



DES-123: VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN

Effective Term

Fall 2025

BOT Approval Date

12/17/2024

Discipline

DES - Design

Course Number

123

Course Title

Visual Communication Design

Short Title

Visual Communication Design

Credit Status (CB 04)

D - Credit - Degree applicable

Units

Activity Units

3.00

Hours

Activity Contact Hours

96-108

Out of Class Hours Activity

48-54

Total Contact Hours

96 - 108

Total Out of Class Hours

48 - 54

Total Student Learning Hours

144 - 162

Distance Education

Yes

Distance Education

Distance Education Type

Both Fully Online and Hybrid Online

Fully Online Delivery Requirements:

- a. Students must be notified via the college schedule of classes and the syllabus for the class if proctored tests are required for this course
- b. Any planned face-to-face meetings, such as an orientation or study session, must be optional
- c. The MSJC curriculum committee requires the use of accessible, asynchronous discussion as a component of every fully online course

Are you using publisher content?

No

Regular Substantive Interaction

Instructor-to-student, student-to-student, and student-to-content contact shall be distributed in a manner that will ensure regular substantive interaction (RSI) is maintained not only weekly but also for the duration of the course. Instructor interactions should be equivalent in time, quality and consistency to the engagement students would receive in a face-to-face course—for example, through announcements, discussion participation, personalized feedback, video messages, or other instructional communications. Instructors are expected to be responsive to student inquiries within a 24-72 hour time frame excluding holidays. RSI will be maintained through a variety of methods:

- Orientation - Students must be oriented to the online and face-to-face portions at the start of the course.
- Announcements - Announcements using the course management system must be posted at least weekly to keep students current on course events, due dates, materials, etc.
- Discussion Forums - Content-related discussion forums within the designated CMS will include appropriate instructor participation and will be initiated and maintained, with timely feedback provided. Instructors are required to monitor the discussions and related activities to provide guidance and direction. Open-ended discussion boards may be used to further learning and interaction.
- MSJC Communication – Instructor will use MSJC-administered communication tools (such as email or the designated CMS communication tools) to regularly communicate with and provide ease of access to students.
- Timely Feedback - Timely feedback on student work will be provided by the instructor, which may include comments and/or rubrics, within the Grades area of the designated CMS.
- Scheduled Meetings – Hybrid and synchronous courses will meet at regularly scheduled times.

ADA Compliance - All course interactions and content must be designed with accessibility in mind and meet ADA requirements.

Catalog Description

The course approaches the visual communication development process within advertising, identity, data visualization, and motion. The course focuses on design thinking, an approach to both innovation and creative problem solving. Principles of rapid prototyping, ideation processes, and materials determination will be used to finish projects from scratch to a final design piece.

Requisites**Prerequisite(s)****Prerequisite(s) (must be taken before)**

ART-123 (with a grade of C or better).

Codes**TOP Code (CB 03)**

1030.00* - *Graphic Art and Design

CIP Code

50.0409 - Graphic Design.

Repeatability Code

No

Grading Option

Letter grade OR P/NP

GE Information**Check GE Types Requested**

AA/AS C - Humanities

Learning Objectives**Learning Objectives****Learning Objective**

1. Construct design works using the stages of Design Thinking: define, research, ideate, prototype, select, implement and learn.
2. Critique visual design work that undergoes various stages of a design process.
3. Develop skills in current professional software to conceive, design, produce, and create visual form and successfully communicate ideas, opinions, and concepts that are consistent with the professional field of visual communication design.

4. Formulate decisions made during the iterative process of design within critiques to effectively revise compositions.
5. Examine the target market and demographic of the intended communication and use research to find innovative approaches for successful visual communication.
6. Demonstrate sensitivity to how a communication may be perceived from various cultures by listening to peer and stakeholder feedback, accumulating data, and making informed decisions in revisions with regards to considering diverse cultures in visual design choices.
7. Assemble feedback loops for formative and summative evaluation of stakeholder responses to evaluate the efficacy of results (i.e. user satisfaction).

