ITP 211: Power-Tools for Visual Communication

Course   **Power-Tools for Visual Communication**
                    http://blackboard.usc.edu

                    2 Units

Lecture/Lab   Monday 2:00 PM - 4:50 PM — OHE-542

Instructor   **Larry Jordan**
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Teaching Asst. *(TBA)*
                        Email:

Office Hours   **MONDAY**, from 12 PM to 2 PM
                        Location: TBA

Open Labs   OHE-540 and OHE-542
                    (Times to be posted after the semester starts)

Summary   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 commu-
                    nicate visually.

                    The leaders of tomorrow need to know the power tools of visual
                    communication today and how to use them to influence and persuade
                    others.

                    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.

                    In this course, you will learn how to use software in three key areas of
                    visual communication to create and communicate your ideas:

                    - 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 im-
                    ages.

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.

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:

	Qty	Pts Each	Total Pts	% of Grade
Labs	11	25	275	48%
Mid-Term Exam	1	50	50	8%
Assignments	3	50	150	26%
Final Exam	1	50	50	8%
Final Presentation	1	50	50	8%
Total points			*575*	*100%*

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

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

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

Visual Communication Power-Tools
ITP-211 (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   Jan. 8   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.
Non-graded quiz: "Help Me Get To Know You"
Lab #1: Due at the start of Lecture 2
        Topic: Set goals for semester assignment

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Martin Luther King Holiday
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Lecture 2   Jan. 22   ADOBE PHOTOSHOP - INTRODUCTION
Intro to Graphic Production and Photoshop
Basic tools, Selections, Layers, Effects
Basic photo and image manipulation techniques
Using the Shape tool
Lab #2: Due at the start of Lecture 3
        Topic: Composition basics

Lecture 3   Jan. 29   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
Lab #3: Due at the start of Lecture 4
        Topic: First draft: Image for Assignment 1

Lecture 4   Feb. 5   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
Lab #4: Due at the start of Lecture 5
        Topic: Masks and image repair

Lecture 5   Feb. 12   PLANNING FOR VIDEO PRODUCTION
Techniques of Visual Story-telling
     How the eye "sees
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
Lab #5: Due at the end of class
     Topic: Storyboard a dramatic scene

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President's Day
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Lecture 6   Feb. 26   **MID-TERM EXAM**
     25 short-answer questions

APPLE COMPRESSOR
Understanding video/audio compression
Optimum settings for video compression
Compressing video for the web and YouTube
Lab #6: Due at the start of Lecture 7
     Topic: Create a compressed video file
Assignment #1: Poster due

Lecture 7   Mar. 5   APPLE *MOTION (Part 1)*
Motion graphics - harnessing the power of Motion
Understanding behaviors and filters
Animating backgrounds
Animating text
Lab #7: Due at the start of Lecture 8
     Topic: Create a motion graphic

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Spring Break
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Lecture 8	Mar. 19	APPLE MOTION (Part 2) Creating movement with behaviors Animating a still image Applying effects Working with sound Drawing paths and random shapes *Lab #8: Due at the start of Lecture 9* *Topic: Create a motion graphic with video & audio*
Lecture 9	Mar. 26	APPLE MOTION (Part 3) Particle systems Replicator systems Blend modes Working with filters Compositing techniques Creating an effect for Final Cut Pro X Export and compression *Lab #9: Due at the start of Lecture 10* *Topic: Animate stills, video and audio*
Lecture 10	April 2	APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - EDIT, TRIM & EXPORT Introduction to editing digital video An 11-step workflow to focus your energy The importance of telling a "story" Creating a new project, importing media Reviewing clips, and editing a basic story. The story of "John and Martha" Trimming an edit to improve story-telling *Lab #10: Due at the start of Lecture 12* *Topic: Edit a dramatic scene* ***Assignment 2: Motion Graphics project due***
Lecture 11	April 9	[Lab time]
Lecture 12	April 16	APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - AUDIO & EFFECTS Adding transitions The fundamentals of hearing and digital audio Audio, sample rates, and human hearing How to add, edit, and mix audio A survey of simple visual effects *Lab #11: Due at the start of Lecture 13* *Topic: Edit a short documentary*

Lecture 13   April 23   HOW TO FIND AND GET A JOB
                            Larry's philosophy of how to market yourself , find a job,
                            land a job, and negotiate a decent salary.
                            Assignment 3: 30-second video commercial due

FINAL EXAM May 7   **Final Exam**
                                 25 short-answer questions

                            IN-CLASS REVIEW OF ALL STUDENT PROJECTS
                            Students present and discuss their projects to the class