**MPC 6350** **VISUAL COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE**

**Instructor:**

**Office:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

**Consultation hours:**

**Course Description:**

Visual messages are a powerful way to inform, persuade and educate. Within the workplace, the ability to effectively communicate goals, ideas and client information through combinations of visual and textual elements is an invaluable skill. This course introduces students to philosophical and theoretical perspectives that enable effective visual presentation in the organization. It also exposes them to practical design principles, skills and tactics that generally guide effective screen and print design. Additionally, students will learn how to critically analyze visual communication materials and aids according to standards that reflect sensitivity to fairness, diversity, good ethics and effectiveness.

**Course Format:** includes 24 hours of classroom instruction, approximately 24 hours of online instruction and approximately 60-70 hour of reading and projects outside of class.

**Required Textbooks:**

* *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices, 2nd ed.,* by Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans & Sean Nixon, Sage, 2013.
* *Visual Communication: Images with Messages, 6th ed.,* by Paul Martin Lester, Cengage, 2013.
* *Readings from Visual Intelligence: Perception, Image, and Manipulation in Visual Communication* by Anne Marie Seward Barry, 1996, Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods and Media by Kenneth Smith, et al, 2004
* *The Non-Designer’s Design & Type Books,* Deluxe Edition by Robin Williams
* *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* by Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright
* A flash drive of at least 8 GB to save and back up your work.

**Required Website:**

* Lynda.com. Costs about $25 for one-month access.

**Canvas:**

* Syllabus, lecture slides, study guides, assignments and other materials

**Learning Outcomes:**

After taking this class, students will be able to:

* Work effectively with designers and art directors
* Work as effective liaisons between designers and clients
* Understand design principles for pages and screens
* Define and use industry-standard design terminology
* Critically analyze visual designs for effectiveness, fairness, and good ethical treatment
* Understand common visual communication theories applied by designers and the importance of color and type choices in the communication process
* Understand how visual elements such as effective photo selection, infographics, cartoons and charts can inform the communication process

**Assessment Methods:**

Your success will be evaluated on:

* Knowledge of design principles, visual communication theories for pages and screens, and design terminology (assessed through tests and visual scrapbook)
* Ability to apply knowledge of design principles and visual communication theories to create a visually interesting and effective project for the page such as a poster, brochure, magazine or newspaper advertisement, or billboard (assessed through an assignment)
* Ability to apply knowledge of design principles and visual communication theories to create a visually interesting and effective project for the screen such as an electronic newsletter, customized blog site, or custom-designed PowerPoint or Prezi slides (assessed through an assignment)
* NOTE: Assessment tools inside Chi tester will be used for tests. Rubrics will be used to evaluate projects.

**Grading:**

Your grade will be based on the number of points you earn throughout the semester. To get grades in the A range, students must earn 90 percent or more of the points. B-range grades will be given to students with 80 percent to 89 percent of the points, and C-range grades will be given to students with 70 percent to 79 percent of the points. Students with fewer points will receive D’s or E’s. Grades with pluses and minuses will be given. Note: Scores and grades are posted in Gradebook. Please ask if you do not know how to access them.

Assignments 3 @ 100 points each 300 points

Visual scrapbook 8 @ 25 points each 200 points

Online discussion 5 @ 25 points each 125 points

Final project 300 points 300 points

Attendance 8 @ 10 points each 80 points

**Requirements:**

**1. Final Project.** Create a four-part final project for a client or organization. The project should include a print element and a screen element.

* Choose two from the following for the print portion:
  + Two-sided, 6-panel, full-color brochure – Nontraditional folds will be considered with my permission
  + A half-page black & white newspaper ad
  + A double-page magazine story spread
  + A single page magazine ad
  + Complementary set of invitation and poster announcement to company event
* Choose two of the following for the screen portion:
  + A two-page e-newsletter
  + A newly designed/or re-designed blog site optimized for interactivity
  + Landing page for company’s website (shown in static format)

The instructor must agree on the project and the deadlines. Students will be required to go through two levels of instructor review.

**2. Assignments.** Students will complete the following:

* + A poster to build awareness about a Weber State University event, organization or department
  + Organizational business materials: business card, letterhead, envelope
  + An interactive, and well-designed Powerpoint/Prezi presentation on a topic of your choice (with required specifications)

**3. Visual Scrapbook.** Detailed instructions for each of the eight entries will be posted in Canvas.

* Collect four images that illustrate Gestalt principles and write 50 words about each image.
* Collect five images that show figure-ground relationships and write 50 words about each image.
* Collect four uses of effective typography and write 50 words about each use.
* Illustrate television composition by drawing (or cropping) a 4:3 frame around a person facing the camera in a close-up shot. Similarly, draw a 16:9 frame that illustrates a medium shot of a person in profile.
* Collect five images that demonstrate each of the following design principles: contrast, harmony, proportion, balance, and movement. Write 50 words about each describing how the principle works.
* Collect three images showing effect visual/verbal integration, and three more that show ineffective integration. Write 50 words analyzing how each one succeeds or fails.
* Collect three images showing the use of the following signs: iconic, indexical, and symbolic. Write 50 words analyzing how each one fits its category.
* Find a magazine advertisement that is an effective illustration of the Z pattern and a website that is an effective illustration of the F pattern. Write 50 words about each.

**4. Online Discussions.** You will be asked to respond to a number of questions in an online format on Canvas that are designed to help you develop a critical sensibility surrounding the selection and usage of various visual formats. You will be expected to engage early and often to each of these questions and to also engage and discuss critically, and respectfully, with classmates. The point is to apply these theoretical principles to real-world examples in a collaborative manner.

**5. Attendance.** Being in class is extremely important. We will learn about basic design principles as well as the theory and ethics required to become an effective visual communicator. We will work in the computer lab on a number of projects. We will also enjoy the insights and knowledge of several top professionals in the industry. The readings are helpful resources, but much of the instruction can only be gleaned by attendance in class. Consequently, attendance in class will count toward your final grade.

**Class schedule:**

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|  | **In Class Component** | **Online Component** |
| **Week 1:** | Introduction to visual representation | Application of concepts to popular culture |
| **Week 2:** | Design principles | - Discussion and application of concepts for organizational uses  - Homework utilizing design principles |
| **Week 3:** | Typography and color | - Discussion and application of concepts for organizational uses  - Homework utilizing typography and color |
| **Week 4:** | Art and illustration | - Discussion and application of concepts for organizational uses  - Homework selecting art and illustration |
| **Week 5:** | Print design applications | Critique and discussion of visual scrapbooks |
| **Week 6:** | Screen design applications | Discussion critiquing representation in printed and screen materials |
| **Week 7:** | Screen design applications | Final project draft, homework including peer review/critique of others’ projects |
| **Week 8:** | Production | **Final Project Due** |