Learning Outcome Information

Course Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome

1. Students will successfully identify and explain the stages of Design Thinking: define, research, ideate, prototype, select, implement, and learn.
2. Students will use the iterative process of design through critiques to evaluate and revise compositions.
3. Students will create a series of projects that demonstrate the understanding of various visual communication design outputs.
4. Students will recognize cultural differences and empathize with different groups of people who view the design work, such as their age, body type, races, sexual orientation, and physical abilities.

Program Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome

Demonstrate problem solving skills in the process of producing art.

Demonstrate the use of appropriate terminology in evaluating art and design.

Develop a progression of works that demonstrate their creative style, technical skill, and personal approach to subject and media. Aesthetic Awareness: The student will identify and evaluate how aesthetic expression leads to an appreciation of social and cultural context as well as the values of art and nature. Communication: The student will effectively express and exchange ideas through listening, speaking, reading, writing, visual works, and other modes of interpersonal expression. Critical Thinking: The student will analyze problems, gather and synthesize relevant

Institutional Learning Outcomes

Aesthetic Awareness: The student will identify and evaluate how aesthetic expression leads to an appreciation of social and cultural context as well as the values of art and nature.

Communication: The student will effectively express and exchange ideas through listening, speaking, reading, writing, visual works, and other modes of interpersonal expression.

Critical Thinking: The student will analyze problems, gather and synthesize relevant information, evaluate ideas, information, and evaluate alternative points of view to create, innovate and implement effective solutions.

Content

Course Activity Content

1. Stages of Design Thinking
 - a. Empathize - Research user needs.
 - i. Identify drivers
 - ii. Information gathering
 - iii. Target groups
 - b. Define - State user needs and problems.
 - i. Critique Methods
 - ii. Managing Feedback
 - c. Ideate - Challenge Assumptions and create ideas
 - i. Idea generation
 - ii. Themes of thinking
 - iii. Inspiration and references
 - iv. Brainstorming
 - v. Inclusion

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- vi. Sketching
 - vii. Presenting Ideas
 - d. Prototype - Start to create solutions
 - i. Developing Designs
 - ii. Material selection
 - iii. Vocabulary
 - e. Test - Try solutions out
 - 2. Project Concepts
 - a. Copyright Issues
 - b. Understanding Briefs
 - c. Image/Wording relationships
 - d. Posters, Outdoor Advertising, Point of Purchase
 - e. Visualization of Data Information
 - f. Branding/Identity
 - g. Editorial
 - 3. The Design Process
 - a. Concept Development
 - i. Audience
 - ii. Descriptive Words
 - iii. Descriptive Visuals
 - iv. Composed Works
 - b. Visual Research
 - i. Finding an appropriate style
 - ii. Layout Options
 - 1. Spacing and color
 - 2. Weight, relationships, consistency
 - 3. Proportional groupings of images.
 - 4. Typographical Forms and Use
 - c. Graphic Design Production.
 - i. File setup and use
 - ii. Exportation of various file formats based on output
 - iii. Use of Bitmap Based Software in graphic design solutions
 - iv. Use of Vector-Based software in graphic design solutions
 - d. Critique of Final Output
 - i. Concept/Execution
 - ii. Visual Composition
 - iii. Technical Proficiency
 - iv. Aesthetic Quality
 - 4. Introducing Diversity in Visual Communication Design
 - a. Dimensions of Diversity
 - i. Cultural
 - ii. Ethnic
 - iii. Gender
 - iv. Sexuality
 - v. Age
 - vi. Socioeconomic
 - vii. Disabilities
 - b. Ethical Considerations
 - i. Avoiding Tokenism - Ensuring authentic representation rather than superficial inclusion.
 - ii. Inclusive Storytelling - Crafting narratives that honor diversity without perpetuating harmful stereotypes.
 - iii. Cultural Sensitivity - Understanding symbolism, colors, and iconography that may have different meanings across cultures.
 - c. Best Practices for Designing Inclusively
 - i. Inclusive Imagery: Using diverse visuals in photography, illustrations, and iconography.
 - ii. Typography: Choosing typefaces that are legible and culturally appropriate.
 - iii. Color Choices: Considering color symbolism, contrast, and accessibility for color-blind users.

