ITP-211: Power-Tools for Visual Communication

Course
Power-Tools for Visual Communication

http://blackboard.usc.edu

2 Units

Lecture/Lab
Monday: 3:30 PM - 4:50 PM in OHE-542
Wednesday: 3:30 PM - 4:50 PM in OHE-542

Instructor
Larry Jordan
larry@larryjordan.com (818) 519-2183

Teaching Asst.
Annabelle Lau
lauannab@usc.edu

Office Hours
Monday and Wednesday, from 2 PM to 3:15 PM
Location: OHE-330C

Open Labs
OHE-540 and OHE-542
Fridays - times to be posted after 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 communicate 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 images 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

Not all of us can be artists, but all of us can improve our visual communication skills.
Objective

The purpose of this course is to learn the creative, technical and communication skills necessary to produce compelling messages, images and videos.

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 after graduation.

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 learn how to use professional tools of visual communication to create persuasive presentations and the importance of the call to action.

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.

Grading

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

Here’s the breakdown of assignments and points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Qty</th>
<th>Pts Each</th>
<th>Total Pts</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labs</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total points</td>
<td>650</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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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! (Proof-read and review your work.)

Class Policies
Students are expected to:
- Attend and participate in class discussions and labs; asking questions is encouraged!
- Complete weekly labs and assignments on time
- Complete all tests
- 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.

There is an automatic 10% deduction of the total possible points for any lab or assignment posted 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 or 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](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 readings below can be an aid in understanding the material covered in this course.

**Suggested Readings**

**Relevant training on Lynda.com**

**Relevant training on LarryJordan.com**

**In The Blink of an Eye (2 Revised Edition)**
Walter Murch
Silman-James - 2001
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. Students will be required to bring a Flash memory drive or a portable hard drive to all classes.

**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 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 the professor, 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. Exams consist of short-answer questions, completed in class.
The purpose of a lab is to reinforce subjects taught in that day's lecture. Labs are designed to be completed at the end of a class. Assignments are designed to be completed outside of class, with an emphasis on creativity. There are two lectures each week.

## COURSE OUTLINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture 1</td>
<td>Aug. 20</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION TO THIS COURSE</td>
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<td>Course introduction – what we are doing this semester</td>
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<td>Discuss goals and theme for semester</td>
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<td>Discuss syllabus and assignments</td>
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<td>Digital Media fundamentals and key terms</td>
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<td>Workflow for creative digital projects</td>
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<td>*Non-graded quiz: “Help Me Get To Know You”</td>
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<td>*Lab #1: Due at the start of Lecture 3</td>
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<td>*Topic: Set goals for semester projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture 2</td>
<td>Aug. 22</td>
<td>ADOBE PHOTOSHOP - INTRODUCTION</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Issues of copyright and altering image</td>
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<td>Introduction to Photoshop Interface</td>
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<td>File Management</td>
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<td>Basic photo and image manipulation techniques</td>
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<td>Adjust Levels and Color</td>
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<td><em>Thumb drives presented to students</em></td>
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<td><em>Prep for Lab #2</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture 3</td>
<td>Aug. 27</td>
<td>ADOBE PHOTOSHOP - DESIGN, COLOR, TEXT, SHAPES</td>
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<td>Basic design rules</td>
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<td>Framing, balance, and composition techniques</td>
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<td>The Color Wheel and gray-scale values</td>
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<td>Use the power of fonts to convey emotion</td>
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<td>Add and modify text and shadows</td>
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<td>Work with shapes, paths and curves</td>
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<td>*Lab #2: Due at the start of Lecture 4</td>
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<td><em>Topic: Images, text and shapes</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture 4</td>
<td>Aug. 29</td>
<td>ADOBE PHOTOSHOP - LAYERS, SELECTIONS &amp; MASKS</td>
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<td>Layers, selections and masks in compositing</td>
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<td>Understand layers</td>
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<td>Use selection tools to create selections</td>
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<td>Use selections to create masks</td>
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<td>*Lab #3: Due at the start of Lecture 5</td>
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<td><em>Topic: Layers, selections and masks</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Lecture 5  Sept. 5  ADOBE PHOTOSHOP - BLEND MODES AND FILTERS
Explain and illustrate blend modes
Apply filters to images and/or selections
Explore the Filter Gallery
Automate image processing with Actions
   Lab #4: Due at the start of Lecture 6
      Topic: Filters and blend modes

Lecture 6  Sept. 10  ADOBE PHOTOSHOP - IMAGE REPAIR & COOL TOOLS
Repair damaged images
Patch, content-aware fill and move
Puppet warp
Perspective warp
   Lab #5: Due at the start of Lecture 8
      Topic: Image repair

Lecture 7  Sept. 12  ADOBE PHOTOSHOP - REVIEW AND WORKSHOP
Review key Photoshop terms and concepts
   Work on any incomplete labs
   Work on Assignment #1

Lecture 8  Sept. 17  PRE-PRODUCTION AND AUDIENCE CONTROL
Define story and story-telling
How to plan
Balancing technology with story.
Storyboarding
Control where the eye looks
The Importance of the Call to Action
   Assignment #1: Poster due 9/17
   Lab #6: Due at the end of class
      Topic: Storyboard a dramatic scene

