USCAnnenberg

PR 488 Multimedia PR Content: Visual Communication of Information
2 Units

Fall 2021 – Tuesdays – 4:30-6:10 p.m.
Section: 21370R
Location: ANN 308

Instructor: Susanne Manheimer
Office: Online
Office Hours: After class and by appointment
Contact Info: smanheim@usc.edu

I. Course Description

Overview of tools and techniques available to convey messages and experiences; exploration into graphic design, visual branding, design methods and processes.

Visual Communication is part of a communication system which helps in transmission of information or language through symbols and images. Through this process of communicating or sharing ideas, expressions, opinions, emotions etc. either in verbal or non-verbal. Visual Communication includes tools like graphic designs, art, animations, and typography etc.

It's increasingly important that public relations professionals not only be good at writing for an array of audiences, but also have an understanding of basic design principles and a fluency in digital design tools, such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, and Adobe InDesign. While many organizations may employ outside designers, or have an art department of their own, sometimes the task of creating smaller design collateral, Infographics or posters, falls to the PR practitioner. For many smaller firms, an art department or contract design help may not be available, so it is even more imperative to have a basic understanding of how to design for social media and execute these designs in the above programs. These are also important skills to have when communicating with an art department or outside designer, so you can clearly and effectively work with these parties and understand their needs.

II. Student Learning Outcomes
- The difference between different graphics and image file formats
- Apply the concepts found within elements and principles of design
- Incorporate theories and concepts when discussing visual communication
- Use theory when considering different mediums in visual communication
- Create a brand identity such as business cards, packaging, and advertising
- Design logos, especially as related to brand identity
- Visualize the differences between visual UX, UI, graphic, and web design
- Create simple information visualizations

Students will develop the fundamental skills to:

- Create and improve artwork by manipulation of media and practicing techniques.
- Express themselves creatively.
- Identify visual strengths and weaknesses to promote aesthetic resolution and clarity of intention.
- Identify and apply art and design elements, principles, and terminology in the creation and improvement of work.
- Demonstrate effective use of media and techniques while creating works of art and/or design.
- Express themselves aesthetically and/or creatively while making works of art and /or design.

This class will allow you to exercise a lot of creativity as well in the assignments. You will have to come up with your own design concepts and execute them. Each of the assignments will measure:

- Your ability to present a concept for a project. Public relations is all about devising ideas on how to promote a brand, a product, an issue or idea, and your ability to not only develop a concept but also to explain how and why it is appropriate for your target audience(s) is key in the industry.
- Your ability to execute a design idea. Is your design appropriate for the audience? Is it aesthetically sound? Can you explain why you made the design choices you did?
- Your ability to use the design programs that are industry standards: Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign. You should be able to create basic collateral using any of these programs by the end of this class.
- Your ability to present your final idea to your peers. This will prepare you for client presentations, fielding questions asking why certain design or collateral decisions were made, and being able to explain your concept from beginning to how it was executed.

There are no prerequisites for this course, but it is recommended you have some familiarity with the Adobe design programs. The Annenberg Digital Lounge offers workshops throughout the semester to learn basic Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign concepts; it's highly recommended you partake in some of these workshops to bolster your skills and familiarity with these programs. You can visit https://annenbergdl.org to see their schedule and find tutorials.

You can find tutorials for the Adobe programs here. Feel free to practice all you want!
Photoshop: https://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop/tutorials.html
Illustrator: https://helpx.adobe.com/illustrator/tutorials.html
InDesign: https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/tutorials.html

III. Course Notes
All course material for this class will be posted on our class website: **to be added.** Please bookmark this website and check it regularly for readings and the slides from lectures.

There will be some in-class assignments throughout the semester. No makeups or credit will be given if you are not in class to complete these assignments.

IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments
All the assignments in this class will follow a semester-long theme: your own company. This can be a non-profit centered around a specific cause, or a company offering a service or tangible product(s). Students will think of a concept -- including a name -- for their own company, and create collateral throughout the semester for this company.

Assignments are as follows:

- **Company pitch:** Students must devise a name for their own company and decide what the purpose of this company will be. For example, is this a non-profit, a service-based company, or a company selling product(s)? What is the purpose of this company? Who does this company serve? What is the target audience and demographic? What kind of look and feel does the student envision for this company?
- **Basic branding:** Students will create a basic logo (can be type-based) for the company, along with a visual

style guide for the company. What color schemes and fonts will be used for collateral and why?

- **Social Media Content:** It's time to promote something your company is creating, an event, or a product your company is putting out. How can you promote this across different mediums via printed material and digital material?
- **Microsite:** Say your company is putting on a special event or wants to promote a new product or service. Create a mini-site (a.k.a. a landing page) that you can link to on social media or print collateral and send potential customers to for information.
- **Final project – Identity for a Product or Company** Students will create a final Icon/Campaign to inform people about their company. Students must write and design all elements for the Campaign and it should be a prototype for a website or a prototype for a digital experience (such as a mobile app, desktop app, or web app).

