

# Introduction to Graphic Design

## Course Description

The basic skills of visual layout and design will be developed in this class: concept, composition, legibility, language and typography. The projects will develop visual literacy and skills in text, drawing and image production using thumbnail sketch exploration and the Macintosh computer as the primary design tools. The type/image synthesis is examined and comprehended through the visual projects and class critiques.

The class will focus on the computer programs of Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop and QuarkXpress.

## Class Purpose

This class will introduce you to the principles of graphic design; the concepts and skills which you will learn and practice include:

- the ability to create strong compositional designs through the use of format, line, shape, contrast, negative/positive space, rhythm, direction, balance and repetition
- the ability to solve visual problems by expressing your ideas through the creative use of images and text
- the ability to recognize and produce professional quality design and projects
- the ability to explore concepts through thumbnail sketches
- the sharing of ideas and the principles of design through class critiques
- an understanding of the macintosh computer and the design lab
- an enhanced knowledge of the computer design programs Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop and QuarkXpress

## Class Format

This class meets every Tuesday and Thursday; please be on time. If you are more than 15 minutes late, you are counted as absent. If you are late more than two times, your grade is lowered one-half a letter, i.e., C becomes C-. Come to class prepared to work and have work ready as specified in the previous class.

The classes will consist of assignment conceptualization, ideation, execution and critique. They will focus on the practical application of design theory, concepts and terminology presented in the project introductions. This is a studio class, so class time will mainly consist of work on exercises and projects. Specifically, preliminary class exercises, which involve idea generation, will be seminal to each major project. Each project will be subject to individual and group class critique. Note that the purpose of the critique is to improve the end product, it is not a critique of the individual.

Throughout this session, emphasis will be placed on process (play, discovery and research) and on the conclusion. Some written work, such as self evaluation and a visual engagement paper, will be required. The projects are designed to be completed during the allotted time frame. Everyone is expected to work in the classroom during class time. Come to class every day with any materials needed and be prepared to work in class. You will be expected to work outside of class on assignments and keep abreast of due dates.

Class participation will be emphasized. It is expected that all students will actively participate in critiques in order that others may benefit from the student's comments and you all will gain necessary presentation skills. All critique comments are expected to be constructive and honest; note that critiques are not a reflection of the artist but of the work. The exception to this may be when it is evident the individual has not made the necessary effort to solve the problem.

## Grading Policy

Grading is used to pinpoint clearly and accurately the strengths and weaknesses of the student's performance. Project grades will be based on consideration of process, creativity, problem-solving, professionalism and presentation. The final semester grade will be assigned by the averaging of grades for the studio projects, class/critique participation and growth and then making necessary deductions for tardies and attendance. Lack of participation, preparation and/or minimal process work will have a negative impact on your final grade. Grading and value for all projects will be criteria based.

## Absences

Absences affect your work, so they affect your grade. If you are going to miss class, you must contact me prior to the class you will miss. **E-mail me at [skott333@aol.com](mailto:skott333@aol.com) or call Jan at x1680.**

Excused absences require you to make up the work within one week of your absence. An excused absence is: sickness, with a note from the health center; a verifiable death in the family; extenuating circumstances (a huge snowfall or a personal issue which you have previously discussed with me) or with a doctor's note on his/her stationery with a telephone number. The doctor's note must be presented at the next class.

If you are absent, you are responsible for contacting a class member in order to get any information or assignments that are given. If there are handouts that you did not receive, advise me in writing or photocopy them from a classmate. I will not have any class time to repeat missed lectures or assignments. You will be considered late if you arrive at class after roll has been taken. If you are late, it is your responsibility during that class period to make sure that I have you added to the roll.

If you don't make up the work in a timely way, your project grade is lowered.

Unexcused absences seriously affect your grade. One unexcused absence is allowed.

**Two unexcused absences lower your project one full letter grade.** I will help you catch up as long as you have made the effort to get and work with the material.

If you need to get in touch with me, I can be reached via e-mail at **[skott333@aol.com](mailto:skott333@aol.com)**.

## Project Submission

- All projects are due at the start or end of class (as will be specified on a per project basis) on the due date and are to be presented professionally...neat, clean and worthy of client scrutiny.
- Any project not turned in on the due date will receive a lower grade.
- Absences from class do not excuse you from a deadline; deadlines must be met!
- Get your work to me somehow.
- You can rework your project and turn it in for a better grade.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the copying of existing artwork or design. Working from photographs is allowed and sometimes necessary for the production of illustrations and layouts, however an attempt should be made to adapt and alter the image so as not to merely duplicate someone else's artwork in another medium or form. Do not take the ideas someone else has worked hard to create.

## Required Text

- Illustrator CS for Windows and Macintosh  
by Weinmann and Lourekas
- QuarkXpress 6 for Windows and Macintosh: Visual Quick Start Guide  
by Elaine Weinmann and Peter Lourekas

## Suggested Reading

- Photoshop CS for Windows and Macintosh  
by Elaine Weinmann and Peter Lourekas
- All design periodicals in the Lab, Barnes+Noble, Borders, etc.
- Any graphic design and publication books you can get your hands on!!! Look constantly!!!

## Required Materials

- X-acto knife with #11 blades
- Tracing paper pad
- A binder/notebook of some sort to hold thumbnail sketches, handouts and project sheets
- A flash drive—available through Jan in the Art Department.

## **Grading Criteria**

### **To receive the grade of F:**

- The student failed to meet even the basic assignment criteria
- Total disregard was shown for the determined deadline
- Class was missed repeatedly with no excused absences

### **To receive the grade of D:**

- The student handed in mediocre, at best, assignments
- Projects were consistently turned in late
- Class attendance was sporadic with little participation

### **To receive the grade of C:**

- The student did what was expected for assignment completion, nothing more
- Projects were turned in on time
- Little imagination or creativity was displayed
- A lack of personal participation and growth was shown

### **To receive the grade of B:**

- The student showed initiative in visual exploration
- Projects were turned in on time and well executed
- Creativity was above average
- Project research reflected curiosity and ingenuity
- A knowledge of the material was displayed

### **To receive the grade of A:**

- The student went above and beyond assignment expectations
- Projects were turned in on time, maybe including multiple solutions
- Creativity and exploration were well above normal
- Projects were well executed and presented
- The solutions reflected a growth of knowledge and intelligence