**JOMC 712 Visual Communication and Multimedia**

This course is designed to help you develop a deeper understanding of the role of visual communication and multimedia in journalism and mass communication. This class is not about learning software, but rather gaining a critical understanding – through reading, discussion, critiques and projects – of these forms of communication. By reading, viewing and discussing the writings and works of journalists, artists, Web developers, photographers, usability experts, graphic designers, educators and researchers you will develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the principles and practices of communication through visual expression. By examining the latest eyetracking research and usability testing, you will evaluate the practical application of many concepts. Through critiques, original articles and research projects, you will work to expertly integrate this knowledge into a publishable piece.

**Class dates, Spring 2014 semester**

Wednesday, January 8 through Friday, April 25  
Spring Break: March 8-16

**Instructor information**

Adjunct Professor Delphine Andrews

Email: [delphine.andrews@gmail.com](mailto:delphine.andrews@gmail.com)

I amavailable for office hours by appointment. Please email me to schedule a time to talk, and I will respond within 24 hours.

**Sakai**

All course materials and links will be available on the Sakai course site at <http://sakai.unc.edu>.

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**Required course materials**

All course materials—PDF files and/or links to articles, multimedia presentations, videos and book chapters—will be accessible from the Sakai course site.

**There is no text required for this course.**

**Poynter News University:** You will be required to complete three online tutorials by Poynter's News University. These are free and self-directed, but do require a login to enroll. Please create a user account at <https://www.newsu.org/user>.

**Screen recording tools:** You will be using a free screen capture service called Screencast-O-Matic <http://www.screencast-o-matic.com> to record video for certain assignments. If you are more familiar with another screencapture and/or video editing software, feel free to use that particular software or service instead. Screencast-O-Matic is easy and free for those of us who are new to screen capture.

You will use YouTube or another video sharing service to host the screencast videos online. Other options include Vimeo and Flickr.

Online support for getting started with Screencast-O-Matic (<http://www.screencast-o-matic.com/u/h/start-recording>) and YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/t/about_getting_started>) is available. These services require a user account. If you have any problems, please use the Technical Help discussion forum in Sakai to get assistance from in-house support.

**Other applications:** You will also use other applications to complete assignments. There will always be a simple, free option, or you may choose to use a program you have or one you are familiar with that is not listed. One exercise will require a graphics/image composition program such as Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign or PowerPoint. There are also simple, free applications available online:

• Sumo Paint (<http://www.sumopaint.com/start>)

• Gimp (<http://www.gimp.org>) - open source alternative to Photoshop

• Inkscape (<http://inkscape.org>) - open source alternative to Illustrator

Another exercise will require an interactive timeline application. Options include:

• Capzle (<http://www.capzles.com>)

• Timetoast (<http://timetoast.com>)

• Timeline (<http://timeline.verite.co>)

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**Grading criteria and scale**

Your grade will be based on three components\*:

* **Discussion:** Class participation and professionalism, relating to class discussions in Sakai and also your interactions with the instructor and other students in all contexts. Students are required to participate in discussions per Discussion Guidelines located below. (20%)
* **Discussion Leadership:** Participation and facilitation of course discussion during assigned week as well as summary and key insights for the week. (10%)
* **Assignments:** Four assignments: design without a word, photo editing, timeline and usability test. (40%)
* **Final Project:** End-of-semester article, critique or publishable piece that incorporates what you have learned about visual communication. (30%)

**Note:** Any student who earns four (4) “Low Pass” grades in the course, either for assignments or for participation (or lack of participation) in discussion, will automatically earn a maximum grade of a “Low Pass” for the course. Similarly, any student who earns or receives two (2) zeroes in the course, either for failing to submit an assignment or for a lack of participation in discussion, will automatically earn a maximum grade of a “Low Pass” for the course.

**Grades:** From the UNC Graduate School handbook (available in full as a PDF at <http://gradschool.unc.edu/handbook/pdf/handbook.pdf>), the grade scale used for graduate-level courses numbered 100 or above is:

H for High Pass

P for Pass

L for Low Pass

F for Fail

IN for work incomplete

AB for absent from final examination

Simply put, engagement is required, participation is expected and deadlines are absolute.

*\* Thanks to Professor Brian Carroll for some of the wording used above.*

**UNC Honor Code:** It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and to support the enforcement of the Honor Code (<http://instrument.unc.edu>), which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student, or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.

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**Discussion Guidelines**

Meaningful and quality discussion is an essential part of online courses, and will be for this course. The asynchronous nature of the course allows you to carefully consider your contributions to the discussion board. Please read through these expectations and use them as a reference for guiding your discussion participation.

**Quality over quantity:** All students are expected to make **at least five substantive posts** each week. You are expected to add to the discussion with each post. That means you should comment thoughtfully, expand the conversation, bring in your professional experiences, and share your viewpoints and solutions. The testing and challenging of theory is encouraged. You are *not* expected to respond to each and every comment. Posts that do not add to the discussion (e.g. “I agree.”) are not encouraged. Be concise and respectful in all of your comments, and, please, no casual chatter. (There’s a discussion forum for that—“Water Cooler”!)

