

ITP 211: Power-Tools for Visual Communication

Course	Power-Tools for Visual Communication <i>http://blackboard.usc.edu</i> <i>2 Units</i>
Lecture/Lab	Monday from 2 PM till 5 PM in OHE-540
Instructor	Larry Jordan <i>larry@larryjordan.com</i> <i>(818) 519-2183</i>
Teaching Asst.	(TBA)
Office Hours	1 PM - 2 PM Biegler Hall - B-5
Open Labs	OHE-540 and OHE-542 <i>(Times to be announced after the semester starts)</i>
Summary	<p>In a world where videos move millions and a picture is more powerful - and popular - than the written word, a key survival skill in college and into future careers is how well you communicate visually.</p> <p>The leaders of tomorrow need to know the power tools of visual communication today and how to use them to influence and persuade others.</p> <p>From creating websites to posting videos on YouTube, your ability to effectively communicate your ideas depends, in large part, on your ability to master visual communication.</p> <p>In this course, you will learn how to use software in three key areas of visual communication to create and communicate your ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Still images• Motion Graphics• Audio and Video Editing
Objective	The purpose of this course is to learn the creative, technical and communication skills necessary to produce compelling images and video.

This is not a theory class. This is a “get your hands dirty” class. It is not enough to “create.” We need to create, communicate, suggest, persuade and convince - using still and moving images – all while meeting deadlines. These skills are necessary during college and *critical* later in business.

This course explores the use of professional-grade software to create 2D images, 2D graphics, motion graphics, visual effects and video. As well, students will learn how to properly compress video for high-quality web distribution and mix audio for compelling sound tracks.

During the course, students will create posters, motion graphics, and video projects centered around a theme of the student’s own choosing.

Content Goals

1. To discover how to use the tools of visual communication to create persuasive presentations.
2. To learn the fundamentals of story-telling, structure and workflow and the importance of the call to action.
3. To actually see, not just look at, what you are creating. To create work according to directions, not just what you think the directions should be.
4. To learn how these techniques apply to other classes and careers.

Grading

Grading is based on class participation, lab completion, assignments and quizzes.

Here’s the breakdown of assignments and points:

	<i>Qty</i>	<i>Pts Each</i>	<i>Total Pts</i>	<i>% of Grade</i>
Labs	11	25	270	45%
Mid-Term Exam	1	50	50	8%
Assignments	3	60	180	30%
Final Exam	1	50	50	8%
Final Presentation	1	50	50	8%
<i>Total points</i>			<i>600</i>	<i>100%</i>

Final course marks are determined by standard formulas:

A	93-100%
A-	90-92%

B+	88-89%
B	82-87%
B-	80-81%
C+	78-79%
C	72-77%
C-	70-71%
D+	68-69%
D	62-67%
D-	60-61%
F	59% or below

Secrets to Success

1. Read the instructions *before* doing the work!
2. Do the labs at the end of class, don't wait to do them later.
3. Practice seeing what's *actually* on the screen, not what you *expect* to see!

Class Policies

Students are expected to:

- Attend and participate in class discussions and critiques; asking questions is encouraged!
- Complete weekly labs and assignments on time
- Complete all quizzes
- Complete assignments and projects on time

Assignments

It is the responsibility of the student to make sure projects and assignments are turned in on time. Make sure you follow the procedures outlined in each assignment or project. All assignments will be uploaded by students through Blackboard. Some assignments will be turned in on paper.

Late projects automatically deduct 10% of the total possible points before grading starts. A project is considered late if it is turned in after the deadline, unless prior arrangements have been made.

IMPORTANT!

All labs and assignments must be submitted via Blackboard in order to be graded. Emailed labs, assignments and projects will not count.

ITP Labs

Before logging onto an ITP computer, students must ensure that they have emailed or saved projects created during the class or lab session. Any work not saved will be erased after restarting the computer. ITP is not responsible for any work lost.

ITP offers Open Lab use for all students enrolled in ITP classes. These open labs are held beginning the second week of classes

through the last week of classes. Please contact your instructor for specific times and days for the current semester.

