

Introduction to Visual Communication Design

Course Description

Class Time	Mondays, 1:00 PM - 3:50 PM PST
Classroom	SCI L105
Professor	Renée Reizman reizman@usc.edu
Office Hours	Mondays, 11:00 AM - 12:50 PM PST MAP Faculty Lounge or By Appointment on Zoom
Student Assistant	TBD

Course Description

This is an introductory course that teaches the fundamentals of visual design. Every day, you consume art, text, and branding in public and private spaces. You absorb this information through movie posters, museum exhibitions, social media, retail experiences, and even in national parks. Graphics build meaning through image, language, and movement.

This course uses hands-on tutorials, theoretical discussions, and historical context to discover the field of graphic design. We will take ideas throughout the entire design process, beginning with sketches and delivering fully conceptualized campaigns. Students will learn many softwares included in Adobe Creative Suite, mainly Illustrator, InDesign, and Photoshop.

Learning Outcomes

As a result of taking this course, students will be able to:

- Gain knowledge of strategies which construct and deconstruct graphic design taking into account issues of audience, function, and composition, as well as location, and context
- Communicate using a fundamental vocabulary of terms associated with art and design
- Create introductory level art and design using Adobe Creative Suite.
- Understand the use, creation, customization and manipulation of typography and its relationship to communication and design
- We will discuss the following concepts: Balance/Alignment, Contrast, Space, Color, Form, Type, Hierarchy, Production

Required Texts

Poulin, Richard. (2018). *The Language of Graphic Design: An Illustrated Handbook for Understanding Fundamental Design Principles*. Maine: Quarto Publishing Group. ISBN: 9781610602334

Lupton, E. (2017). *Design is Storytelling*. New York: Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. ISBN: 9781942303190

Additional texts may be assigned and distributed through the semester via email of Google classroom. You are required to read and discuss the texts on assigned days.

All readings available through USC libraries portal (<https://libraries.usc.edu/>)

Course Structure

This course is made up of three interrelated parts:

1. Visual Literacy:

In order to contend with our multifaceted visual environment, we need tools to help us make sense of it all. Through a process of visual inquiry, we will discuss how to “read” beyond the surface of what is presented on the page, poster, screen, billboard, etc., in order to reveal the underlying messages at stake. We will learn how to construct and deconstruct graphic design, taking into account issues of audience, function, and composition, as well as location and context

2. Design Exercises, Reading Responses & Homework

Over the course of the semester Students will be asked to complete various readings and design challenges that aim to get the class thinking about visual communication, designing around abstract concepts and building a repertoire of designer skill sets. All homework and design challenges must include detailed visual documentation of your creative processes (images, screenshots, etc.) and a 200-300 word description of your personal goals and objectives for a project. All homework must be posted to Google Classroom before the class on the date due to receive full credit.

A note on research: Because your imagination may stretch beyond what’s taught in class, I also encourage you to always be looking for inspiration. Here are some publications that frequently spotlight the best in graphic design:

AIGA: *Eye on Design*: <https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/>

It’s Nice That: <https://www.itsnicethat.com/>

Print Magazine: <https://www.printmag.com/>

*Wallpaper**: <https://www.wallpaper.com/>

Fast Company Co.Design: <https://www.fastcompany.com/co-design>

Behance: <https://www.behance.net/galleries>

I also encourage you to independently search for tutorials on web-

sites like YouTube or LinkedIn Learning. All graphic designers work from inspiration, so it's crucial to include imagery depicting this inspiration with brief annotation and citation.

3. Projects

Each student will produce 3 design projects over the course of the semester, including a final portfolio review where these projects will be refined. Each project is meant to be multidisciplinary and pull from a variety of design principles, including graphic, environmental, exhibit and interactive/motion design. All projects will be completed and submitted digitally. If items are hand-illustrated, they will need to be scanned and edited in Adobe Creative Suite prior to submission.

- Identity for Opulent Mobility
- A political poster in the style of a famous designer
- A concept for an immersive, branded experience for the film

SCA Viewing Portal: <http://scacommunity.usc.edu>

MA+P Community: <https://map.usc.edu/community/>

A key component of each project is group critique and feedback. Critique is not meant to intimidate or bully. It's a moment to reflect on our own work and take constructive criticism from our peers. Be thoughtful and helpful. Say more than "I like it" or "I don't like it." Critiques should help people improve their work and walk away with new ideas. This classroom will be a safe environment to experiment and take creative risks!

Required Materials

Software: Adobe Creative Suite - available in computer lab, but it is highly recommended to install these programs on your own personal laptop if you'd like to work outside of lab hours.