V. Grading
a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	% of Grade
Research	30%
Homework	20%
Class Participation	10%
Final Assignment	40%
TOTAL	**100%**

b. Grading Scale

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

c. Grading Standards
Public Relations

"A" projects have writing near professional quality; one or no mistakes; clearly proofread and edited material. All required elements included (catchy headline, solid lead, varied vocabulary; supporting facts/figures; quotes as required). Excellent organization and flow; original thinking. Showed creativity in packaging/distribution method. High end of scale: publishable today as is.

"B" projects have two to five spelling, grammar or AP Style mistakes. One or more required elements missing or poorly displayed (i.e., boring headline; confusing lead, etc.). Shows potential as a good writer. Adhered to inverted pyramid. High end of scale will have at least one extraordinary element such as astonishing lead or little-known facts or pithy quote. Some creativity shown. Publishable with medium editing.

"C" projects have more than five errors (spelling, grammar, AP style). Poorly edited and/or proofread. May have adhered to inverted pyramid but strayed at beginning or end. Hackneyed elements such as trite headline or uninteresting lead. Little or no facts/figures included. Passive rather than active verbs become the norm. Little or no creativity shown. Publishable with major editing.

"**D" projects** have more than 10 errors (spelling, grammar). Needs to be completely rewritten. Poorly organized

with little or no understanding of journalistic style/standards. Needs to work with writing coach.

"F" projects are not rewritable, late or not turned in.

d. Grading Timeline
Assignments will be graded and returned within two weeks from the time they were turned in. All feedback will be sent to the student via email.

VI. Assignment Submission Policy

A. All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be dropped one grade (10 points). Assignments that are two weeks late will be dropped two grades (20 points). No late assignments will be accepted after two weeks and are an automatic zero.

B. Assignments must be submitted via email. Digital versions are due before the class date specified; **THE DIGITAL VERSION MUST BE TURNED IN BEFORE THE SPECIFIED DUE DATE TO BE CONSIDERED ON TIME.** If either portion is turned in late, the entire assignment is considered late.

VII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials
You can find tutorials for the Adobe programs here. Feel free to practice all you want!
Photoshop: https://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop/tutorials.html
Illustrator: https://helpx.adobe.com/illustrator/tutorials.html
InDesign: https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/tutorials.html

Students are also encouraged to do supplemental training through the Annenberg Digital Lounge's workshops. A schedule can be found at https://annenbergdl.org.

VIII.   Laptop Policy
All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the **Annenberg Digital Lounge** for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's **Information Technology Services** website.

IX.   Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/23/21 – 12/3/21)
Link: https://classes.usc.edu/term-20213/calendar/
Friday, September 10: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001
Friday, September 10: Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001
Friday, September 10: Last day to purchase or waive tuition refund insurance for fall
Tuesday, September 14: Last day to add or drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund or change to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001
Friday, October 8: Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript for Session 001. Mark of "W" will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]
Friday, October 8: Last day to change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 001. [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]
Friday, November 12: Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001

X. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Important note to students: *Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.*

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates **All work to be uploaded by 11:59 p.m. the day before class**
Week 1 Date: 8/24	Introductions, explanation of syllabus and class requirements. Defining Visual Communication Graphic Design vs. Art Visual Design Tools Image Files **Design Theory:** Gestalt Principles Lab: Will start to work on Visual and Literal Assignment Visual Perception **ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN** Color, shape, texture, space, form unity/harmony, balance, hierarchy, scale/proportion emphasis, similarity, contrast Please dedicate a small notebook to jot down thoughts and observations about Icons/Logos.	**Gestalt Assignment** **Homework:** Create a list of 5 businesses or industries that interest you and provide ample amount of market research and competitive analysis. Choosing your brand. **Watch:** The Naked Brand film https://vimeo.com/56118009 Write a summary including 4 main take-away points.	Gestalt Assignment: Abstract and Literal solutions. 5 businesses or industries to discuss. Discussion of The Naked Brand
Week 2 Date: 8/31	**Discussion of The Naked Brand and Gestalt Assignments** **Lecture:** Intro to branding: What is branding? What is marketing? What makes a brand a successful brand? What is competitive analysis (SWOT)? Icon vs. Logo. Your relationship to brands. **Label Handout of SWOT Analysis Grid to be worked on in class**	**Homework:** Research and create a mood board that targets your specific market based on Objects, Culture, and People. Also create a board with all of your competitor's logos for a total of 4 boards.	Discussion of film and SWOT analysis
Week 3 Date: 9/7	**Lecture:** What is a mark and how is it used and viewed in social media. **Lab:** Start work on Pyramid Exercise	**Homework:** Brand Pyramid Exercise	Pyramid Exercise