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- iv. Universal Design Principles: Designing for all users, including those with disabilities (e.g., accessible fonts, color contrast, alternative text for images).

Methods of Instruction

Method

Activity

Integration

In class activities on various design problems that develop an understanding of using software to achieve a specific design goal by finding images, making design decisions, and properly exporting files.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Design readings to develop essays and/or design problems will be assigned and submitted through the course management system.

Method

Critique

Integration

In-class critiques, done individually and in groups, of student work

DE Adaptations for MOI

Student's projects will be compiled into a PDF format or other format as needed and posted into the course management system in a way that other students and the instructor can give feedback on the various stages of work listed in the objective areas by discussing concept, strategy, inspiration, process, and self-reflection. This will typically be done in a shared space like a video conferencing program or through a feedback form given to each student to run an analysis on other students' works to post on the discussion boards.

Method

Lecture

Integration

Classroom lectures on advertising concepts and the entire process of developing a graphic design piece for intended audiences. Lectures on famous designers, design philosophies, and design styles.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Lectures on design figures, styles, and components made in captioned video format. Students will watch captioned videos and respond to questions about the videos in a blog entry online that facilitates a real time discussion or analysis of what they have just watched.

Methods of Evaluation

Method

Class Participation

Integration

Class participation in critiques based on the instructor's observation of the student's analytic commentary on peer's design solutions.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Students will be required to critique others work in the development of their projects. Typically, this is done at four stages: the idea stage, the thumbnail sketches, the revised/digital drafts, and the final draft. Each stage (e.g. Rough Draft, Digital Draft, Final Draft) needs to be placed into the course management system so that an open dialogue/critique can take place in regard to the student projects. This will happen through a discussion board post for each stage.

Method

Projects

Integration

Projects that span multiple classes and explore the creative design process from ideas to thumbnails to revisions, finished products.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Projects that span multiple classes and explore the creative design process from ideas to thumbnails to revisions, finished products. The process will be submitted online through the course management system in their various stages.

Method

Class Work

Integration

Graded evaluation of student's design skills; specifically, the creative solutions to class exercises and design case problems.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Students will be required to submit design problems and essays through the course management system. These individual solutions or critical thinking on issues are not typically open in critique as they resemble a test or a lab. These projects are also typically very specific in the scope of what the student can do, and they are being judged on their creativity to the solution, thoughts on readings, or execution of a directed process.

Method

Portfolios

Integration

Graded evaluation of required work that demonstrates an understanding of the advertising principles to be utilized. Works are generally graded based on the clarity and originality of the design concepts, the aesthetic value of the work, and the technical expertise of the product.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Finished works that follow the creative process will be graded in the course management system. These works are the final pieces of a period of time in which the student prepares a project from the idea stage to the final stage. Portfolios will be analyzed in the three main areas as described in the objective sections: Concept, Visual Design/Aesthetic, and Technical Execution.

Assignments**Assignment Type**

Other

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

Directions:

Please choose one of the following companies to develop work for. You will be doing the logo, the stationary, and two applications (items in parenthesis).

Circuit City (small sized shipping box & shipping van) - [Electronic store similar to Best Buy and Fry's]

Imagine Gadgets (Shipping Box & shipping van) - [Toy store focused on building, science, and learning]

Interstellar Transit (snack box & Space Ship Graphics) - [Similar to any airport but built for space]
Café Moderna (Coaster, Coffee Cup with Hot Wrap) - [Coffee House]
The Curious World of Creatures (admission ticket & animal transport vehicle looks like a truck with a wood fence for the bed) - [Similar to a Zoo, but this can also be fictional, like a world of space aliens, monsters, ect.]
You will need to create a letterhead, business card and envelope for your company as well as the following applications, depending on the company you chose to do:

Letterhead Size 8.5" x 11" - Top OR bottom (not both) can have 3 inches of graphics with 1.5" inches around the other edges. (Must Include: LOGO, company address, website, phone number, and fax number)

Envelope Size 4" x 9" - No graphics on bottom 1/2" or right 3" (Must Include: LOGO and Company address)

Business Card 3.5" x 2" - No restrictions but no main type should be within a 1/4" border. (Must Include: LOGO, company address, website, phone number, fax number, company number (or extension), PERSON'S NAME, JOB TITLE, and COMPANY EMAIL).