- Illustrator
- InDesign
- Photoshop

Hardware:

- External hard drive

Art Supplies:

- Sketchbook (can be physical or digital. Physical sketches must be scanned and submitted digitally.)
- Pens & Pencils

Grading Breakdown

There are no exams in this course. The majority of your grade is determined by your assignments. The rest comes from class participation and documentation of your work.

The breakdown is as follows:

- 40% - Projects
- 30% – Homework Assignments
- 15% – Final Portfolio
- 15% – Attendance & Class Participation

Class participation means speaking during critiques, participating in class discussions, and completing readings.

Late submissions will instantly get a 5% deduction. If there is a personal reason why you cannot submit work on time, please discuss it with me advance so you may get an extension.

Extra Credit: Visit an art event (exhibition, lecture, festival, etc.) and write a 300+ word reflection for a 5% bump to your overall class grade. Extra Credit is due the last day off class before finals.

GRADING SCALE

- Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:
 - A (95-100)
 - A- (90-94)
 - B+ (87-89)
 - B (83-86)
 - B- (80-82)
 - C+ (77-79)
 - C (73-76) **MINIMUM PASSING GRADE FOR MEDIA ARTS + PRACTICE MAJORS**
 - C- (70-72)
 - D+ (67-69)
 - D (63-66)
 - D- (60-62) **MINIMUM PASSING GRADE FOR USC**
 - F (59 and below)

Absence Policy

MA+P classes depend on group work and in-class critique, which makes attendance crucial. You are expected to be present for every scheduled class session. If you must miss a class, please be sure to get any notes and assignments from a classmate so you do not fall behind.

Students are allowed two absences before a reduction in grade. Tardiness or leaving class early for (0 to 15 minutes) will be considered ½ an absence. Missing more than 30 minutes of a class is considered an absence. After your second absence, each additional

absence will lower your final grade by 5%.

If you anticipate attendance issues, please notify your professor immediately.

Academic Policies

Land Acknowledgment Statement:

For those participating from the LA Basin, we acknowledge our presence on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Tongva and Chumash peoples. For those who are elsewhere, please visit Native-Land.ca to discover the Original People of your home.

SCA Diversity and Inclusion Statement:

Diversity and Inclusion are foundational to the SCA community. We are committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all identities and backgrounds can flourish. The classroom should be a space for open discussion of ideas and self-expression; however, SCA will not tolerate verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, intimidation or violence against person or property. If students are concerned about these matters in the classroom setting they are encouraged to contact their SCA Diversity and Inclusion Liaison, <http://cinema.usc.edu/about/diversity.cfm>; e-mail diversity@cinema.usc.edu. You can also report discrimination based on a protected class here <https://equity.usc.edu/harassment-or-discrimination/>

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

In the spirit of disability culture, please feel free to stim, stretch, knit, doodle, move around, change seats, do yoga or do what feels right to your bodymind.

Academic Integrity:

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers

dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's](#) website, and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

AI Generator Policy

In this course, I encourage you to use artificial intelligence (AI)-powered programs to help you with assignments that indicate the permitted use of AI. You should also be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses; thus they are not yet prepared to produce text that meets the standards of this course. To adhere to our university values, you must cite any AI-generated material (e.g., text, images, etc.) included or referenced in your work and provide the prompts used to generate the content. Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Please review the instructions in each assignment for more details on how and when to use AI Generators for your submissions.

If found responsible for an academic violation, students may be as-

signed university outcomes, such as suspension or expulsion from the university, and grade penalties, such as an “F” grade on the assignment, exam, and/or in the course.

Statement on Fair Use

Fair use is a legal principle that defines certain limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders. MA+P projects are produced with fair use doctrines in mind using its four pillars: (1) the purpose and character of use, (2) the nature of the copyrighted work, (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. Generally speaking, this means you must only use as much of a copyrighted work as is necessary to make your point, and you must cite your sources accordingly.

Citation Guidelines

We assert that work produced in our classes is covered under the Doctrine of Fair Use. In order to make this claim, however, all projects must include academically appropriate citations in the form of a References section, which covers all sources, in order to receive a passing grade. The References section is either included in the project itself or as a separate document, as appropriate. For citation purposes, we follow Kairos Journal of Rhetoric, Technology and Pedagogy style guide; Kairos uses [APA format](#), which is slightly modified and whose general guidelines and specific examples may be found here: <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/styleguide.html#apa>

Computer Code

Computer code is often shared and reused. This is appropriate in a MA+P course unless otherwise directed by the assignment. If you do use code, you should attribute it. Please follow these protocols from MIT which call for placing a comment in one’s code with a URL to the original source, a note if it was adapted, and the date of retrieval: <https://integrity.mit.edu/handbook/writing-code>

Support Systems

[Counseling and Mental Health](#): (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#): 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier

for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#): (213) 740-9355 (WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#): (213) 740-5086

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.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#): (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#): (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#): (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#): (213) 740-2101

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

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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#): (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#): (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

Typical Class Session

- 10:00 am–11:15 am: Lecture and Discussion
- 11:15 am–11:30 am: Break
- 11:30 am–12:50 pm: Lab: Demonstrations, exercises, class-work, Q&A, and individual assistance

Assignment Descriptions & Assessment

Project 1: Opulent Mobility Identity Due Week 5

Guest Speaker: A. Laura Brody, Founder
<https://www.opulentmobility.com>

Opulent Mobility wants to improve its brand! They are looking for a cohesive identity that can be used across their social media accounts, primarily Instagram.

