# ITP-211: Power-Tools for Visual Communication

**Course**
Power-Tools for Visual Communication  
[http://blackboard.usc.edu](http://blackboard.usc.edu)

2 Units

**Lecture/Lab**
Monday: 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM in **OHE-542**  
Wednesday: 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM in **OHE-542**

**Instructor**
Larry Jordan  
[mailto:larry@larryjordan.com](mailto:larry@larryjordan.com)  
(818) 519-2183

**Teaching Asst.**
TBA

**Office Hours**
**Monday** and **Wednesday**, from 12:15 - 1:45 PM  
*Location: TBA*

**Open Labs**
Schedule provided at the end of Week 1

**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. You need to learn the tools, then how to use them effectively.

From creating images to posting videos on YouTube, your ability to powerfully 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 using images, video and audio.
This is not a theory class. This is a “get your hands dirty” class. It is not enough to “create.” We need to plan, create, refine, communicate, and convince - using still and moving images – all while meeting deadlines. These skills are necessary during college and critical after graduation as you move into 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 labs, posters, motion graphics, and video projects centered around a theme of the student’s own choosing. Experience shows that students will learn more from doing labs than any other part of the course.

**Content Goals**

1. To learn the fundamentals of visual story-telling, structure and workflow to control what the audience sees and feels.

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

3. To actually see, not just look at, what you are creating and then refine it. Additionally, to create compelling work on time as determined by the requirements of the task.

**Deadlines**

The goal of all assignments is to practice what we are learning in class. It does not benefit the student for work to be turned in late. All labs projects are due at the date and time specified in the syllabus. All material must be posted to Blackboard in order to be graded.

Projects that are more than 48 hours late may receive a 50% deduction in points.

A student can request up to two extensions during the semester, though granting the extension is up to the professor.

**IMPORTANT:** All work, including any extensions, is due at 5:00 PM on the last day of classes for the current semester.

**Grading**

Grading is based on class participation, lab completion, projects and tests. Here’s the breakdown of tasks 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>
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<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total points</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>650</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Final course marks are determined by standard formulas:

- A: 92.5 - 100%
- A-: 90 - 92.5%
- B+: 87.5 - 89.9%
- B: 82 - 87.5%
- B-: 80 - 81.9%
- C+: 77.5 - 79.9%
- C: 72 - 77.5%
- C-: 70 - 71.9%
- D+: 67.5 - 69.9%
- D: 62 - 67.5%
- D-: 60 - 61.9%
- F: 59.9% 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 labs and projects on time
- Complete all tests

**Assignments**

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

**IMPORTANT!**

All labs and projects **must** be submitted via Blackboard in order to be graded. Emailed labs 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.

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

Techniques of Visual Persuasion
Larry Jordan
Published by: New Riders
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 this flash drive or a portable hard drive to **all classes**.

**Labs**

Weekly labs focus on practicing technology and reinforcing the material covered in that week’s class. All labs are due one week after they are assigned. Due dates are listed in this syllabus.

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 over the course of the class.

**Projects**

Unlike labs, projects focus on creativity. There are three projects 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 over 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. More details will be provided during class.
Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu
Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421
studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.
Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

**USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710**
/studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

**Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101**
diversity.usc.edu
Information on events, programs and training, the Provost’s Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

**USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call**
dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

**USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call**
dps.usc.edu
Non-emergency assistance or information.
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. Projects are designed to be completed outside of class, with an emphasis on creativity. There are two lectures each week.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Lecture 1** Aug. 24  
INTRODUCTION TO THIS COURSE  
Course introduction – discuss goals for semester  
Discuss syllabus and assignments  
Digital Media fundamentals and key terms  
Workflow for creative digital projects  
*Non-graded quiz: “Help Me Get To Know You”*  
*Lab #1: Due at the start of Lecture 3*  
*Topic: Set goals for semester projects*

**Lecture 2** Aug. 26  
ADOBE PHOTOSHOP - INTRODUCTION  
Issues of copyright and altering image  
Learning the Photoshop Interface  
File Management  
Basic photo and image manipulation techniques  
Adjust Levels and Color  
*Thumb drives presented to students*  
*No lab*

**Lecture 3** Aug. 31  
ADOBE PHOTOSHOP - DESIGN, COLOR, TEXT, SHAPES  
Design rules of Visual Literacy  
Framing, balance, and composition techniques  
The Color Wheel and gray-scale values  
How to use the power of fonts to convey emotion  
Add and modify text and shadows  
Introduce the Shape Tool  
*Lab #2: Due at the start of Lecture 5*  
*Topic: Images, text and shapes*

**Lecture 4** Sept. 2  
ADOBE PHOTOSHOP - LAYERS, SELECTIONS & MASKS  
Understand layers  
Layers, selections and masks in compositing  
Use selection tools to create selections  
Use selections to create masks  
Explore paths and curves  
*Lab #3: Due at the start of Lecture 6*  
*Topic: Layers, selections and masks*
LABOR DAY - Sept. 07

Lecture 5 Sept. 9  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 7
    Topic: Filters and blend modes