In this project we are doing two separate drafts. One for the logo itself and one for the applications

LOGO Step 1 (Analysis Report): Gather 10 logos of similar companies of the industry your company is in. Write a quick analysis of what is similar about them. Make a quick company profile (very simple): What does the company do? What type of person do they target? I trust you will do this on your own and it is not required.

LOGO Step 2 (Rough): Taking your findings from step 1, develop your mind map. Use the mind map to develop fifty initial sketches of the company you chose. I recommend that you take 5 combinations from your mind map and explore 10 quick sketch variations of each to generate the 50 sketches of the logo.

LOGO Step 3 (Revisions): Begin 8 revised rough logos (DRAWN) working on composition variations of your best 1-3 ideas. Ask yourself, should this logo be more corporate (minimal and abstract) or unique/artistic (decorative) or some combination between the two. Start collecting the following (on your own, not turned in) 5 or so samples of fonts you may choose to use with the logo (computer); and 3 or so color schematics/palates for the elements in the logo (computer or drawn).

LOGO Step 4 (Digital): Based upon feedback there should be 4 digital variations of logo with slight compositional changes and use of fonts/color palates.

APPLICATIONS step 1: Bring in 10 ideas from good design sources like Communication Arts, Print, CMYK, Graphis, etc showing extremely innovative ways of laying out stationary. Have five sketches (of 5 completely different ideas) of how your letterhead would look for your logo as well.

APPLICATION step 2: Have three revised (we are skipping rough sketches, do on your own) of letterheads focusing on snazzy graphics to add to your applications.

How do visuals relate to the purpose or identity of the company?
How do colors relate to the purpose or identity of the company?
How are information pieces unified?
What is Hierarchy of information?
How are information pieces organized (aligned)?

Use this site for some good inspiration: <https://www.creative.com/inspiration/83-crazy-beautiful-letterhead-logo-designs/Links> to an external site.

APPLICATION Step 3: Using the layout limitations provided, turn in your drafts of all work. I would make at least two compositional explorations of solutions. In other words, you should have two variations of every application in digital form. These will integrate your ONE final logo.

FINAL STEP. Make PDF presentation of all work on a 3 page PDF presented to me. Make each page 8.5 x 11 (Landscape).

Page 1 will include your logo in one color & black and white.
Page 2 will include your stationary at about half size
Page 3 will include your applications

GRADING :

20% Deadline - (10% reduction for first two days late, full reduction after)

20% Directions (Were all size requirements, layout, content all followed?)

30% Style/Aesthetic (Use of creativity, this grade is subjective to the evaluator - Stylistic research and inspiration gathering will greatly help this grade)

30% Technical Process (How well was the software used to make a professional looking project?)

Feedback will be given in each area of the criteria rubric listed above.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

Submission of each stage of the project will be submitted through the discussion board for online critique rather than in class on the pin board. Also for online the final version will be submitted as a PDF and not need to be printed.

Assignment Type

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Objective:

To analyze and evaluate real-world examples of design projects that have successfully incorporated diversity and inclusivity, identifying key strategies, challenges, and outcomes. This will help students understand how diverse design practices can enhance engagement, communication, and representation.

Assignment Overview:

You will research, analyze, and present three case studies of design projects (can be branding, advertising, product design, or digital platforms) that focus on diversity and inclusivity. Your goal is to explore how these projects represent various aspects of diversity (cultural, racial, gender, disability, age, etc.), and to critically assess their effectiveness in achieving inclusivity.

