ITP-411: Techniques of Visual Persuasion

Course : Techniques of Visual Persuasion
http://blackboard.usc.edu

4 Units

Lectures/Lab : Monday: 10:00 AM - 11:50 AM
Wednesday: 10:00 AM - 11:50 AM
Classroom: OHE-540

Instructor : Larry Jordan
larryjor@usc.edu

Office Hours : Mon/Wed 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM — reach me via email anytime.

Open Labs : TBA

Summary : This course can change your life! Visual communication and storytelling are essential skills in this digital age. This course teaches how to think and create visually by showing how to use professional-grade tools and software to create, edit, and deliver compelling moving images.

This is not an “arts” class, it’s a “communications” class. It’s a class on motivating change. Not all of us can be artists, but all of us can improve our ability to tell stories with video. This is not a “theory class.” This is a “get your hands dirty working with it” class - with a focus on audio, video and the moving image. Students will work with video shot with their cell phones, along with stock and library footage to tell compelling stories that effect change.

This is not a class for filmmakers or artists, though they are welcome to join. Rather it is a course for everyone who needs to improve their communication skills.

In this survey course, you will learn how to use professional-grade image and video software to create a variety of visual projects, and, ultimately, present your projects to the class.
Objective

Structured around a professional creative workflow, this course explores how to create compelling visual messages using professional software containing audio, video, motion graphics, and visual effects.

Students will:

- Apply and develop the fundamentals of visual storytelling, combined with an efficient workflow, to tell visual stories that motivate change.
- Demonstrate their understanding of how to focus on the needs of the audience through careful planning, audience research, compelling writing, and effective design.
- Develop competence in using professional tools to create persuasive videos for business communication. This includes both production and editing.
- Evaluate their work through on-going critiques – both in-class and from faculty. Use what they learn to actually see, not just look at, the projects they are creating and then refine it based upon their understanding.
- Discover ways to unlock and explore their creativity individually and as part of a team.

Content Goals

1. To learn the fundamentals of visual story-telling, along with an efficient workflow, to tell stories that motivate change.

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

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

4. To encourage students to unlock and explore their creativity.

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 and assignments are due at the date and time specified in the syllabus. All material must be posted to Blackboard in order to be graded.

Projects more than 48 hours late will receive a 50% deduction in points. No work will be accepted more than four weeks late.

Update: 04/07/2020
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 lab completion, projects and tests. Labs are designed to be completed in class. Projects require creative time outside of class.

There are three 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.)

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>Approx. % of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Final Project</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total points</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>700</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
Class Policies

Students are expected to:

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

Assignments

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

IMPORTANT!

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

Required Text

**Techniques of Visual Persuasion**
Larry Jordan

*Published by:* New Riders

This book may also be available via Safari Books Online.

DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS

Labs

The last portion of each class is devoted to a hands-on lab. Both the professor and CTA circulate through the room reviewing in-progress work and answering questions. The 11 weekly labs focus on practicing and reinforcing the technology students learn in class. Unlike a programming course where there is only one right answer, each lab is a creative project where students are given technical criteria, then required to design a creative image to meet that spec. Each student’s lab is unique and due one week after it is assigned. All labs are reviewed and critiqued personally in writing by the professor as part of the grading process. Grading is done by the professor, not the CTA.

Projects

Unlike labs, the three projects focus on creativity and messaging. There are three projects during the course, with each project due about a month apart. Two of the three projects require teams, team and project assignments are made early so students have time to plan, schedule and produce.

- Audio interview, to focus on creating and editing content (team effort)
  
  » *Assigned Week 1 – due Week 5*
Students select the topic and the content. All assignments are presented to the class and critiqued by the professor to allow students to improve their work over the course of the semester. Each project will be presented to the class by each team or student.

**Quizzes**

Three quizzes, each containing 10 short-answer questions. Each quiz takes 30 minutes at the start of a class, with a lecture to follow.