Lecture 6 Sept. 14  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. 16  ADOBE PHOTOSHOP - REVIEW AND WORKSHOP
Review key Photoshop terms and concepts
  Work on any incomplete labs
  Work on Project #1

Lecture 8 Sept. 21  PRE-PRODUCTION AND AUDIENCE EYE CONTROL
Define story and story-telling
Balancing technology with story.
Control where the eye looks
How to plan a video - Storyboarding
  Project #1: Poster due
  Lab #6: Due at the end of class
    Topic: Storyboard a dramatic scene

Lecture 9 Sept. 23  VIDEO PRODUCTION
The importance of emotion, reactions, and breathing
Basics of camera angles, placement, and framing
Discuss composition and framing
Basics of lighting and production audio
  No Lab
Lecture 10  Sept. 28  VIDEO COMPRESSION - OVERVIEW
Fundamentals of video compression
Optimum settings for video compression
Compressing video for the web
No lab

Lecture 11  Sept. 30  VIDEO COMPRESSION - SOFTWARE
Video compression using Apple Compressor
Video compression using Adobe Media Encoder
Compressing video for the web
Lab #7: Due at the start of Lecture 12
Topic: Create a compressed video file

Lecture 12  Oct. 5  APPLE MOTION - Introduction to Motion Graphics
Key terms and definitions
Explore the Motion interface
Use Behaviors to make objects move
MID-TERM - 10/1 - Covering Lectures 1 - 11
No lab

Lecture 13  Oct. 7  APPLE MOTION - Deeper into Motion
The Inspector
Add, style and animate text
Use filters for effects
Drawing tools
Lab #8: Due at the start of Lecture 14
Topic: Create a simple motion graphic

Lecture 14  Oct. 12  APPLE MOTION - Media, Paths and Masks
Import audio and video media
Video Behaviors and Filters
Create Paths and Masks
Animate using keyframes
No lab

Lecture 15  Oct. 14  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 17
Topic: Create a promo using audio & video

Update: 04/07/2020
Lecture 16  Oct. 19  APPLE MOTION - Explore 3D Space
Move and position elements in 3D space
Add and modify lights, cameras
Set design and moving cameras between sets

Lab #10: Due at the start of Lecture 19
Topic: Play in 3D

Lecture 17  Oct. 21  APPLE MOTION - Review
Particle systems
Replicator systems
Working with filters and blend modes
Compositing techniques
Creating an effect for Final Cut Pro X
Export and compression

No lab

Lecture 18  Oct. 23  APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - INTRODUCTION
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
Set design and moving cameras between sets

No lab

Lecture 19  Oct. 26  APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - EDIT and TRIM
Reviewing clips
Edit and trim a basic story
Project 2: Motion Graphics project due

Lab #11: Due at the start of Lecture 21
Topic: Edit a documentary scene

Lecture 20  Oct. 28  APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - AUDIO
Audio, sample rates, and human hearing
How to add, edit, and mix audio
Working with sound effects and music
Adding transitions

No lab

Lecture 21  Nov. 2  APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - STORY-TELLING
Improve story-telling through trimming
The story of “John and Martha”
The importance of reaction shots
A closer look at lighting

Lab #12: Due at the start of Lecture 22
Topic: Edit a dramatic scene with audio
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Nov. 9</td>
<td>APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - EFFECTS</td>
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<td>Text and Generator effects</td>
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<td>Inspector effects</td>
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<td>Effects Browser effects</td>
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<td>Lab #13: Due at the start of Lecture 24</td>
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<td>Topic: Edit an effects scene</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Nov. 11</td>
<td>APPLE FINAL CUT PRO X - COLOR CORRECTION</td>
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<td>Explain color in video</td>
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<td>How to use video scopes</td>
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<td>How to fix color problems</td>
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<td>How to create dramatic color “looks”</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Nov. 16</td>
<td>OPEN LAB</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Nov. 18</td>
<td>ADOBE AUDITION CC: AUDIO EDITING</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fundamentals of audio</td>
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<td>Audition workflow and interface</td>
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<td>Editing interviews</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Nov. 23</td>
<td>ADOBE AUDITION CC: AUDIO MIXING</td>
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<td>The role of audio sweetening</td>
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<td>How to add, edit, and mix dialog, music &amp; effects</td>
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<td>Editing and mixing a short documentary</td>
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<td>Lab #14: Audio mixing lab due by Lecture 27</td>
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<td>Topic: Audio mix a documentary scene</td>
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**THANKSGIVING - Wednesday, Nov. 25 - 29**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
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<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>Probably an Open Lab</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>HOW TO FIND AND GET A JOB</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Larry’s philosophy of how to market yourself, find a job, master the</td>
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<td>interview and land a good job.</td>
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<td>Project 3: 30-second video commercial due 11/28</td>
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<td>Dec. 4</td>
<td>All unsubmitted class materials due by 5 p.m.</td>
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</table>
[TBA]  **FINAL EXAM - 2 - 4 PM**  
Covers Lectures 11 - 25  
Short-answer questions

**IN-CLASS PRESENTATION OF ALL STUDENT PROJECTS**  
Students present and discuss their Projects in class  
Presentations are not graded, but are critiqued.