Part 1: Case Study Selection

Choose Three Case Studies:

From the list below, select three design projects that specifically address issues of diversity. These can include:

Examples of case studies to consider (each case study reflects a different aspect of diversity (e.g., cultural, racial, gender, accessibility, age, or socioeconomic diversity)).:

Coca-Cola's "Share a Coke" Campaign (representation and personalization)

Apple's Accessibility Features (inclusive design for people with disabilities)

Google's Diverse Emoji Designs (gender and racial inclusivity in digital communication)

Nike's "Pro Hijab" Campaign (cultural inclusivity and sportswear design)

Heineken's "Worlds Apart" Campaign (bridging divides through diversity)

Part 2: Case Study Analysis

For each of the three selected case studies, write a detailed analysis (500-600 words per case study). Your analysis should cover the following:

Overview of the Project:

What was the project about?

Who was the target audience?

Diversity Focus:

How does the project incorporate diversity?

(Consider cultural, racial, gender, disability, socioeconomic, or age-related factors.)

What specific design elements were used to promote inclusivity? (e.g., visual imagery, language, accessibility features, user interface design, product design.)

Design Strategy:

What were the key design decisions made to represent diversity in this project?

How did these decisions aim to address the needs of a diverse audience?

Ethical Considerations:

Were there any ethical concerns addressed in the project?

How did the designers avoid tokenism or stereotypes? (e.g., representing diverse groups authentically.)

Impact and Effectiveness:

Did the project successfully achieve its goals?

How was the diversity incorporated received by its intended audience?

What were the results or outcomes (e.g., brand awareness, social impact, user feedback)?

Challenges and Lessons Learned:

What challenges did the designers face when incorporating diversity into the project?

What can designers learn from this case study for future inclusive design work?

Part 3: Reflection

After analyzing the three case studies, write a 1-2 page reflection on the following:

What common themes did you find in the case studies when it comes to diversity and inclusion in design? (For example: inclusive language, visual representation, accessibility features, or challenges in authentically representing diversity.)

How can you apply the lessons learned from these case studies to your own design work?
(Think about strategies you could adopt in your future design projects to ensure inclusivity.)

What are some potential challenges or pitfalls you might face when trying to create inclusive designs?
(Consider issues like cultural misinterpretation, accessibility limitations, or balancing aesthetics with representation.)

Deliverables:

Case Study Report (3 case studies, 500-600 words each)

Reflection Paper (1-2 pages)

Grading Criteria:

Depth of Analysis: Insightfulness in evaluating how diversity is represented in each case study (30%)

Relevance and Quality of Case Studies: Selection of diverse and relevant case studies (20%)

Ethical Considerations: Ability to identify and address ethical concerns (20%)

Reflection and Application: Thoughtfulness in reflecting on lessons learned and how to apply them in future design work (20%)

Clarity and Structure: Well-organized, clear, and professional writing (10%)



Resources for Case Study Research:

Design and Marketing Websites: (e.g., AIGA, Behance, Campaign, Ad Age, or Creative Review)

Books on Inclusive Design: "Designing for Diversity" by Kat Holmes, "Inclusive Design for a Digital World" by Regine M. Gilbert

Feedback will be given in each criteria area in the Course Management System (CMS).

How assignment will be adapted in online format

Assignment in both cases would be submitted to the CMS where both feedback and grading will take place.

Assignment Type

Reading

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Reach Chapter one from the course book...

This chapter will describe the Stages of Thinking and The design process; Stage one - Define; Stage two - Research; Stage three - Ideate; Stage four - Prototype; Stage five - Select; Stage six - Implement; Stage seven - Learn;

It will also include a case study industry view from NB Studio.

After you have read the chapter, take the survey and quiz on the next page.

There will be 14 questions, two from each of the stages for thinking to show you understand what they are.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

The reading will be from the required book and the quiz will also be in the CMS.