**Final Presentation**

In lieu of a final exam, students display and discuss each of their three major projects – audio interview, video commercial and motion graphic - to the class for review and comment. In this presentation, each student presents their work, describes how it was created, the challenges they faced in creating it and, now that the work is complete, what they would do differently. This is designed to allow students to reflect on what they accomplished, what they learned in the process and how they will integrate this knowledge going forward.

**NOTE:** This presentation, critique and analysis is critical to student’s understanding how their work in this class can apply outside the classroom.

**Assignment Submission Policy**

The goal of all assignments is to practice what we are learning in class while we are learning it. It does not benefit the student for work to be turned in late. All labs and projects are due at the date and time specified in the syllabus. All material must be posted to Blackboard in order to be graded.
Assignments that are more than 48 hours late receive a 50% deduction in points. No assignment will be accepted that is more than two weeks late. A student can request up to two extensions during the semester, though granting the extension is up to the professor. (Documented emergencies are an exception to this policy.)

**Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment**

Course materials are proprietary to USC and may not be shared to anyone outside of current class members.

*Campus Section 11.12(B)*

Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).

**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 ap-
proved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Be sure the letter is delivered as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

**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

*Update: 04/06/2021*
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities, including 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.
Techniques of Visual Persuasion
ITP-411 (4 units)

The purpose of a lab is to reinforce subjects taught in that day’s lecture. Assignments emphasize creativity. Readings are from “The Techniques of Visual Persuasion.”

COURSE OUTLINE

Lecture 1  Aug. 23  INTRODUCTION TO THIS COURSE
Course introduction – discuss goals for semester
Discuss syllabus and assignments
Digital Media fundamentals and workflow
   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. 25  VISUAL LITERACY REVIEW
How images are constructed
File and Media management
Basic photo and image manipulation techniques
   Reading: Chapters 1 & 2
   No lab

Lecture 3  Aug. 30  PLAN AN AUDIO INTERVIEW
Fundamentals of audio
Create teams of 2
Practice interview techniques
   Reading: Chapter 11
   Project 1: Assigned, due Lecture 7
   Lab #2: Due at the start of Lecture 4
   Topic: Planning Interview Questions

Lecture 4  Sept. 1  ADOBE AUDITION: INTRODUCTION TO AUDIO
Conduct & critique sample interviews
Learn Adobe Audition interface
Audition workflow and interface
   Reading: Chapter 12
   No lab

************ LABOR DAY ************

Lecture 5  Sept. 8  ADOBE AUDITION: AUDIO EDITING & MIXING
The role of audio sweetening
How to add, edit, and mix dialog, music & effects
Editing and mixing a short documentary
Lab #3: Due Lecture 6  
*Sound design & mixing*

Lecture 6  Sept. 13  IN-CLASS WORK ON PROJECT 1

Lecture 7  Sept. 15  PLAYBACK & CRITIQUE PROJECT 1  
*Project #1: Audio Interview Due*

Lecture 8  Sept. 20  VIDEO PLANNING  
Video terms, concepts and workflow
Scripts, rhythm and casting
Media Management
Storyboards

*Project #2: Due Lecture 18  
Reading: Chapter 10  
Lab #4: Storyboards (completed in-class)*

Lecture 9  Sept. 22  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

*Reading: Chapter 13*

Lecture 10  Sept. 27  APPLE FINAL CUT PRO - INTRODUCTION  
Introduction to video editing
A 12-step workflow to make you more efficient
Explore the interface
Organize media using favorites and keywords
Media import and clip preview

*Quiz #1 – covering Lectures 1 - 7  
Reading: Chapter 14  
No lab*

Lecture 11  Sept. 29  APPLE FINAL CUT PRO - EDIT and TRIM  
Reviewing clips
Edit and trim a basic story

*Reading: Chapter 14  
Lab #7: Due at the start of Lecture 12  
Topic: Edit a documentary scene*

