

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

COMM 2305 Viz COMM

ST. EDWARD'S UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

Section 01 & 02 • TR • Trustee Hall 118 • Spring 2014

Instructor: Dr. Shannan H. Butler

Email: shannanb@stedwards.edu

Office: 310 Premont Hall

Office Phone: 512-492-3113

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 1:00 – 3:00
& by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS

Lester, Paul Martin. (2013) *Visual Communication: Images with Messages*
(Sixth Edition). Wadsworth Press.

Samara, Timothy. (2007) *Design Elements: A Graphic Style Manual*.
Rockport Publishers.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

As our society continues to become an increasingly visual one, it is imperative that we begin to investigate how visual imagery affects us.

This course explores major theoretical and practical approaches to the creation and analysis of visual images.

Students will develop their visual literacy skills by learning to evaluate and construct visual arguments, with an emphasis on the ethical and social concerns of image construction.

Students will learn to design professional-looking images created with the latest image editing and graphic layout software.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Attendance at each class is required. Each time you are absent from class counts as one absence. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late to class, you will be marked absent for that day. After your second absence, your final grade will be reduced by three (3) percentage points for each additional absence. Accruing more than six (6) unexcused absences (including the two (2) free absences you receive) will result in Withdrawal or Failure of the class.

After the second week of class, it is your responsibility to sign the roll sheet each class period. Be sure to do so, as this is the official record of your attendance in class.

If you have a valid and unavoidable reason for missing class, you may submit a completed *Excused Absence Request* along with a two page (at least 500 words) chapter summary / discussion for the material you missed. The request form is available on Blackboard. A separate request form and additional chapter summary / discussion must be submitted for each absence. You will also need to provide me with proper documentation for your absence (such as a doctor's note, a hospitalization record, a university excuse, or an athletic excuse). For your request to be considered, all documentation must to be turned in to me no more than two-weeks from your return to class or the final class day of the semester, whichever comes first. After review of your request I will determine whether the excuse will be granted.

If you are involved in athletics or another school-sanctioned activity that requires you to miss this class, please give me appropriate supporting material signed by the sponsor. Please underline or highlight the specific dates that involve this class. If changes occur throughout the semester after you have given me a schedule, please keep me updated.

I reserve the right to "WA" a student for excessive absences. Please note that this does not mean that I will automatically "WA" you if you risk failing the class. It is your responsibility to initiate drop procedures if you are in danger of failing this class.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty includes cheating on exams as well as plagiarizing (presenting another's work as your own). Cheating comes in all different shades—ranging from blatant copying off another's exam/bringing a 'cheat sheet' to class to more subtle forms of 'borrowing' a few ideas and not citing your sources—all of which will be treated with the same level of seriousness in this class. The St. Edward's University Undergraduate Bulletin and the Student Handbook state that a student who is dishonest in any work may receive the maximum penalty of a mark of F for that course. Withdrawal from a course is not allowed when an F in the course for academic dishonesty has been imposed. Students caught committing academic dishonesty in this course will be subject to the full range of penalties as described in the Undergraduate Bulletin and in the Student Handbook.

Email

I check email once per day, usually in the afternoon, and I will get back with you as soon as possible. Please note that I do not return email over the weekend.

Courtesy

Cell phones: As a courtesy to your teacher and to your classmates, please make sure at the beginning of each class period that your cell phones are silenced. Any texting during class will result in you being counted absent for the day.

Laptops: You may use a laptop to take notes in class. However, in-class laptop usage is restricted to taking notes about this particular class or working on projects for the class. Writing papers for other classes, surfing the Internet, checking email, visiting Facebook, or other such distractions are strictly prohibited. Using your laptop for anything other than taking notes, or Visual Communication projects can be distracting for your classmates and detrimental to your grade. Improper usage of your laptop will result in you being counted as absent for that day and asked not to use your laptop during future class sessions.

Tardiness: If you are late to class on a presentation day, and a speaker has already begun his/her presentation, please wait until the speaker is finished before entering the room.

Content: Some course content may contain nudity, violence, or other images that some may find disturbing. Our intent is to use the images to question our sense of ethics, avant-garde design and appropriateness within the mass media. Please approach them in an adult manner.

Special Accommodations

If you have a medical, psychiatric or learning disability and require accommodations in this class, please let me know early in the semester or as soon as you are eligible. You will first need to provide documentation of your disability to the Student Disability Services Office located in Moody Hall 155 in Academic Planning and Support Services.

ASSIGNMENTS

You will soon receive several letters from the Caravaggio Group, an agency out of Puxatony, Pennsylvania. They are a demanding firm and will require your finest skills in the production of their commissions. You do not wish to lose their business, therefore your projects should be submitted on time--I understand they do not look favorably upon late work. Caravaggio is a stickler for original and creative work and they demand adherence to proper rules of composition, layout and design. Their director is known to have fired several designers whose artwork even remotely resembled clip art, so be sure to stay away from the clip art for these projects. They also will accept no work with grammatical or spelling mistakes so proof your projects well. Lorem Ipsum may be used to Greek in certain text blocks.