Lecture 9  Sept. 19  VIDEO PRODUCTION
The importance of emotion, reactions, and breathing
Basics of camera angles, placement, and framing
Discuss composition and framing
Basics of lighting
Basics of production audio
   No Lab
Lecture 10  Sept. 24  VIDEO COMPRESSION - APPLE COMPRESSOR
Fundamentals of video compression
Optimum settings for video compression
Compressing video for the web
Prep for Lab #7
Topic: Create a compressed video file

Lecture 11  Sept. 26  VIDEO COMPRESSION - ADOBE MEDIA ENCODER
Fundamentals of video compression
Optimum settings for video compression
Compressing video for the web
Lab #7: Due at the start of Lecture 12
Topic: Create a compressed video file

Lecture 12  Oct. 1  APPLE MOTION - Introduction to Motion Graphics
Key terms and definitions
Explore the Motion interface
Make objects move
Add, style and animate text
MID-TERM - 10/1 - Covering Lectures 1 - 11

Lecture 13  Oct. 3  APPLE MOTION - Deeper in Motion
The Inspector
Compositing - add and adjust filters
Drawing tools
Lab #8: Due at the start of Lecture 14
Topic: Create a simple motion graphic

Lecture 14  Oct. 8  APPLE MOTION - Media, Paths and Masks
Import audio and video media
Video Behaviors and Filters
Animate using keyframes
Create Paths and Masks

Lecture 15  Oct. 10  APPLE MOTION - Particles, Replicators and Parameters
Create and modify a particle system
Create and modify a replication system
Animate using Parameter Behaviors
Lab #9: Due at the start of Lecture 16
Topic: Create a promo using audio & video

Lecture 16  Oct. 15  APPLE MOTION - Explore 3D Space
Move and position elements in 3D space
Add and modify lights, cameras
Set design and moving cameras between sets
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture 17</td>
<td>Oct. 17</td>
<td>APPLE MOTION - Review</td>
<td>Particle systems, Replicator systems, Working with filters and blend modes, Compositing techniques, Creating an effect for Final Cut Pro X, Export and compression</td>
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<td><strong>Lab #10: Due at the start of Lecture 18</strong></td>
<td><em>Topic: Animate stills, video and audio</em></td>
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<td>Lecture 18</td>
<td>Oct. 22</td>
<td>APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>Introduction to video editing, A 12-step workflow to make you more efficient, Media management and organization, Media import and clip preview, Favorite, Keywords and viewing clips</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment 2: Motion Graphics project due 10/22</strong></td>
<td><em>Assignment 2: Motion Graphics project due 10/22</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture 19</td>
<td>Oct. 24</td>
<td>APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - EDIT and TRIM</td>
<td>Reviewing clips, Edit and trim a basic story</td>
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<td><strong>Lab #11: Due at the start of Lecture 20</strong></td>
<td><em>Topic: Edit a documentary scene</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture 20</td>
<td>Oct. 29</td>
<td>APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - AUDIO</td>
<td>Audio, sample rates, and human hearing, How to add, edit, and mix audio, Working with sound effects and music, Adding transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture 21</td>
<td>Oct. 31</td>
<td>APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - STORY-TELLING</td>
<td>Improve story-telling through trimming, The story of &quot;John and Martha&quot;, The importance of reaction shots, A closer look at lighting</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Lab #12: Due at the start of Lecture 22</strong></td>
<td><em>Topic: Edit a dramatic scene with audio</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture 22</td>
<td>Nov. 5</td>
<td>APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - EFFECTS</td>
<td>Text and Generator effects, Inspector effects, Effects Browser effects</td>
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<td><strong>Lab #13: Due at the start of Lecture 24</strong></td>
<td><em>Topic: Edit an effects scene</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Lecture 23 Nov. 7 APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - COLOR CORRECTION
Explain color in video
How to use video scopes
How to fix color problems
How to create dramatic color “looks”
No lab

Lecture 24 Nov. 12 ADOBE AUDITION CC: AUDIO EDITING
The role of audio and audio sweetening
Audition workflow and interface
Audio editing

Lecture 25 Nov. 14 ADOBE AUDITION CC: AUDIO MIXING
How to add, edit, and mix dialog, music & effects
Editing and mixing a short documentary
Lab #14: Audio mixing lab due by Lecture 26
Topic: Audio mix a documentary scene

Lecture 26 Nov. 19 OPEN LAB DAY
Work on anything you need to work on.

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THANKSGIVING BREAK
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Lecture 27 Nov. 26 Open Lab

Lecture 28 Nov. 28 HOW TO FIND AND GET A JOB
Larry’s philosophy of how to market yourself,
find a job, master the interview and land a good job.
Assignment 3: 30-second video commercial due 11/28

Nov. 30 Any unsubmitted class materials due by 5 p.m.

[TBA] FINAL EXAM - 2 - 4 PM
Covers Lectures 11 - 25
Short-answer questions

IN-CLASS SHARING OF ALL STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS
Students present and discuss their assignments in class
Presentations are not graded, but are critiqued.