Academic Integrity

The use of unauthorized material, communication with fellow students during an examination, attempting to benefit from the work of another student, and similar behavior that defeats the intent of an examination or other class work is unacceptable to the University. It is often difficult to distinguish between a culpable act and inadvertent behavior resulting from the nervous tension accompanying examinations. When the professor determines that a violation has occurred, appropriate action, as determined by the instructor, will be taken.

Although working together is encouraged, all work claimed as yours must, in fact, be your own effort. Students who plagiarize the work of other students will receive zero points and possibly be referred to Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards (SJACS).

All students should read, understand, and abide by the University Student Conduct Code available at:

<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/nonacademicreview.html>.

Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU301 and is open 8:30 AM – 5 PM, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Required Texts

While there are no required texts, because the span of software we are covering is too broad, the suggested reading below can be an aid in understanding the material covered in this course.

Suggested Readings

Relevant Lynda.com online training

In The Blink of an Eye (2 Revised Edition)

Walter Murch
Silman-James - 2001

Final Cut Pro X: Making the Transition

Larry Jordan
Peachpit Press – 2011

Students will be required to bring a Flash memory drive or a portable hard drive to **all classes**. The ITP department will provide all students with a USB flash drive on the second day of class that will contain media used throughout the course.

Labs

Weekly labs focus on understanding technology and reinforce the material covered in that week's class. All labs are due one week after they are assigned.

However, it is *strongly* urged that students complete each week's lab in the hour of lab time at the end of each class, so that they can practice the material while the lesson is still fresh.

All labs are critiqued by either the professor or grading assistant, depending upon class size, so that students can learn from their mistakes and improve during the course of the class.

Assignments

Unlike labs, assignments focus on creativity. There are three assignments during the course:

- Poster with an image
- Motion Graphics video
- Video commercial

Students select the topic and the content. All assignments are personally critiqued by the professor to allow students to improve their work during the course of the semester.

Exams

There are two exams during the course: a mid-term and final. Each exam contains 25 short-answer questions.

Visual Communication Power-Tools (2 units)

Note: The purpose of a lab is to reinforce subjects taught in that day's lecture. Labs are designed to be completed in class. Assignments are designed to be completed outside of class. (Details on all Assignments will be handed out the first day of class.)

COURSE OUTLINE

Lecture 1	Aug. 21	PLANNING FOR THIS COURSE - WORKFLOW Course introduction – what we are doing this semester Discussion of goals and theme for semester Workflow for digital projects and assets Media Basics: Digital Media Fundamentals. File formats for audio, video, images, text & animation <i>Non-graded quiz: "Help Me Get To Know You"</i> <i>Lab #1: Due at the start of Lecture 2</i> <i>Topic: Set goals for semester assignment</i>
Lecture 2	Aug. 28	ADOBE PHOTOSHOP - INTRODUCTION Intro to Graphic Production and Photoshop Basic tools, Selections, Layers, Effects Basic photo and image manipulation techniques Using the Shape tool <i>Lab #2: Due at the start of Lecture 3</i> <i>Topic: Composition basics</i>
Lecture 3	Sept. 4	ADOBE PHOTOSHOP - COMPOSITING AND TEXT Understanding the power of fonts to convey emotions Framing, balance, and composition techniques Combining layers to create complex images Working with text and shadows <i>Lab #3: Due at the start of Lecture 4</i> <i>Topic: First draft: Image for Assignment 1</i>
Lecture 4	Sept. 11	ADOBE PHOTOSHOP - MASKS and IMAGE REPAIR Digital Image Editing Image manipulation and clean-up Drawing on a path Masks – what they are and how to create them Advanced selections Using blend modes Using filters to create special effects <i>Lab #4: Due at the start of Lecture 5</i> <i>Topic: Masks and image repair</i>

