; assisted in fabrication and on-site raising of architectural timber frame structures; proficiency in AutoCAD HSB & Cadwork timbering software

**2006 *Chateau Morrisette Winery***

**Graphic Designer**

Designed promotional materials and produced conceptual wine labels

## LECTURES

- 2021**     *Exhibitor & Demonstrator*  
88<sup>th</sup> Historic Garden Week Tour, Roanoke VA
- 2020**     *Invited Lecturer, "Sketching Trees"*  
North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville NC
- Invited Lecturer, "Inspired by a Southern Appalachian Bonsai"*  
North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville NC
- Poster Presenter, "Speculative and Critical Design in Education: Practice and Perspectives"*  
ACM DIS2020 workshop, hosted by Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland, UK
- Visiting Bonsai Artist & Videographer "Radical Redesign: Curator's Talk & Styling Demonstration"*  
North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville NC
- 2020**     *Invited Lecturer, "A Bonsai Program"*  
Salem Garden Club, Salem VA
- 2019**     *Invited Lecturer, "A Bonsai Program"*  
Hahn Horticultural Garden, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg VA
- 2019**     *Invited Lecturer, "Bonsai & YouTube Content Creation"*  
IDS Thought Leaders Series, Industrial Design Program, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg VA
- 2017**     *Lecturer & Demonstrator, "Introduction to Bonsai"*  
8<sup>th</sup> Annual Greater Roanoke Home & Garden Show, Roanoke VA

## APPOINTMENTS

- 2016 – 2018**   *President*  
Hinoki Bonsai Club, Roanoke VA
- 2015**         *Vice President*  
Hinoki Bonsai Club, Roanoke VA

## MEMBERSHIPS

*IDSA*  
*Hinoki Bonsai Club*