

Fall 2023

## COM-353 (101): Applied Visual Communication

Christopher Funkhouser

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COM 353  
Applied Visual Communication  
Fall 2023 course syllabus

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**campus office hours Wednesdays 3-5 p.m. Cullimore 425 & by appointment**

**course description:** *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 or bi-monthly 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. If you need to see syllabus details for the entire semester, please let me know and I will furnish a copy. —cf***

\* 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/rental. 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](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) or (rental) via <https://www.cengage.com/c/exploring-the-elements-of-design-3e-evans/9781111645489PF/>. 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 36
- \* Regular office hours are 3:00-5 p.m. Wednesdays, or by appointment.
- \* 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 6: 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".**

**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.**



### **September 13: 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**

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

**Assignment 2 [5 points]:**

**September 20: Typography I & Intro to Zine Culture**

**September 27: Typography II**

**October 4: Language and Image**

**October 11: Color and Design**

**October 18: Design Management**

**October 25: Output Management**

**November 1: Multipage Design and Composition**

**November 8: Multipage Production / Zines and Zine Culture**

**November 15: Course Project Introduction**

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

**November 22: NO CLASS MEETING / THANKSGIVING EVE**

**November 29: Course Project**

**December 6: Project Prototypes**

**December 13: Conclusion**

**Final 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 12/13/22**

**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 Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at [dos@njit.edu](mailto:dos@njit.edu)***