



MEJO182: FOUNDATIONS OF GRAPHIC DESIGN

A primer on the principles and practices of visual communication

In MEJO 182: Foundations of Graphic Design you will learn the basic principles of visual communication and how to apply them in concert with design methodologies in order to solve communication and design problems. This course is project-based. Emphasis will be placed on visual concepts which are applicable to multiple types of media. Topics covered include basic composition, fundamentals of typography, designing on the grid, branding, publication design and infographic design.

Graphic design is one of the most important tools of visual communication. To design is to create with intent, or in other words, to assign visual order to conceptual abstractions.

Introduction to Graphic Design is intended to give you the basics for becoming a successful visual communicator, whether you wish to master page layout techniques, the creation of eye-catching posters, brochures or packages or to be aware of the complex world of informational graphics.

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Office hours:
TBD

Description and Policies

This course is an introduction to the main principles of graphic design: how to create harmonious displays that convey information, attract viewers, and are both effective and beautiful. Therefore, we will cover the basics of layout design, typography, color theory, and interaction. During this class you will be learning:



Adobe Illustrator, a vector-based drawing program;



Adobe Photoshop, an image creation and processing program; and



Adobe InDesign, a page layout program that allows you to assemble images and text into multi-page documents.

Building design expertise comes with practice and this class is comprised of a series of readings, homework assignments, exercises, and projects. Design is also an intellectual activity so we will have discussions and reviews (i.e., critiques) of your work during the semester to help further your understanding of design principles and processes.

Because of the structure of this course attendance is necessary for learning and is required (unexcused absences will affect your final grade). Deadlines are fixed. If you need to miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact me in advance and to subsequently make up the work.

All work must be completed with the high level of honesty and integrity that this university demands. You are expected to conduct yourselves within the guidelines of the UNC-CH Honor Code:

All students must adhere to the UNC Honor Code which states that a student must “refrain from lying, cheating, or stealing”. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-administered honor system and judicial system for over 100 years. The system is the responsibility of students and is regulated and governed by them but faculty share the responsibility. If you have questions about your responsibility under the honor code please bring them to your instructor or consult with the Office of the Dean of Students or the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. This document, adopted by the Chancellor, the Faculty Council, and the Student Congress, contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. Your full participation and observance of the honor code is expected. Additional information pertaining to the UNC Honor Code can be found by going to honor.unc.edu.

Goals of the Course

There are three primary goals for this class:

Software and Production Skills

You should finish the semester with a working knowledge of the three software packages which will enable you to continue learning as you engage in a range of visual design projects.

Design Fundamentals

You should have a basic understanding of how to apply fundamental design principles and graphic design theory to solve problems.

Portfolio

By the end of the course you will have completed four projects suitable for starting a portfolio. As mentioned earlier design is an intellectual endeavor and an on-going process. This class will not turn you into an expert in design or design software but I hope that you will finish the semester with an appreciation for the design process, a set of useful skills, and a solid foundation for continued learning.

Required Materials

Textbook



YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BUY THIS TEXTBOOK. IT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE.
<http://library.unc.edu/>

Graphic Design, Referenced: A Visual Guide to the Language, Applications, and History of Graphic Design
Armin Vit and Bryony Gomez Palacio (2009)

Lynda.com

As a student at UNC you have free access to Lynda.com tutorials through our licensing program. Access Lynda.com via <http://software.sites.unc.edu/lynda/>. Video tutorials will be made available to you on the site.

Readings & Viewings

Additionally, I will assign a variety of required reading materials, websites and videos for specific topics and skills. These will be outlined in our Sakai course site over the course of the semester.

Sketchbook

For roughly sketching your ideas when exploring new concepts. Don't worry about your drawing skill level.

Backup tools

DVDs, USB flash drive (1G minimum), portable hard drive, or cloud drive. Please be aware that you are responsible for backing up your own work. No deadline will be extended due to a loss of files.

Sakai and the Server

Course materials will be available via Sakai and also via the MEJO server. You may store your files on the MJ school server in our Class folder and within this, your named folder. This will be wiped clean at the end of the semester. You will submit your projects and homework/exercises on Sakai under Assignments.

Computer Labs

The computer labs are in use all day from Monday through Thursday for classes but they should be open for general use on Fridays and weekends. If you would like to be able to work on your own computer, MEJO students have free access to the Adobe Creative Cloud while a student at UNC. Additionally, you can purchase an Adobe Creative Cloud subscription. You can also access the server we will work on from outside class.

