

Comm311 – Visual Communication Design

Summer 2009

Tuesday & Thursday 11:30 - 1:18

Derby Hall, Room 3176

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
And by appointment

COURSE RELEVANCE

In the current information environment, as technology becomes more pervasive, we are assaulted by a barrage of graphic images. From larger-than-life vivid ads painted on billboards to weather charts in the newspaper, visual information is presented attractively to move us, to persuade us, and to capture our imagination.

In these times of exciting changes in media technologies, it is critical to understand how these images are produced, how they are processed by humans, and the broader impact of these images on society. In short, it is important to be visually literate.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of COMM 311 is to provide a basic overview of various forms of visual communication and to help students develop a sense of visual literacy, which is often overlooked in the curriculum.

As we travel in time from cave paintings to virtual reality environments, we will pause to look at a few examples of visual communication through different perspectives, namely perceptual, personal, critical, ethical, aesthetic, cultural and historical (Lester, 2002).

In addition to looking at graphics conceptually from different perspectives, we will apply these ideas by focusing on basic design competencies for the web.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of the quarter, students should be able to look at images created in different media and evaluate them from multiple perspectives.

Students should be able to demonstrate basic knowledge in the following areas:

1. Principles of visual design
2. Fundamentals of web design
3. Designing graphics for the web

In a laboratory environment, students will learn how to design effective pages and graphics for the web using two Macromedia programs, **Fireworks** and **Dreamweaver**. It should be underscored that this is a class about visual communication. Only the basics of web design will be introduced in this course. Students interested in careers as web designers are recommended to take COMM 711, which focuses mainly on web design.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

[Students with disabilities or special needs can seek information in alternative formats based on their needs.]

Prerequisites

Students entering the class are expected to have a working knowledge of the Windows operating system. Mac users are encouraged to learn Windows before entering the class. Students should be willing and able to troubleshoot on their own using online tutorials and other resources.

Most of the elements of the course are presented online. Hence, it is absolutely essential that you have access to the Internet and a working OSU e-mail address.

Required Texts

1. Lauer, D. A., & Pentak, S. (2008). *Design Basics (Seventh Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
2. Schulze, P. (2006). *Macromedia Fireworks 8: Training from the source*. Berkeley, CA: Macromedia Press.
 - Go to the OSU library page
 - Click on "Research Database" (under quick links)
 - Under "find database," type in "Safari"
 - Click "Safari Tech Books Online"
 - Under "search," type in "Fireworks 8"

Required Flash Drives

Students are required to bring a Flash drive to class every day. It must be at least 100 MB, or have 100 MB of free space and be IBM PC compatible. Students should also carry with them a back up of all of their files on a separate disk, or should have their files backed up on their personal computers. In case of an emergency, such as a virus attack, your primary disk can be easily corrupted. It is imperative, therefore, that you regularly back up your work on a laptop or another computer. If the media you submit for grading is lost, we can provide you with a new drive. However, we cannot replace your files. Hence, it is your responsibility to make sure that you have all your files backed up before submitting the disk. ***You should always have a backup of your work.***

When submitting your portfolio websites, you will have two options. You can turn in your flash drive or you can burn your website onto a CD and turn in the CD for grading. Late websites will not be accepted.

Software and Lab Access

A number of public labs, including the lab in Brown Hall have Fireworks and Dreamweaver. If you use the lab, be sure that the computer has version MX or MX 2004 for Fireworks and/or Dreamweaver since we will be using the MX versions of both programs.

For a complete list of labs, visit the following search page and search for Macromedia Fireworks or Macromedia Dreamweaver: http://scc.osu.edu/software/software_search.php

Downloading Trial Software

If you have your own computer, you can download a trial version of Macromedia Fireworks and Dreamweaver from www.adobe.com. However, the trial period lasts only 30 days. I would recommend that you download the software toward the end of the quarter to help avoid the end-of-quarter rush at the labs. Also you can purchase your own copy at academic discount rates. Check OSU's Office of Information Technology website for more information.

