

C O M 3 5 3

Applied Visual Communication

Fall 2024 course syllabus

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Wednesdays, 6:00 pm

PC MALL 37

This course explores information structuring using traditional and contemporary techniques and introduces students to the principles of visual communication and provides hands-on practice in document design. The focus is on preparing and presenting information in both professional and popular contexts. Students learn about and work with concepts that enable effective use of graphics and text.

Note to students: Contents of the syllabus for this course will be incrementally presented, on a

weekly basis, in order to keep you focused on work required at the time. Below is an abbreviated version of the syllabus, which indicates all of the major areas of study and assignments.

- Course textbook: Exploring the Elements of Design (Third Edition), Poppy Evans & Mark A. Thomas, eds. ISBN-10: 1111645485. Book & eBook are available for online purchase. See https://www.amazon.com/Exploring-Elements-Design-Poppy-Evans/dp/1111645485/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1B7ICTCCOU2JD&keywords=exploring+the+elements+of+design+3rd+edition&qid=1661783226&sprefix=Exploring+the+Elements+of+Design%2Caps%2C92&sr=8-1

- Buy used now..if you are looking to save, I found one for \$5.00

- Whatever your source, be sure to acquire the 3rd edition.
- * To create work for this course, access to a computer with document layout and design software is required. If you do not have graphic design software on your personal computer, all assignments can be completed with software

accessible via NJIT labs. You are able access the Adobe CC software (PhotoShop, Illustrator, InDesign) through campus labs.

* Unless instructed otherwise, your Assignments and Projects must be hard-copy compositions (i.e., printed).

Please Note: You may need to purchase construction paper and coverstock paper, posterboard, or foam/matte-board (preferably dark). Some of the materials are available at NJIT bookstore (e.g., foam board), and you should be able to get materials at any store (or online store) that sells school or art supplies (i.e., Amazon, Staples, Office Max, Walmart).

* Class meets on Wednesdays, 6:00 p.m., PC MALL 37

* You are required to complete a course evaluation at the end of the semester.

Required Work / Assignments:

1. Students must complete all Assignments listed on the syllabus [85 points total].

2. Course Project: Students will design and construct a 2024 monthly calendar (in print) [15 points].

Note: Attendance will be taken during every session: Unexcused absences and/or failure to participate in classes will not be tolerated and will lower a student's final grade (5 points for every two unexcused absences)

September 4: Course Introduction

Includes student introductions, course + Assignment 1 overview, software instruction (Photoshop basics).

Obtain a copy of Exploring the Elements of Design (Third Edition), Poppy Evans & Mark A. Thomas, eds.; see above for info.

Reading for next week: Preface AND Chapter 1, "Defining the Language of Design".

September 11: Language of Design

Assignment 1 follow-up. Selected students will be called on to discuss their work in class.

Following up on the reading material, be prepared to discuss how the concepts introduced in Ch. 1 are reflected in things we see in everyday life.

f i l m s c r e e n i n g : Helvetica, Gary Hustwit
(see <https://www.kanopy.com/en/product/2874825?vp=njit> and login with UCID)

Assignment 1 [5 points]: Using PhotoShop (or Illustrator or other graphics program), prepare a 3' x 5' flag. Horizontal (landscape) orientation recommended though not required. TEXT ONLY. Example below will be shown in class. Print your design (in color, large format) on 8.5 x 11" paper and bring to class; due on 9/13.

Reading for next week: Chapter 2, "Typography in Design".

Assignment 2 [5 points]: Complete project "Line, Letter, and Leaf", p. 32. Submit both compositions to class next week; due on 9/20. Examples will be provided.

Notes + Assignment 2 clarification & modification: use a real leaf (leaves) in carrying out the assignment! Obtain and use physical materials to create the design. Do not forget to include the 3-inch border! THE OVERALL DIMENSIONS OF YOUR SUBMISSION MUST BE 16" x 16". Also, although the book specifies using a grey background, you may also use black, white, or any color; the book also says to "use up to three planes or divisions in the background"—please disregard this requirement and use a solid color for the background.

September 18: Typography I & Intro to Zine Culture

Assignment 2 due. Selected students will present and discuss their work in class.

Discussion: Chapter 2 & Assignment 3.

Introduction to Zines and zine culture.

Assignment 3 (in-class / group) [5 points]:
"Letterform Grid", p. 79. Due on 9/27.