Week 4 **Date:** **9/14**	**Lecture**: Brand Strategy Pyramids Introduction to Brand Pyramids a strategy tool frequently used in branding. A Brand Pyramid is a deceptively simple tiered analytical diagram that expresses organizational consensus on fundamental questions. Brand Pyramids are used to diagnose and subsequently strengthen the brand strategy of an organization and its products. Lab: Mark Making: Using the tools you have, pencil, markers, crayons we will start to understand what a mark is.	Homework: Ed Bedno. Continue to expand and evolve your logo. Begin to work with color and different type treatments	Upload your grids
Week 5 **Date: 9/21**	**Lecture**: Brand Strategy, IDEO Method Cards Brainstorm and concept 10 unique logo directions. No two directions should be the same, and each one needs to demonstrate the values and principles of the brand. Lab: We will work on your icons and will break out into groups for critique.	**Homework:** Continue work on logo/icon	Presentation of your symbols/icons
Week 6 **Date: 9/28**	Class Critique of Logos/Icons in progress	**Homework:** Continue work on logo/icon	
Week 7 **Date: 10/5**	**Lecture:** Class critique of logos. Our goal will be to pick your best logo so that you may start finalizing your brand. Continue to expand and evolve your logo. Begin to work with color and different type treatments Lab: A lesson in Illustrator for those who need a brush up and some tricks of the trade.	**Homework:** Expand and evolve your logo, also prepare color variation. The amount of exploration will be determined in class and may be assigned student by student. Homework: Continue work on logo/icon	Icon/logo creation
Week 8 **Date:** **10/12**	**Lecture:** Class critique of logos. Our goal will be to pick your best logo so that you may start finalizing your brand. Continue to expand and evolve your logo. Begin to work with color and different type treatments Lab: A lesson in Illustrator for those who need a brush up and some tricks of the trade.	**Homework:** Expand and evolve your logo, also prepare color variation. The amount of exploration will be determined in class and may be assigned student by student. Homework: Continue work on logo/icon	Icon/logo creation

Week 9 **Date:** **10/19**	**Lecture:** Brand Communication Strategy Financial Value Social Value Best Practices Future of brands Lab: Work on Campaign	**Homework:** Continue work on company brand and icon	
Week 10 **Date: 10/26**	**Lecture:** Sales Promotion and Publicity Forms of Sales Objectives of Sales Role of Packaging Merchandising Trade Shows Lab: Work on Campaign	**Homework:** Continue work on company brand and icon	
Week 11 **Date: 11/2**	One on one critique We will work on your icons/ campaigns during class time with art direction	**Homework:** Continue work on company brand and icon	
Week 12 **Date: 11/9**	One on one critique We will work on your icons/campaigns during class time with art direction	**Homework:** Continue work on company brand and icon	Digital version of final project due by 9 a.m. on 11/19. Must be properly packaged (fonts, assets, etc.) as a zip file and uploaded to email.
Week 13 **Date: 11/16**	**Lab:** Class critique of all student projects. You will present to the entire class and we will discuss: What does it take to be a designer or how you can work with one in your future endeavors?	**Homework:** Revisions on work	
Week 14 **Date: 11/23**	Final Critiques USC evaluations	**Homework:** Revisions on work	
Week 15 **Date: 11/30**	Final Critiques One on One		
FINAL EXAM **PERIOD** **Date: Tuesday,** **12/14, 4:30-6:30** **p.m.**	Final Critique		

XI. Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

If you must miss a class, please give ample notice to your instructor via email. You will be responsible for catching up on any missed material and make any arrangements you need to catch up in class.

No late assignments will be accepted unless you have a medical emergency or other excused absence. Documentation for any excused absence must be provided.

Communication

Please make sure to check your USC email regularly. It will be the primary means of communication between you and your instructor. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me, I will reply within 24 hours.

Internships

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to 1 percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned into the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must by unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism or public relations class.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

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.

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

"Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an 'F' on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators."

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

b. Support Systems

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.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 and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by 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. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
dsp.usc.edu
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
uscsa.usc.edu
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.

Annenberg Student Success Fund
https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources
The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]
https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/
The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally "breaking bread" over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

XII. About Your Instructor
@smartdesign is the Santa Monica-based design office of Susanne Manheimer. For the previous vigorous and exuberant 20 years, Susanne has been recognized for her work by its elegance, sophisticated humor, style, and wit. Her knowledge, understanding and respect for innovative design, is incorporated in her invention of new design approaches. Simplicity and directness of communication are the main elements of her style. Her work makes people smile, laugh, and…think. Today, she divides her time between running the studio, teaching, and lecturing to corporations and schools on the importance of The Democratization of Creativity™ as well as Conceptual Thinking and Problem Solving.

Susanne graduated from the Kansas City Art Institute with a BFA in design. Susanne a native New Yorker worked in" The City" as a Creative Director for Tiffany and Co. where she was awarded a Certificate of Distinction for Typography, Creative Director for Bloomingdales by Mail, Revlon, and also The Museum of Modern Art, to name a few. Disney called, and she moved to California to work for Disney + Co. as Creative Director for the Disney catalogue. Susanne has a history of success mentoring young designers, both in academic roles and as an industry leader. She has been described as a "needle in a haystack," a conceptual designer who is creative yet has strong business acumen.