

Section 003: 8am-9:45am (EST)

A primer on the principles and practices of visual communication

Tuesdays & Thursdays: 12:45pm – 2pm
Office Hours Meeting ID: 968 5590 4614



Description and Policies

Course Description

Visual design is a problem solving endeavor. 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.

During this class you will use Adobe Illustrator, a vector-based drawing program; Adobe Photoshop, an image creation and processing program; and Adobe InDesign, a page layout program which 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 the design principles and processes involved. 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 inform me in advance and to subsequently make up the work. You are expected to conduct yourselves within the guidelines of the UNC-CH Honor Code (see p. 9). All work must be completed with the high level of honesty and integrity that this university demands.

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 three 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

You will be required to use LinkedIn Learning for this course and video tutorials will be made available to you on this site: <https://software.sites.unc.edu/linkedin/>. The tutorials will sometimes be assigned for required viewing.

Additionally, I will assign videos for specific exercises and skills. I will also assign a variety of required reading materials and websites to be supplied during the semester.

Canvas, <https://canvas.unc.edu>, will house our course website.

Textbooks

Introduction to Graphic Design: A Guide to Thinking, Process, and Style (2nd Edition)

Aaris Sherin (2023) - Bloomsbury

ISBN: 9781350232235

Building Science Graphics: An Illustrated Guide to Communicating Science through Diagrams and Visualizations

Jen Christiansen (2023) - CRC Press

ISBN: 9781032106748

Items to purchase

Backup tools

A Dropbox.com account. Remember that you are responsible for backing up your work. No deadline will be extended due to a loss of files.

Sketchbook

You will need to roughly sketch your ideas when exploring new concepts. Don't worry about your drawing skill level.

Supplemental Readings & Resources

Meggs' History of Graphic Design (6th Edition)

Philip B. Meggs and Alston W. Purvis (2016) - John Wiley & Sons

ISBN: 9781118772058

Graphic Design, Referenced: A Visual Guide to the Language, Applications, and History of Graphic Design

Armin Vit and Bryony Gomez Palacio (2009) - Rockport Publishing

ISBN: 9781592534470

Grading

This is a project-oriented course with grading based on four (4) main projects which you will work on during class and at home. There will also be several quizzes, homework assignments, key exercises, and a portfolio of your work that will be graded. No final exam will be given.

Scale

	Percentage
Quizzes	10%
Attendance & Homework	15%
Project 1: Typography Composition	15%
Project 2: Poster Series	15%
Project 3: GameTip Sheet	20%
Project 4: Portfolio	25%
	100%

Percentage	Grade
100-95.5%	A
95.4-92.0%	A-
91.9-89.0%	B+
88.9-84.0%	B
83.9-80.0%	B-
79.9-77.0%	C+
76.9-73.0%	C
72.9-70.0%	C-
69.9-68.0%	D+
67.9-60.0%	D
59.9% and below	F

Attendance Policy

Each student will be allowed two (2) unexcused absences and beyond that amount of unexcused absences the student's final 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 final grade. **If no documentation is presented within one day of your return to class the absence will be considered unexcused. Please communicate with me early about potential absences.**

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC).

Please be aware that you are bound by the Honor Code when making a request for a University approved absence.



Notes

The work that you submit is what will be graded. No exceptions.

Late Work: The maximum grade that can be attained for a late assignment (e.g., exercise, project, etc.) will be reduced by 15% for every day that it is late. You have a maximum of one class period to submit late work, otherwise you will receive a zero for the assignment.

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.

Please be aware that I reserve the right to reduce grades at the end of the semester in some cases based upon your class attendance, participation in critiques and reviews, and the overall quality of your work.



		Topic/Theory*	Assignment
1-10	Wednesday	Introduction to MEJO 182/ Introduction to Graphic Design/ Introduction to Adobe Illustrator	
1-15	Monday	HOLIDAY	
1-17	Wednesday	The History and Theory of Graphic Design/ Introduction to Adobe Illustrator	
1-22	Monday	Introduction to Typography/ Adobe Illustrator	
1-24	Wednesday	Introduction to Typography/ Adobe Illustrator	
1-29	Monday	Typography, Layout, and the Grid/ Color Theory/ Adobe Illustrator	
1-31	Wednesday	Typography, Layout, and the Grid/ Color Theory/ Adobe Illustrator	Exercise 1 is due
2-5	Monday	Typography, Layout, and the Grid/ Color Theory/ Adobe Illustrator	
2-7	Wednesday	Critique	Project 1 is due
2-12	Monday	WELL-BEING DAY	
2-14	Wednesday	Introduction to Semiotics/ Introduction to Adobe Photoshop	
2-19	Monday	Introduction to Semiotics/ Introduction to Adobe Photoshop	Quiz No. 1
2-21	Wednesday	Poster Design/ Adobe Photoshop	
2-26	Monday	Poster Design/ Adobe Photoshop	
2-28	Wednesday	Poster Design/ Adobe Photoshop	Exercise 2 is due
3-4	Monday	Poster Design/ Adobe Photoshop	
3-6	Wednesday	Critique	Project 2 is due

*This is meant to be a guide for topics discussed in the course this semester. Some dates for topics may fluctuate depending upon the class' progress.