Notes, Assignment 3 clarification, and modification: Do this assignment by using hard-copy materials (i.e., cut-out squares printed letters on paper), using Photoshop (or other graphics software). Create a composition whose dimensions must be at least 9" x 9". You are NOT limited to using the fonts listed within the description, but you should USE ONLY ONE TYPEFACE in this assignment.

Assignment 4 [5 points]: Zine #1.

Working individually or in pairs, for Zine #1 I recommend creating a single-page (with proper folding technique) "zine" of your own design. Approach to construction/structure and subject matter is entirely up to you. (Later issues can be in a different format). Countless types of designs and layouts are possible. Zines must include a title, brief statement of purpose, and contact information. You must provide credit for any appropriated work. Due on 9/27.

Potential resources: ["How to make a zine"](#) (Rona Akbar/Somnath Bhatt); ["How to Make a Zine: A Beginner's Guide"](#) (Aisling Twomey).

September 25: Typography II

Assignment 3 & 4 due. Students will present and discuss their work in class.

Discussion in class will focus on Assignments and Chapter 2.

Reading for next week: Chapter 3, "Imagery in Design".

Assignment 5 [5 points]: "Type Collage", p. 82.
Due on 10/4.

Note: I recommend using software to produce the "Type Collage" (and output to print).

October 2: Language and Image

Assignment 5 due. Selected students will present and discuss their work in class.

Discussion: Chapter 3, issues regarding language and image.

Introduction to Illustrator.

Reading for next week: Chapter 4, "Color and Design".

Assignment 6 [5 points]: "Word and Type Mix and Match" (one word per page), p. 80-81. Due on 10/11.

Note: Use software to produce this Assignment.

October 9: Color and Design

Discussion: Chapter 4

Assignment 7 [5 points]: "Color and Season", p. 166 (in-class/group):

Follow directions in the book: TRIAD WITH ONE ACCENT COLOR + name of season should appear. No Photos (unless they are reduced to one color) or use of gradients. Begin during class, final version due 10/18. Those who are absent should complete the assignment on their own.

Reading for next week: Chapter 5, "Managing Effective Design".

Practice with Color and Design; image reduction.

Assignment 8 [5 points]: Prepare either a.) "Photo/Hashtag Composition"; or, b.) "Selfie/Hashtag Composition". Using pictures taken with your phone (or other camera), add a #hashtag caption (layer text on top of image); create one example for discussion (print to 8.5" x 11" paper). Due on 10/18.

October 16: Design Management

Discussion: Chapter 5

Assignment 9 [5 points] (in class & over the next week): "Name Logo", p. 116. Use PhotoShop or Illustrator to complete; Illustrator, as demonstrated in class, allows you to reduce images, which is the process I recommend; due on 10/25.

Note: NO PHOTOGRAPHS allowed. I recommend using your first name for the logo;

name should be as integrated as possible with the object you pair your name with (ideally choosing something that represents who you are). Some examples will be shown.

Assignment 10 [5 points]: Zine #2. Due on 10/25.

October 23: Output Management

We will review outcomes of selected assignments in class.

Zine #2 is due. Submit a note (on Canvas) describing rationale and process in designing this project (including any unique techniques or methods used to create it). Please note what design concepts are influencing your approach to constructing your layout(s). Conclude by adding commentary regarding how you expect to approach designing the next two editions.

Assignment 11 [5 points]: text/image pamphlet (in-class, to begin)

Working in small groups or individually, using Illustrator, or PhotoShop, create a Text and Image Pamphlet using song lyrics, poetry, or any other type of text/subject. The end product (delivered) should be 1 page double-sided (size and formatting are up to you). This could end up appearing as 2, 4, or 6 pages total, depending on how (or if) you fold the paper. You must include some type of graphic decor (your choice). Due 11/1, with a note describing rationale and process in designing the Pamphlet (including the software you used to create it). Co-compose your rationale, and post to Canvas to receive a grade.

PLEASE NOTE: The last day to submit assignments or revisions to Assignments 1-12 is 11/15.

Reading: Chapter 6, "Managing Effective Design".

October 30: Design and Composition Review

Review Assignment 10 and 11 outcomes.

Discussion: Ch. 6.

Assignment 12 (in-class) [5 points]: "Photo Crop", p. 117. Due on 11/1. Note: Please follow the directions in the book. You need to do TWO different photo crops, and use "L" shaped pieces of paper, taped on to the pictures. It is in your best interests to use inferior photographs to complete the assignment--images that enable you to eliminate parts of the image that do not contribute anything to the composition.