**Don't delay:** Please begin participating in discussion early in the week. Waiting until late in the discussion can be overwhelming. You may find that the points you’d like to raise have already been covered. Best practice is to check discussions daily or every other day.

**Organization of online discussions:**

1. For the first two weeks, online discussions will be a warm up to the more focused, scholarly discussions we will have this semester. There will be no discussion leaders; so all students should follow discussion prompts for each week.
2. For each of the next 11 weeks of the semester, students will be assigned to lead the online discussion in pairs. Expectations are as follows:  
     
   **Student discussion leaders** will lead us in our discussion and understanding of the readings for that week. Discussion leaders are expected to kick off the week’s discussion and then wrap the discussion at the end of the week with a summary and key insights post. You should respond to comments made by your classmates as you facilitate the week’s discussion. For your summary and key insights post, you and your partner will need to provide a one or two paragraph summary and a list of 5-7 key insights. This synthesis should combine takeaways from the readings as well as from the points raised in the discussion that week.

**Students who are not discussion leaders** are expected to read the readings, make sure you understand the material and make substantive posts. A substantive post is one that responds to the prompt with additional insight to the readings from your personal experience and/or a supplementary reading or link. It is important for you to read and react to the course materials. You are always encouraged to respond to your classmates’ posts.

1. For the last two weeks, discussions will be informal. You are expected to participate in these forums, however your comments will not be evaluated for a grade. It will benefit everyone if you continue to post substantive feedback in these forums. The informality of these discussions is meant to take the pressure off as the semester comes to an end and you are working diligently on your final projects.

**Assignment Critique Discussions**

After each assignment is due, we will engage in a discussion where you will critique each other’s work. In the discussion forum, you will post as a new topic your assignment in the form of a link or an attachment. You will be assigned to critique another student’s work. See “Discussion Moderators and Critique Assignments” in the syllabus folder in Course Materials to know whose work you are critiquing. You will respond to your classmate with your “critique.” Your feedback should be substantive. Do not just say, "Great Job! I like that!" If you like something, tell why. If it is a job well done, explain what makes the work effective. If it is not, make suggestions for improvement. Think "constructive criticism," and support your claims with evidence from the readings.

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**Course calendar**

A link to the course calendar is located in Sakai. You can also visit the course Google calendar at <http://tinyurl.com/jomc712> and add it to your own Google calendar using the button in the lower right corner (shown here).



Below is a general week-by-week guide of the topics to be covered. Instructor comments and readings for each week can be found in the corresponding folder in Course Materials of the Sakai course site.

WEEK 1: What is visual communication?

WEEK 2: History of visual communication

WEEK 3: Color theory and use

WEEK 4: Typography

WEEK 5: Photography, photo editing and visual communication

WEEK 6: Video storytelling

WEEK 7: Graphic communication

WEEK 8: Motion graphics

WEEK 9: Interactivity and electronic media

WEEK 10: Web and multimedia design

WEEK 11: Multimedia design research

WEEK 12: Usability testing

WEEK 13: Usability testing, continued

WEEK 14: Creating an original article or research

WEEK 15: Presenting and pitching your work

**Online Course Statement**

1. By enrolling as a student in this course, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the Acceptable Use of online resources. Please consult the Acceptable Use Policy (<https://help.unc.edu/help/unc-chapel-hill-network-acceptable-use-policy/>) on topics such as copyright, net-etiquette and privacy protection.

2. As part of this course you may be asked to participate in online discussions or other online activities that may include personal information about you or other students in the course. Please be respectful of the rights and protection of other participants under the UNC Chapel Hill Information Security Policies (<http://its.unc.edu/ITS/about_its/its_policies/index.htm>) when participating in online classes.

3. When using online resources offered by organizations not affiliated with UNC Chapel Hill, such as Google or YouTube, please note that the Terms and Conditions of these companies and not the University’s Terms and Conditions apply. These third parties may offer different degrees of privacy protection and access rights to online content. You should be well aware of this when posting content to sites not managed by UNC Chapel Hill.

4. When links to sites outside of the unc.edu domain are inserted in class discussions, please be mindful that clicking on sites not affiliated with UNC-Chapel Hill may pose a risk for your computer due to the possible presence of malware on such sites.

5. Online courses may at times require Web-based assignments that are public in nature and may be viewed by third parties online. This is especially true in social media and blogging platforms. Be mindful of the information you choose to share publicly as part of your assignments. Under the Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and UNC’s FERPA regulation (<http://registrar.unc.edu/AcademicServices/PoliciesProcedures/StudentRights/CCM1_042762>), a student’s education records are protected from disclosure to third parties. However, FERPA protection does not extend to material shared publicly by students.