You are to research Opulent Mobility & come up with a Style Guide set of deliverables for our client: a text-based logo, 2-3 typefaces, 6 color palette & 5 different social media templates.

With these deliverables, Opulent Mobility's team will be able to show off their voice, build a brand, and easily create social media content to promote their exhibitions and events.

In addition, each designer must include a well-designed PDF that shows their creative process, including sketches and a 200-300 word summary of the intentions of their work.

Deliverables:

- PDF Presentation document
- 1 vector wordmark logo created in Illustrator.
- 6 Social Media templates created in Photoshop
- Style Guide created in Illustrator and exported as PDF
- A physical packaging prototype, printed at a smaller scale, that would be the container for one of your products.

Project 2: Voting Poster

Due Week 10 (Midterms)

It's an election year, and you stand for something! We hear many people speak about "one issue voters," and I want to know which issue you care about most. We will be creating political posters to advocate for a cause you believe in, no matter what side of the political spectrum you fall on. Graphic design has been an integral part of political activism for generations, and continues to influence people to this day.

Even if you may not be a one issue voter yourself, you will only focus on 1 issue for your poster. You will be assigned a designer from Graphic Design history and need use their aesthetic as influence for your design. We should be able to see the designer you are referencing, but also your own voice. Your poster must combine a slogan with a typographic treatment with imagery of your choosing.

All typography must be set with InDesign. You may design the images with Illustrator and Photoshop. You will also create an in situ mock-up of the poster in Photoshop.

Deliverables:

- A 200-300 word summary of the intentions of their work and any sketches or research that supports their process.
- Final presentation PDF
- Packaged InDesign file for the poster itself (with fonts and links included). Poster will be 18 x 24 inches, 150 DPI.
- Photoshop file showing poster mocked up into real life.

Project 3: Designing a Branded Experience

Due Final Exam Week

Group Project

In this assignment, you get to imagine an immersive experience for any film of your choice. You adapt the film's branding, as well as the movie's content, to ideate an interactive, branded experience. You will create a fictitious schematic plan in Illustrator that reflects the approximate size of the exhibit space and labels each activity for audiences to engage with.

Think of your branded experience's target audience, and design a presentation for key stakeholders. Your presentation will include the following:

- Schematic Floorplan with traffic flow pattern
- Title wall treatment and typography
- Color Palette for venue
- 1 Detailed Example of an interactive space or activity.
- Consider any interactive elements (projections, animations, inter-

active games, low tech/high tech, etc.)

In addition, each designer must include a well-designed PDF that shows their creative process, including sketches and a 200-300 word summary of the intentions of their work.

Deliverables:

- Final presentation PDF
- Subfolders holding: title wall mockup, color palette, floor plan, interactive examples & mockups
- Original packaged InDesign files with fonts and links.

Other Assignments

Design Exercises

Over the course of the semester students will be asked to complete various small assignments that work towards a general understanding of core concepts and principles. Typically these assignments will begin in class during the hands-on tutorial session, and be completed at outside of class. The purpose of the in-class session is to get you started and to address any initial questions that you have.

Final Portfolio

All projects, completed design exercises, and revisions of previous work will be turned in during finals week in the form of a portfolio. You will create a logo for yourself, a brief biography (200-300 words), and present your work in a digital PDF format on 8.5 x 11" pages.

Final Portfolio Contents:

- Project 1 Opulent Mobility Identity
- Project 2 Political Poster
- Project 3 Branded Experience (your contributions only)
- Pen Shape Worksheet
- Color Palette
- Floor plan Demo
- Personas
- Accessible Venue Findings

Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments should be submitted before the class meeting via Google Classroom. Assignments not on Google classroom as of 1:00 PM will be considered late and subject to a lesser grade.