COURSE EVALUATION

Attendance Policy

This class is a workshop that is based on a philosophy of collaborative learning. Also the class is driven by a set of assignments in sequential order, with increasing levels of challenge. When a student misses class, or falls behind on an assignment, it disrupts the progress of the whole class. To minimize chaos, we will strictly enforce our attendance policy.

In short, attendance is compulsory. A missed lab section automatically results in a **2 percentage-point deduction from your final grade**. When emergency situations warrant absence, the deduction can be waived off at the discretion of the instructor. However, supporting documentation is required to explain the circumstances. Routine events, such as conflict between class hours and internship/work hours, do not constitute an emergency. Do not schedule work, internships, or classes during the COMM 311 labs. Also, **do not make travel plans during exam week**.

One of the primary reasons for poor performance in this course is failure to attend class and failure to read the syllabus and other material. Please take note of this.

In order to do well, you should read through the assigned pages focusing on how you can use the information and incorporate it in your designs. **Note-taking** during reading is also encouraged.

Mid-term and Final

Part of the midterm is an open-book lab test, and part of the midterm is comprised of closed-book questions related to the text. You will be required to create some simple websites and other graphics in class for the midterm.

The final exam is cumulative and covers all the content covered during the quarter. Besides a design component, the final includes a closed-book exam as well. In order to do well, you should be well-versed with the tools in Fireworks and Dreamweaver.

Projects

Assignments will be evaluated along various dimensions. Scores will be based on creativity, crisp design, sophisticated analytical thinking, attention to detail, and polished writing.

Here are some of the criteria that will be used while grading:

- Connecting your work to readings and class discussion
- Fluency with which design vocabulary is used in the text and lectures
- Demonstration of technical competence with Fireworks tools
- Understanding of visual literacy principles presented in readings or lecture
- Ability to develop creative graphic themes, designs and artwork
- Ability to critically evaluate visual communication, including self-critique
- Quality writing that expresses clear thinking
- Writing that is free of typos, spelling errors and poor grammar
- Documentation of personal discovery through visual communication

Demonstration of effort is an integral part of each assignment and students should strive to present multiple attempts for each assignment. In short, **submitting the first version** of a design element that meets minimum requirements does not guarantee a passing grade. Be sure to save earlier copies of your work to document the process of evolution of your design.

Class Participation and Homework

Fifty percent of the grade in the class is assigned to individual portfolio websites. The portfolio websites consist of several components, which should be finished by the due dates. Students are expected to upload each of their assignments - both tutorials/lessons from *Fireworks 8* and individual website component assignments such as the “about me” draft graphic and write-up - to the Carmen dropbox by the beginning of class time on the due date specified on the syllabus, unless otherwise advised by the instructor. If your homework is not submitted by the beginning of the class, a late penalty will be applied to your score.

Students are also expected to bring the finished work on a jump drive to class. Sometimes, students will be asked to take a look at one another’s work and offer suggestions and critiques. Students are expected to improve these components throughout the quarter before turning in the final portfolio website. Performance will be based on trajectory of growth demonstrated by a student.

Revised write-ups for each of the components of the portfolio websites must be made part of the websites you submit at midterm and final time.

In the case of tutorials/lessons from *Fireworks 8*, students should upload to the dropbox all files that they are asked to “Save” as part of the lesson. This may mean that each student uploads multiple files for a single tutorial/lesson. This is important to ensure that the student has done each required step of the tutorial/lesson. In the case of website components, students should be sure to upload all files required per the assignment instructions to the dropbox (for example, write-ups, graphics, or any other required file).

Classroom Civility

We want to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. In a communication class, it is *especially* important that we (1) display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students, (2) pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities; (3) avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and (4) avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom. This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, they represent the minimal standards that help make the classroom a productive place for all concerned. Your final grade may be reduced by 1% *each time* you engage in these sorts of behaviors.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's *Code of Student Conduct* and this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct."