Assignment 13 [5 points]: Using Photoshop or Illustrator (or other graphic software), create a Flyer (8.5 x 11" or 8.5 x 14") for a fictitious or real event. Due 11/8, with a note (a paragraph, posted on the Canvas section for this Assignment) describing your rationale and process in designing the flyer, including the software you used to create it. Every flyer will be presented in class next week.

November 6: Multipage Production

Flyer assignment review.

InDesign introduction.

Reminder: last day to submit or re-submit
Assignments 1-12 is next week.

Assignment 14 [5 points]: Zine #3. Due on 11/15.

November 13: Course Project Introduction

Last day to submit any revisions to course
Assignments 1-12.

Course Project introduction.

Course Project [20 points]: Calendar

Create a bound (stapled, ring-bound, or other fastening) Calendar with unity and cohesive theme, preferably using InDesign. Due 12/13.

Students will determine the theme of their calendar, which should contain text and images, as well as reflect effective use of the design principles we've explored during the semester. Students must create a printed and bound hard copy of this project, and submit both the computer

files used to output the publication as well as hard copy of the calendar once complete. Images used in the Course Project may be appropriated, but providing credit and source for them is required. Please avoid use of templates. Final Project must be submitted on or before the last night of class.

More on InDesign and layout issues.

If you did not complete Zine #3, you can submit it on 11/29.

Homework: Spend time considering the theme for your course project, and begin compiling design ideas (and images). Make a sketch (on paper) of your potential page design. Bring the sketch and your images to class on 11/29.

November 20: Course Project Studio

InDesign tutorial

Bring Course Project materials to work with in class (e.g., sketches you made for your calendar page design as well as any images you plan to use).

Assignment 15 [10 points]: Zine #4. Due by 12/13.

**November 27: NO CLASS MEETING /
THANKSGIVING EVE**

**December 4: Project Studio & Prototype
Review**

Bring your Project files to class. By the conclusion of class tonight, you should have at least one fully formatted page of your Calendar prepared and ready for review (this is required).

December 11: Conclusion

Course Project Due / Students will present and discuss their projects in-class.

Incomplete grades (IN) will not assigned under any circumstance. Final grades will be based on works completed by this date.

ALL WORK FOR THIS COURSE MUST BE COMPLETED BY 12/11/24

OTHER COURSE INFO:

This course is designed to ensure NJIT's Communication and Media program successfully provides its students with a foundation in a range of forms of communication. The course's overall objectives are designed to promote each student's competence or mastery of visual communications, using a graphic design as an expressive tool.

Through project development and completion, students build practical skills in developing and creating design projects using print media competently and artistically. In the process of

preparing assignments, students acquire the ability to effectively produce and edit more elaborate course projects. The course will improve a student's flexibility in communication by using contemporary media , thus advancing their general skillset and delivering content via professional media formats.

Students in this course will: 1.) Gain firsthand understanding of a communicative genre; 2.) Explore the practical and creative implementation of digital tools and applications; 3.) Develop individual technical practices using software; 4.) Use peers to develop ideas, and cultivate production of original work; and 5.) Foster printed artifacts for publication.

Learning outcome 1: Engage in critical thinking and reflection regarding use of text, image, and other communication strategies.

Learning Outcome 2: Gain a practice-based introduction to understanding processes and tools of visual communication in print.

Learning Outcome 3: Gain a practice-based introduction to methods for preparing printed documents and making decisions that enable efficient communication with others.

Learning Outcome 4: The course will expand a student's conceptual perspective of communication, thus improving his or her skills in both quantitative and qualitative reasoning, critical thinking, information literacy, and project management.

Core competencies addressed by the course include: Student awareness of, and engagement with, communications strategies; building perception of contemporary communication(s) environments; performative practice with communication tools; critical thinking on the subject matter; cultivation of communication literacy.

Instructional objectives / evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on the basis of their production's:

(1) Real-world relevance; design qualities

(2) Sustained investigation; development of materials (process over time)

(3) Use of multiple sources and perspectives; originality

(4) Creating polished products; aesthetic products

Integrated assessment (feedback from multiple sources) will be used in evaluating assignments and projects produced in the course.

Scale converting number to letter grade

A = 90 - 100

B+ = 85 - 89

B = 80 - 84

C+ = 75 - 79

C = 70 - 74

D = 60 - 69

F = 59 or less

Course prerequisites: HUM 102 with a grade of C or higher, and one History and Humanities GER 200 level course with a grade of C or higher

Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic

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