Please submit your work with all necessary elements (Adobe files, fonts, links, etc.) **compressed in a zip folder named as shown here: LastName_IML230_ProjectName**

**IML 230
FALL 2024 SCHEDULE**

WEEK 01 8/26	Introduction to Design Principles Course overview and introductions <u>Lecture</u> : What is graphic design? Composition & Form through the lens of graphic design and art history. <u>Lab</u> : Introduction to Adobe Illustrator — lines, paths, groups, building shapes, pen tool, complex paths. <u>Homework</u> : Finish pen tool worksheet <u>Read</u> : <i>Language of Graphic Design</i> , pg. 20-56.
WEEK 02 9/02	NO CLASS - Labor Day
WEEK 03 9/09	Research & Inspiration <u>Guest</u> : A. Laura Brody, artist & founder of Opulent Mobility <u>Assignment Overview</u> : Project 1, Opulent Mobility Identity <u>Lecture</u> : What is the role of research in graphic design? <u>Lab</u> : Photoshop: Masking Layers, Adjustment Layers, Clipping Masks, Blending Modes Illustrator & Photoshop: Building a color palette and swatch library. <u>Homework</u> : Finish building a color palette <u>Read</u> : <i>Design is Storytelling</i> , pgs 104-111 and <i>Language of Graphic Design</i> , pg. 66-80.
WEEK 04 9/16	Color Theory <u>Lecture</u> : How does color impact design? <u>In-Class Work Time</u> : Project 1
WEEK 05 9/23	Project 1 Presentations Present your work in a quick Pecha Kucha presentation. https://www.pechakucha.com/about . We will allow time for critique and feedback. <u>Read</u> : <i>Language of Graphic Design</i> , pg. 254-268
WEEK 06 9/30	Typography <u>Assignment Overview</u> : Project 2, Political Posters <u>Lecture</u> : Typography as a form of expressive communication. <u>Lab</u> : Working with text and building layouts & grids in InDesign. <u>Homework</u> : Select a typeface and research its history. Provide a brief written explanation. <u>Read</u> : <i>Graphic Design: The New Basics</i> (PDF Provided) pg. 129-163
WEEK 07 10/7	Visual Hierarchy <u>Lecture</u> : How might placement, scale, layering, and transparency subvert or reinforce the message? <u>Lab</u> : Working with layers and master pages in InDesign; Importing graphic elements from Illustrator <u>Read</u> : <i>Language of Graphic Design</i> , pg. 234-244.
WEEK 08 10/14	Working with Images <u>Lecture</u> : Discussion of the impact of imagery in design, sourcing and exporting images, resolution, and color space. <u>In-Class Work Time</u> : Project 2
WEEK 09 10/21	Package Design <u>Show & Tell</u> : Bring in packaging that appeals to you <u>Lecture</u> : Packaging <u>In-Class Work Time</u> : Project 2

**IML 230
FALL 2024 SCHEDULE**

WEEK 10 10/28	Project 2 Presentations Present your work in a quick Pecha Kucha presentation. We will allow time for critique and feedback.
WEEK 11 11/4	Introduction to Environmental, Exhibit & Spatial Design <u>Guest:</u> Nick Garritano Creative Director, NVE Experience Agency <u>Assignment Overview:</u> Project 3, Experiential Design <u>Lecture:</u> How do you approach design within an architectural environment? What considerations are necessary to create an impactful design? <u>Lab:</u> Drawing a scale floorplan in Illustrator <u>Homework:</u> Visit an exhibition with you Exhibition Design team and use Serrell's Framework to critique the space. Be prepared to present your findings in a quick Pecha Kucha presentation.
WEEK 12 11/11	NO CLASS - Veteran's Day <u>Remote Lecture:</u> How can certain interfaces take design and communication to the next level? <u>Read:</u> <i>Design is Storytelling</i> , pgs. 132-151
WEEK 13 11/18	Exhibition Design Pecha Kuchas <u>Read:</u> <i>Design is Storytelling</i> , pgs 72-81 & 90 - 99
WEEK 14 11/25	REMOTE CLASS - Thanksgiving Week REMOTE LECTURE & ASSIGNMENT: Accessible Design <u>Lecture:</u> How has design changed to include equity for individuals of different abilities and cultures? <u>In-Class Work Time:</u> Project 3 <u>Homework:</u> Visit a local venue (museum, theatre, restaurant, etc.) of your choice and notice what accessibility options they offer. Do they have large format type or closed captioning options? Do they have braille signage? Use Ronald Mace's 7 Principles of Universal Design to guide your thinking. Include a 200-300 word summary of your findings. Take pictures! http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/The-7-Principles/
WEEK 15 12/2	Web Design <u>Assignment Overview:</u> Final Portfolio <u>In-Class Work Time:</u> Project 3
WEEK 16 12/9	EXAMS BREAK
FINAL EXAM 12/18 11 AM - 1 PM	Project 3 Presentations Present your work in a quick Pecha Kucha presentation. We will allow time for critique and feedback. Final Portfolio Due over email on Wednesday, Dec. 18 at 11:59 PM.