Lecture 12  Oct. 4  APPLE FINAL CUT PRO - AUDIO  
Audio, sample rates, and human hearing
How to add, edit, and mix audio
Using sound effects and music
Adding transitions

*Update: 04/07/2020*
### Lab 5: Due Lecture 14
*Edit an interview (Dr. Cerf)*

| Lecture 13 | Oct. 6 | APPLE FINAL CUT PRO - STORY-TELLING  
Improve story-telling through trimming  
The story of “John and Martha”  
The importance of reaction shots  
A closer look at lighting |
|------------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Lab 6: Due at the start of Lecture 15
*Topic: Edit a dramatic scene with audio*

| Lecture 14 | Oct. 11 | APPLE FINAL CUT PRO - EFFECTS  
Text and Generator effects  
Inspector effects  
Effects Browser effects |
|------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Lab 7: Due at the start of Lecture 16
*Topic: Edit an effects scene*

| Lecture 15 | Oct. 13 | APPLE FINAL CUT PRO - COLOR CORRECTION  
Explain color in video  
How to use video scopes  
How to fix color problems and create dramatic color “looks”  
*No lab* |
|------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Lab 8: Due at the start of Lecture 19
*Topic: Create a compressed video file*

| Lecture 16 | Oct. 18 | VIDEO COMPRESSION - OVERVIEW  
Fundamentals of video compression  
Optimum settings for video compression  
Compressing video for the web |
|------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Lab 9: Due at the start of Lecture 20
*Topic: Create a compressed video file*

| Lecture 17 | Oct. 20 | VIDEO COMPRESSION - SOFTWARE  
Video compression using Apple Compressor  
Video compression using Adobe Media Encoder  
Compressing video for the web |
|------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Lecture 18 | Oct. 25 | In-Class work on Project #2 - Commercial  
**Quiz 2** – covering Lectures 9 - 15 |

### Lecture 19 | Oct. 27 | In-Class work on Project #2 - Commercial |

### Lecture 20 | Nov. 1 | APPLE MOTION - Introduction to Motion Graphics  
Key terms, definitions  
Explore the Motion interface  
Use Behaviors to make objects move  
*Project 2: 30-second video commercial due*
Reading: Chapter 15
No lab

Lecture 21  Nov. 3  APPLE MOTION - Deeper into Motion
The Inspector
Add, style and animate text
Filters, effects and drawing tools
Export and compression
Lab #9: Due at the start of Lecture 22
Topic: Create a simple motion graphic

Lecture 22  Nov. 8  APPLE MOTION - Media, Masks and Paths
Import audio and video media
Video Behaviors and Filters
Create Paths and Masks
Animate using keyframes
No lab

Lecture 23  Nov. 10  APPLE MOTION - Particles, Replicators and Parameters
Create and modify a particle system
Create and modify a replication system
Animate using Parameter Behaviors
Lab #10: Due at the start of Lecture 24
Topic: Create a promo using audio & video

Lecture 24  Nov. 15  APPLE MOTION - Explore 3D Space
Move and position elements in 3D space
Add and modify lights and cameras
Set design and moving cameras between sets
Lab #11: Due at the start of Lecture 25
Topic: Create your own commercial

Lecture 25  Nov. 17  APPLE MOTION - Review
Particle and replicator systems
Blend modes and filters
Motion tracking
Green-screen (chroma) key
Compositing techniques
Quiz #3 – covering Lectures 17 - 24
No lab

Lecture 26  Nov. 22  In-class time to work on Project 3.
Lecture 27  Nov. 29  In-class time to work on Project 3.
Quiz #3 - Lectures 17-25

Update: 04/07/2020
Lecture 28        Dec. 1        HOW TO FIND AND GET A JOB
Larry’s philosophy of how to market yourself,
find a job, master the interview and land the right job.

Dec. 3            Project #3: 15-second motion graphic due
Presentation and discussion of Project 4
Any remaining unsubmitted class materials due by 5 p.m.

[TBA]        FINAL PRESENTATION - 8 - 10 AM
All Projects screened for class