		Topic/Theory*	Assignment
3-11	Monday	SPRING BREAK	
3-13	Wednesday	SPRING BREAK	
3-18	Monday	Introduction to Information Graphics	
3-20	Wednesday	Information Graphics - Dealing with Data and Statistics/ Information Design	
3-25	Monday	Information Graphics	Quiz No. 2
3-27	Wednesday	Information Graphics	
4-1	Monday	Information Graphics	
4-3	Wednesday	Information Graphics	
4-8	Monday	Information Graphics	
4-10	Wednesday	Critique	Project 3 is due
4-15	Monday	Publication Design/ Introduction to Adobe InDesign	
4-17	Wednesday	Publication Design/ Introduction to Adobe InDesign	
4-22	Monday	Publication Design/ Introduction to Adobe InDesign	
4-24	Wednesday	Publication Design/ Introduction to Adobe InDesign	
4-29	Monday	Publication Design/ Introduction to Adobe InDesign	Exercise 3 is due Quiz No. 3
FINAL CRITIQUE			
5-3	Friday	Final Critique @ 8am	Project 4 is due

*This is meant to be a guide for topics discussed in the course this semester. Some dates for topics may fluctuate depending upon the class' progress.



Assignments and Grading

Workload

Throughout the academic term, students will spend approximately two hours per class period completing assignments associated with course instruction including readings, software demonstration tutorials, and other exercises.

This course requires effort and perserverance.

The class will be held face-to-face and attendance is required.

Due to production requirements you cannot wait until the last minute to complete assignments.

All grades are final, non-negotiable, and will not be approximated. No exceptions.

You must remain attentive and demonstrate professionalism during each class.

All students are required to participate in critiques.

If your completed work is not submitted on time you will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. No exceptions.

You are expected to remain in class until class is dismissed.

All assignments are to be completed as detailed by the instructor and all assignment requirements must be followed.

If you are absent for more than 25% of the class periods during the term you will fail the course.

Excessively teleconferencing (i.e., zooming) into class will adversely affect your final course grade.

Face-to-Face Synchronous Instruction (live classroom session)

+++++++ ALWAYS BACKUP YOUR FILES! +++++++

UNC Honor Code

Seeking Help

If you need individual assistance, it is 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 and Policy on Non-Discrimination

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions. More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements with accompanying goals. These compliment the University's Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Misconduct. In summary, 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. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] 966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies.

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact information at safe.unc.edu) or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

Title IX

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall at titleixcoordinator@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.



Special Accommodations

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs, and activities.

Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website at <https://ars.unc.edu> for contact information or email them at ars@unc.edu.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website at <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

Final Exam

Final exam times are based on the Hussman School's final exam schedule. Exams are scheduled according to the day and start time of the first meeting of the course each week and held in the regularly assigned meeting room unless the instructor is otherwise notified. If you are unable to hold your final exam at the assigned time, contact Professor Jules Dixon-Green to check rescheduling options.

Syllabus Changes

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.



Generative AI

Generative AI is extremely useful; however, it has the following limitations:

- How output is arrived at is not clear as the internal processes used to produce a particular output within the generative AI cannot be determined.
- The output is based on existing data (often scraped from online sources) and may reflect biases that should be acknowledged; it may also be inaccurate or entirely fabricated, even if it appears reliable or factual.
- AI evokes a range of intellectual property concerns; sourcing and ownership of information is unclear, and the status of AI output raises numerous questions—e.g., is output equivalent to a published resource? What citational responsibilities are in place for various AI interactions?

The following sections provide the philosophy and specific guidelines for using these tools and features (increasingly, generative AI capabilities will be integrated with everyday applications). **Unless I provide other guidelines for an assignment or exam, you should follow these guidelines.**

Use of generative AI in your coursework is based on the following principles:

1. **AI should help you think.** Not think for you. Use these tools to give you ideas, perform research (in compliance with point 2 below), and analyze problems. Do not use them to do your work for you, e.g., do not enter an assignment question into ChatGPT and copy & paste the response as your answer.
2. **Engage with AI Responsibly and Ethically:** Engage with AI technologies responsibly, critically evaluating AI-generated outputs and considering potential biases, limitations, and ethical implications in your analysis and discussions. Utilize AI technologies ethically, respecting privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual property rights. Ensure that the data used for AI applications is obtained and shared responsibly and in compliance with relevant regulations.
3. **You are 100% responsible for your final product.** You are the user. If the AI makes a mistake, and you use it, it's your mistake. If you don't know whether a statement about any item in the output is true, then your responsibility is to research it. If you cannot verify it as factual, you should delete it. You hold full responsibility for AI-generated content as if you had produced the materials yourself. This means ideas must be attributed, facts are true, and sources must be verified.
4. **These guidelines are in effect unless I give you specific guidelines for an assignment or exam.** It is your responsibility to ensure you are following the correct guidelines.



5. Data that are confidential or personal should not be entered into generative AI tools.

Putting confidential or personal data (e.g., your One Card details) into these tools exposes you and others to the loss of important information. Therefore, do not do so.

The following sections provide the philosophy and specific guidelines for using these tools and features (increasingly, generative AI capabilities will be integrated with everyday applications). Unless I provide other guidelines for an assignment or exam, you should follow these guidelines.

You are responsible for producing all of the final typography, imagery, layouts (spreads), and compositions required for each course assignment. The use of generative AI is prohibited for the production of final products in this course, however, it may be used solely for ideation and prototyping.



Accreditation

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media'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://hussman.unc.edu/accreditation>. 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. The specific values and competencies addressed in this course are listed below:

- **Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;**
- **Think critically, creatively and independently;**
- **Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;**
- **Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;**
- **Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;**
- **Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.**