Unless otherwise stated, when you have completed each project you should submit the proper file in the requested format into the appropriate Assignment on Blackboard. Be sure to label the files:

“Project#-YourFirstNameYourLastName.” Such as “Project I -ShannanButler.psd”

Files must be submitted to Blackboard by midnight before the class period when they due. Once submitted, the Caravaggio Group will give you feedback from there. Good luck!

Exams will be a mixture of multiple-choice, matching, and essay questions.

ASSIGNMENTS & SCORING

Letter Grade Equivalent

A+ = 100	A = 95	A- = 92
B+ = 88	B = 85	B- = 82
C+ = 78	C = 75	C- = 72
D+ = 68	D = 65	D- = 62
F = 50		

Course Grading Scale

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	Below 60

My hope is that you will focus on learning rather than grades in this class. Although a good GPA is admirable, it is by no means the focus of education. The Job Outlook Survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) ranked GPA as number 17 of the top 20 qualities employers find important in a candidate. Interestingly, the most important quality to potential employers is communications skills!

There is no such thing as an “A Student,” and it is not my responsibility to maintain your 4.0 GPA, or to make sure you achieve a certain GPA for a scholarship or organization—those responsibilities are yours. That said, if you are not doing as well as you would like in class, please don’t hesitate to come talk to me so that we can discuss how you might improve your performance on the remaining assignments. I am happy to discuss study tips, explain assignments and grading criteria, or simply help you understand key course concepts. My goal is to be fair to everyone in the class, which means I will hold everyone to the same standards.

Assignment	Weight	Record Your Grade	Multiply by	Assignment Total
Project #1 - Logo Design	10%		× 1.0	
Project #2 - Photo Restoration	10%		× 1.0	
Project #3 - Newsletter Layout	15%		× 1.5	
Project #4 - Logo Creation	15%		× 1.5	
Project #5 - CD Cover Artwork	15%		× 1.5	
Midterm Exam	15%		× 1.5	
Final Exam	15%		× 1.5	
Participation	5%		× 0.5	
			Total Points	
			Divide by 1000	

Keeping track of your grade? You can get a good idea what your course grade is by using the chart provided above. Just fill in the grades as you receive them. Multiply each grade by the number listed in the “Multiply by” column and record the total. Numeric equivalents for letter grades are listed above under “Grading Scale.” Total up all of your multiplied assignments and divide by 1000, this will give you your course grade. You can use this chart anytime during the semester to find your current grade by dividing by the total points possible at that time instead of 1000. Please note that the matrix does not take into account absences so that is something you should also keep track of below.

Absences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Subtract	0	0	-3	-6	-9	-12	F
Record							

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One

Readings

M 1/13 Into the Visual

W 1/15 "Let there be Light"
[Self Portrait Due]

VC 1

Week Two

M 1/20 *Martin Luther King Day – Class will not meet*

W 1/22 The Physiology & Sociology of Sight

VC 2

Week Three


M 1/27 Perceptual Theories of Visual Communication

VC 3

W 1/29 Photography & Images Creation

VC 11 & DE 4

Week Four

M 2/03 Photoshop Lab 
[Project #1-Logo Design Due]

W 2/05 Photoshop Lab 

Week Five

M 2/10 Graphic Design

DE Preface & Intro

W 2/12 Space & Form

VC 8 & DE 1

Week Six

M 2/17 Shape & Allusion

DE 2

W 2/19 Layout & Design or "Everything in its Right Place"

DE 2 & 5


Week Seven

M 2/24 Art / Production

W 2/26 Photoshop Lab 

Week Eight

M 3/03 *Midterm Exam*

W 3/05 InDesign Lab 
[Project #2- Photo Restoration Due]

Week Nine

M 3/10 *Spring Break – Class will not meet*

W 3/12 *Spring Break – Class will not meet*

Week Ten

M 3/17 InDesign Lab 


W 3/19 InDesign Lab 

Week Eleven

M 3/24 Typography VC 7 & DE 3

W 3/26 Info Graphics VC 9

Week Twelve

M 3/31 Illustrator Lab 
[Project #3- Newsletter Layout Due]

W 4/02 Illustrator Lab 


Week Thirteen

M 4/07 Consuming the Body Image VC 6

W 4/09 Images & Ethics VC 4 & 5

Week Fourteen

M 4/14 Illustrator Lab  (Open)

W 4/16 Open Lab 
[Project#4- Logo Creation Due]

Week Fifteen

M 4/21 *Easter Break – Class will not meet*

W 4/23 *Final Exam*

Week Sixteen

M 4/28 Open Lab 

W 4/30 CD Cover Art Discussion
[Project #5-CD Cover Artwork Due]

 = Lab Days | VC = Visual Communication | DE = Design Elements



The Caravaggio Group

#6 Moreweeks Blvd.