Lecture 5	Sept. 18	<p>PLANNING FOR VIDEO PRODUCTION</p> <p>Video production – get ready for your commercial How and what to plan, how to get it all done, how to decide what is important and what should be left out. Balancing technology with story. Storyboarding The importance of emotion, reactions, and breathing Basics of camera angles, placement, and framing Basics of lighting Basics of production audio <i>Lab #5: Due at the end of class</i> <i>Topic: Storyboard a dramatic scene</i></p>
Lecture 6	Sept. 25	<p>APPLE COMPRESSOR</p> <p>Understanding video/audio compression Optimum settings for video compression Compressing video for the web and YouTube <i>Lab #6: Due at the start of Lecture 7</i> <i>Topic: Create a compressed video file</i> Assignment #1: Poster due</p>
Lecture 7	Oct. 2	<p>MID-TERM EXAM</p> <p>25 short-answer questions</p> <p>GUEST LECTURE: Norman Hollyn (USC School of Cinematic Arts) Techniques of Visual Story-telling <i>No lab this week</i></p>
Lecture 8	Oct. 9	<p>APPLE MOTION (Part 1)</p> <p>Motion graphics - harnessing the power of Motion Understanding behaviors and filters Animating backgrounds Animating text <i>Lab #7: Due at the start of Lecture 9</i> <i>Topic: Create a motion graphic</i></p>
Lecture 9	Oct. 16	<p>APPLE MOTION (Part 2)</p> <p>Creating movement with behaviors Animating a still image Applying effects Working with sound Drawing paths and random shapes <i>Lab #8: Due at the end of class</i> <i>Topic: Create a motion graphic with video & audio</i></p>

Lecture 10	Oct. 23	<p>APPLE MOTION (Part 3)</p> <p>Particle systems</p> <p>Replicator systems</p> <p>Blend modes</p> <p>Working with filters</p> <p>Compositing techniques</p> <p>Creating an effect for Final Cut Pro X</p> <p>Export and compression</p> <p><i>Lab #9: Due at the start of Lecture 11</i></p> <p><i>Topic: Animate stills, add with audio</i></p>
Lecture 11	Oct. 30	<p>APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - EDITING</p> <p>Introduction to editing digital video</p> <p>An 11-step workflow to focus your energy</p> <p>The importance of telling a “story”</p> <p>Creating a new project, importing media</p> <p>Reviewing clips, and editing a basic story.</p> <p><i>No Lab this week.</i></p> <p><i>Assignment 2: Motion Graphics project due</i></p>
Lecture 12	Nov. 6	<p>APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - TRIMMING AND AUDIO</p> <p>Trimming an edit to improve story-telling</p> <p>The story of “John and Martha”</p> <p>Adding transitions</p> <p>Working with audio</p> <p><i>Lab #10: Due at the start of Lecture 13</i></p> <p><i>Topic: Edit a dramatic scene</i></p>
Lecture 13	Nov. 13	<p>APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - EFFECTS AND EXPORT</p> <p>Audio, sample rates, and human hearing</p> <p>How to add, edit, and mix audio</p> <p>A survey of simple visual effects</p> <p>Integration of Motion projects into Final Cut</p> <p><i>Lab #11: Due at the start of Lecture 14</i></p> <p><i>Topic: Edit a short documentary</i></p>

Lecture 14	Nov. 20	<p>AUDIO MIXING IN ADOBE AUDITION</p> <p>Audio and sound design</p> <p>The fundamentals of hearing and digital audio</p> <p>Audio editing</p> <p>Audio effects and filters</p> <p>Audio mixing</p> <p><i>Lab #12: Due in class</i></p> <p><i>Topic: Audio mix a short documentary</i></p> <p><i>This Lab is NOT graded.</i></p> <p>Assignment 3: 30-second video commercial due</p>
Lecture 15	Nov. 27	Discussion on how to get a job.
FINAL EXAM	Dec. 11	<p>Final Exam</p> <p>25 short-answer questions</p> <p>IN-CLASS REVIEW OF ALL STUDENT PROJECTS</p> <p>Students present and discuss their projects to the class</p>