Course Materials

Textbooks

Victionary, Dynamic Branding: Responsive and Adaptive Graphics for Brands of Today (2024) ISBN 9887566632

Design Thinking for Visual Communication (2020) by Galvin Ambrose

Class Size Information

Class Size

30

Class Size Category

F - Individualized, skills#based instruction/field practice 30

Diversity and Inclusion

Explain how diversity and inclusion(e.g., gender, culture/race, sexuality, etc.) is infused into the course.

Design as a practice has been led by influencers from very diverse backgrounds and cultures. This course emphasizes modern design solutions that are published in international journals. Students will be encouraged to research and incorporate their own cultural heritage in their proposed designs as well as work with other students doing the same from other cultural backgrounds.

Describe how assignments, instruction, evaluation, course content, and interactions are contextualized for diverse learners promoting an equitable course.

Assignments, Instruction and Content will all be delivered using Universal Design as the main concept. This will entail providing each student with multiple platforms and paths to the information needed to reach the Learning Objectives. This course will use the CMS, printed material, direct instruction, and supplemental instruction to ensure all strategies for learning are addressed. Evaluations will use explicit rubrics which are distributed at the time the work is assigned and where applicable, alternate forms of evaluations such as oral presentation, written presentation and conference will be applied.

Interactions**Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-student interaction.**

Student to Student contact will be incorporated in each class session as this course uses a great deal of group work through open critiques to plan design projects. This will include peer discussion and presentation as well as peer demonstrations in which students teach their unique skill sets and idea development to each other. Some of the following activities are examples:

Brainstorming Sessions: Students engage in creative brainstorming activities to generate a wide range of ideas. Techniques like "Crazy 8s," mind mapping, and role-playing may be used.

Peer Review: Students regularly present their ideas, prototypes, and findings to the class for critique. This provides valuable feedback and introduces students to different perspectives.

In the online format students can interact with each other in the discussion board, as assigned peer reviews attached to assignments, or an organized synchronous video conference.

Explain how the course will incorporate instructor-to-student interaction.

The instructor will interact with the students through lectures and presentations to describe theory by powerpoint presentations.

The instructor will also constantly provide feedback in the workshop which provides direction on student made projects to improve project developments. Mostly, this will be one on one either in front of the students' lab space, or in feedback during project presentations.

Lectures in online formats will be recorded video of the instructor or found videos that are relevant and of better quality than what the instructor could create.

Feedback in online formats will happen in the discussion board or in video conferencing software.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-content interaction.

Student to Content interactions will occur daily in this course as all projects are problem-based learning. The students will be provided explicit instructions and content to incorporate into all projects and assignments, but each solution is unique based on the students' creativity. The students will use an iterative process to constantly evolve their work and are continuously evaluated on their appropriate connection to the design process. Here are some examples:

Readings and Case Studies: Instructors may assign design books, articles, or case studies that showcase effective design solutions, famous campaigns, or notable works by iconic designers.

Guest Lectures and Industry Insights: Occasionally, guest speakers from the design industry share insights, career advice, or trends, giving students exposure to real-world design practices.

For online courses, case studies can be integrated into the CMS. For Guest Lectures, they can be recordings of Ted Talks and other types of lectures from professionals.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-self interaction (metacognitive).

Student to Self interactions are natural in the realm of practice-based learning. Every assignment will generate new skills and understanding that may enable students to return to past projects and apply improvements based on newly learned knowledge or skills. Each project and assignment are from other courses, so they are in constant states of revision and improvement. At the end of the course, students will be asked to reflect on how their own design process has evolved, identify weaknesses, and what new techniques they have imbedded into their design-thinking. Here are some examples:

Concept Development: Classes emphasize ideation and brainstorming techniques to help students develop strong concepts before execution.

Design Process: Students practice the complete design process, from initial sketches and concepts through revisions, client feedback, and final production.

Reflection: At various stages, students reflect on their own design process, considering what went well, what could be improved, and how they approached solving the problem.

For online courses these exercises will be placed into the discussion board for feedback from other students and the instructor. Self reflections will be attached to the final project in the CMS.

Key: 239