The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the *Code of Student Conduct* and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct* (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

The Committee on Academic Misconduct Web pages

(oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html)

Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity

(oaa.osu.edu/coam/ten-suggestions.html)

Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity

(www.northwestern.edu/uacc/8cards.html)

FINAL GRADE CALCULATION

Assignment	Points
Midterm Portfolio Website (Black & White) [About Me, Font Poem, Logo, Web Quilt, Splash Page]	200
Final Portfolio Website (Color) [About Me, Font Poem, Logo, Web Quilt, Splash Page, Ad Design]	300
Midterm Exam [Closed & Open Book]	200
Final Exam [Closed & Open Book]	200
Tutorials, Class Participation	<u>100</u>
	1000 points total

GRADING SCALE

Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A	930-1,000	C	730-769
A-	900-929	C-	700-729
B+	870-899	D+	670-699
B	830-869	D	600-669
B-	800-829	E	599 or less
C+	770-799		

DISCLAIMER:

The information provided in this syllabus constitutes a list of basic class policies. I reserve the right to modify this information when deemed necessary for any reason. You will be notified in class and/or via email if/when any changes occur.

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office of Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in Room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

TENTATIVE DAILY SCHEDULE

CLASS	DATE	TOPIC	READING(S)	WHAT'S DUE
Class 1	T 6/23	Introduction to the Class, Syllabus Overview Visual Communication & Visual Language		
Class 2	TH 6/25	<i>About Me</i> Discussion DB: Design Process: Thinking, Looking, and Doing FW: Bitmap Editing	Design Basics Ch. 1 Fireworks Ch. 1	Fireworks Tutorial Ch. 1
Class 3	T 6/30	<i>Font Poem</i> Discussion DB: Typology, Unity, Emphasis & Focal Point FW: Using Vector Tools	Design Basics Ch. 2-3 Fireworks Ch. 2	Fireworks Tutorial Ch. 2
Class 4	TH 7/2	DB: Scale & Proportion, Balance	Design Basics Ch. 4-5	<i>About Me Draft</i>
Class 5	T 7/7	FW: Working with Layers <i>Logo</i> Discussion <i>About Me Draft</i> Reviews	Fireworks Ch. 3	Fireworks Tutorial Ch. 3
Class 6	TH 7/9	DB: Line, Shape/Volume FW: Adding Text	Design Basics Ch. 7-8, Fireworks Ch. 4	<i>Font Poem</i> , Fireworks Tutorial Ch. 4
Class 7	T 7/14	Building a Website in Dreamweaver <i>Web Quilt</i> Discussion		
Class 8	TH 7/16	DB: Pattern & Texture, Value FW: Advanced Techniques	Design Basics Ch. 9, 12, Fireworks Ch. 5	<i>Logo</i> , Fireworks Tutorial Ch. 5
Class 9	T 7/21	FW: Creating Buttons <i>Splash page/Homepage</i> Discussion	Fireworks Ch. 6	Fireworks Tutorial Ch. 6
Class 10	TH 7/23	Workshop Day: Catch-Up, Practice		<i>Web Quilt</i>
Class 11	T 7/28	FW: Creating Slices & Hotspots	Fireworks Ch. 7	Fireworks Tutorial Ch. 7
Class 12	TH 7/30	Midterm Review Black & White Portfolio		<i>Splash page/</i> <i>Homepage</i>
Class 13	T 8/4	Midterm		<i>Black & White</i> <i>Portfolio Website</i>
Class 14	TH 8/6	Workshop Day: Catch-Up, Practice		
Class 15	T 8/11	DB: Color FW: Optimizing & Exporting	Design Basics Ch. 13, Fireworks Ch. 8	Fireworks Tutorial Ch. 8
Class 16	TH 8/13	Viral Marketing & Social Media DB: Rhythm FW: Creating GIF Animations <i>Ad Design</i> Discussion	Design Basics Ch. 6, Fireworks Ch. 9	Fireworks Tutorial Ch. 9
Class 17	T 8/18	DB: Illusions of Space, Illusions of Motion		
Class 18	TH 8/20	<i>Color Portfolio Website</i> Workshop	Design Basics Ch. 10-11, Fireworks Ch. 10 (Extra Credit)	Fireworks Tutorial Ch. 10 (Extra Credit) Review for Final Exam
FINAL	T 8/25 1:30 p.m. - 3:18 p.m.	Final Exam		<i>Color Portfolio</i> <i>Website</i>