Assignments & Grading

Grading

This is a project-based course with grading based on four (4) main projects and smaller key exercises, which you will work on during class and at home. You will also be graded on your contributions to class discussion and project critiques. There will be at least two quizzes based on reading. No final exam will be given.

Exercises, Homework & Quizzes	20%
Class & Critique Participation	15%
Project 1: Poster Design	15%
Project 2: Identity Design	15%
Project 3: Publication Design	15%
Project 4: Information Design	20%
	100%

Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade
100-93%	A	76.9-73.0%	C
93-90.0%	A-	72.9-70.0%	C-
89.9-88.0%	B+	69.9-68.0%	D+
88.0-84.0%	B	67.9-60.0%	D
83.9-80.0%	B-	59.9% below	F
79.9-77.0%	C+		

Expectations

During the course you will be completing several lab exercises and homework assignments with Illustrator, Photoshop, and InDesign. These exercises are intended to give you a better understanding of the software tools in preparation for the projects. As mentioned earlier, some of these short exercises will be graded and commented upon and you will be given credit for completing them on time. We will do in-class reviews both of exercises and projects.

- You are expected to be on time and remain in class until class is dismissed.
- You are expected to complete all readings and to watch all videos that are assigned for homework.
- All projects are to be completed as detailed in their respective project briefs, following all requirements.
- Be prepared to work on projects outside of class.
- You will be able to work on some projects during class sessions but that will not be enough. It is your responsibility to organize your time in order to meet the deadlines. Consider your production speed and make plans accordingly. Always work in advance. And remember that I will be available to help you.

Grading Criteria

These are the generic grading criteria that you should meet in order to get a high grade:

1. Every project must be completed on time.
2. Following guidelines for each project.
3. Spatial organization, structure of the elements, informative value of the display.
4. Thoughtful use of color.
5. Thoughtful choice of type.
6. Aesthetic design choices in general.
7. Creativity.

Attendance Policy

Each student will be allowed two unexcused absences. Beyond that, the student's final class participation grade (which is 15% of the semester grade) will be reduced by 10% for each additional unexcused absence. Excused absences (doctor's note or cleared with me in advance) do not affect your grade. If no documentation is presented within one day of your return to class the absence will be considered unexcused.

Late Work

The work that you submit is what will be graded. If your completed work is not submitted to Sakai you will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. Late work: The maximum grade that can be attained for a late assignment (e.g., exercise, project, etc.) will be reduced by 5 points for every day that it is late.

Participation

You are required to participate in critiques and reviews in class. Reviews are intended to stimulate thought and discussion between you and your colleagues. It is a forum for learning as well as a standard practice for developing ideas.

In short, your final grade will be a reflection of your class attendance, participation in critiques and reviews, and the overall quality of your work. All grades are final, non-negotiable, and will not be approximated.

Working Practices

Working over a network

You will turn in your assignments by uploading them to Sakai. You may keep your working files on the MEJO server. This provides a central location from which you can access project files and temporarily store your work.

All materials needed for class such as demonstration files and exercise files will be located in Class Materials on the server. The Students folder is for your use. You may store copies of your work or any other class related files in this folder. Please create a folder within Students with your name for storing your files.

The network that your lab computer uses to talk to the server is shared by the entire school and it can slow down or “freeze” if too many people try to use it simultaneously. If you open a file directly from the server it may “hang” when you are trying to save it and your work will be lost. There will be nothing that we can do to retrieve the file if this happens.

Before working on a file, copy it to the MEJO SERVER on your computer and then open it from the MEJO SERVER to work with it. If you copy a file to your DESKTOP (instead of the MEJO SERVER), it will be erased at the end of the day. The MEJO SERVER is not erased until the end of the semester.

While you may store copies of your work on the server during the semester, other students will have access to that common folder, which increases the chance of a file being accidentally damaged or lost. If you do not have a backup, you will lose your work. ALWAYS make a separate copy of your current work on a flash drive, other portable storage device or cloud drive before the end of class.

ALWAYS BACKUP YOUR FILES ! LOST FILES AT A DEADLINE ARE NOT EXCUSABLE AND WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT YOUR GRADE

UNC Resources

Seeking Help:

If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

Diversity:

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>. UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Special Accommodations:

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Department of Disability Services website at <http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/>

Core Competencies/Accreditation

This course teaches the following ACEJMC core values and competencies; the ability to:

- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on the last six bullet dots under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above.