Puxatony, PA 16810

Design. Simplicity. Creativity.

Viz Comm Group
3001 S. Congress Ave.
Austin, TX 78704

RE: Project #1
Logo Design

DUE: February 3, 2014

Dear Design Team:

The Caravaggio Group would like to see if you have the creative skills we are looking for. We would like you to create several different versions of a logo for a fictitious company. On a clean white sheet of paper using colored pencils or markers, please offer us at least 7 different logos to choose from—all for the same company. The company you create can be in any industry. The design of the logo should make it clear what kind of work the company is engaged in. The logos should be professionally rendered and neatly presented on one sheet. Be sure to put your name on the back of your work along with a brief description of what the company's full name is and what it does. Please hand this project in to your instructor.

Sincerely,

Phillip G. Shadow

Phillip G. Shadow
Vice President of Accounts



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3001 S. Congress Ave.
Austin, TX 78704

RE: Project #2
Photo Restoration

DUE: March 5, 2014

Dear Design Team:

The Caravaggio Group has managed to get a commission from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Ken Burn's new film about the Spanish missions in San Antonio will be marketed with a companion keepsake book. As you can imagine, many of the photographs which will be used are in rather poor condition. Caravaggio has been commissioned to restore the photographs before publication. To show us that you have the skills necessary for this tedious work, we would like to see a sample of what you can do.

For this project, you will scan an old family photograph that has obvious damage such as scratches, tears, discoloration, dust, etc. Scan the image in at 300-600 dpi and utilize Photoshop to restore the image by eliminating obvious noise such as dust particles, repairing tears and scratches, and correcting any discoloration. Be sure to pay attention to detail in this project as only perfection will be accepted. Submit this project as a Photoshop file with both the before and after images side by side on a single page.

Sincerely,

Phillip G. Shadow

Phillip G. Shadow
Vice President of Accounts



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RE: Project #3
Cacophony Newsletter

DUE: March 31, 2014

Dear Design Team:

Cacophony Studios owns several smaller video production units and a few independent film production houses across the United States. Cacophony, based in Roundrock, Texas, would like to boost employee morale and develop a stronger interconnectedness between the various production houses they run. The PR executive has decided to develop a newsletter that would be sent to all employees.

Please provide us with a cover and two-page sample spread for the newsletter created using InDesign. The PR branch of Cacophony has a tight budget, however, and has requested that the newsletter be a two-color job. So keep your pallet to one primary color and one accent color. Headlines and section titles should be written out but body text may be Greeked. Submit this project as an InDesign project.

Sincerely,

Phillip G. Shadow

Phillip G. Shadow
Vice President of Accounts



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Puxatony, PA 16810

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Austin, TX 78704

RE: Project #4
Logo Creation

DUE: April 16, 2014

Dear Design Team:

Now that you have developed skills using Adobe Illustrator, Caravaggio would like you to develop one of your original logos into a fully realized publication ready logo. So, take one of your original logos from Project #1 and recreate it as a professionally designed piece, paying attention to company identity, font choice, color choice, and how it might interact with other elements within corporate design.

Create both a full color version of the logo and a version using only black and white. The logos must be created in Illustrator. The black and white logo should be submitted as an Illustrator document and the color version should be exported and submitted as a transparent PNG file.

Sincerely,

Phillip G. Shadow

Phillip G. Shadow
Vice President of Accounts



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Puxatony, PA 16810

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RE: Project #5
Scheherazade Knights CD Cover Art

DUE: April 30, 2014

Dear Design Team:

We are very lucky to have received this commission from Interscope Records. They have several firms competing for the cover art for the new Austin based band Scheherazade Knights' much-anticipated debut CD. *Vibe* has described the band as "an energetic synthesis of late eighties new wave textures, hip-hop beats, and speed metal riffs." *Rolling Stone* says of Jonathan Rorschach, the band's lead singer, "He possesses the soulful fire of a modern day prophet of love." Their fusion of styles and reliance upon Middle-Eastern chord structures defies easy classification. The studio band has created much buzz in the industry by refusing to appear in public. They wish to remain somewhat mysterious therefore there will be no depiction of them on the album artwork. As a matter of fact, even their signing agent has never seen them.

Their album is currently untitled so you will need to develop a working title for the CD artwork. Please design an eye catching CD cover that catches the spirit of the band's mystery and sound. You will design the complete case for this project. Be creative with this one but also aware of current trends in cover art. You must to use Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign for this project. The project itself should be submitted as an InDesign file. This should be production ready artwork and include a 1/4" bleed on all sides. We're counting on you to provide further inroads to again working with such a powerful multimedia company.

You will give a 3-minute presentation to the class discussing the reasoning behind your design choices and how the CD cover may work for it's intended target audience. Be sure to cover all aspects of design including layout, color choice, images, and fonts.

Sincerely,

Phillip G. Shadow
Vice President of Accounts