

## INTRO TO VISUAL DESIGN

GD105 / Sec. 503 / 4 credits  
T/TH 10:10–11:40  
CDM 632

### INSTRUCTOR:

Jen Thomas  
[jthom116@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:jthom116@cdm.depaul.edu)

### OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesdays  
8:30–10:00 am  
CDM 709

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide an introduction to the principles of visual design, primarily through an analysis of cognitive and gestalt psychology. We will look at a variety of different types of techniques that can be used to evaluate visual design, and study what things can be used to make design more effective. During this course, we will examine the perceptual forces at work in our visual processes from the standpoint of their usefulness to visual artists. This class will introduce concepts of visual perception, composition and color theory, and how these are affected by movement, duration and display. This course is primarily a lecture class, but class time will also include discussions, critiques and lab (computer work) time. You are expected to work about 3–6 hours a week outside of class.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will focus on theories of how the mind processes visual information, and then practice the application of this learning to achieve effective visual communication. This course is designed specifically for the needs of Graphic Design, Game Development, Digital Cinema, Animation, and Interactive Media students (but all majors are welcome!) Everyone will receive an introduction to Adobe Photoshop (for raster graphics), Adobe Illustrator (for vector graphics) and Adobe Flash (for design in motion). However, learning software is secondary to our goal of gaining an understanding of the mechanisms of visual perception. Practical issues introduced include visual planning, typography, color palettes. Theoretical issues include composition (emphasis, rhythm, contrast, unity, balance, scale, hierarchies of information), movement, color, and spatial illusion.

## TEXTBOOKS

*Art & Visual Perception*, Rudolf Arnheim. Berkeley: Univ. of CA Press, 1974.

## SUPPLIES\*

Sketchbook  
Notebook or binder  
Pencil and black ink pen  
External hard drive/flash drive  
*\*always bring supplies to every class*

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Attendance is mandatory.** Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each class session. There are no excused absences. In the event of a missed class, it is the student's responsibility to catch up on any missed assignments. Missed lectures will not be repeated. After 2 absences, a student's grade will be lowered by 1 letter. Any student missing 4 classes or more will earn a grade of "F" for the quarter.

If a student is more than 5 minutes late for a class, it will count as tardy. Four tardies will count as an absence. If a student is 20 minutes (or more) late to class, it will count as an absence. If you're not in class, you're not participating and it will adversely affect your grade.

## EXCUSED ABSENCE

In order to petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or significant personal circumstances should complete the Absence Notification process through the Dean of Students office. The form can be accessed at [studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/forms.html](http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/forms.html). Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. The professor reserves the sole right whether to offer an excused absence and/or academic accommodations for an excused absence.

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## LATE WORK

In the client-driven design world, late work is rarely acceptable. In the case of this class, I will accept late work **1 class** beyond the due date and it will receive a letter grade deduction. Beyond 1 class late, it will be considered a 0. In the event of late work, it must be uploaded to D2L prior to the following class session to be accepted. Only work turned in on time will receive comments and feedback.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

Each week you will have a reading assignment from the texts, as well as a design project to complete. We will be having weekly/bi-weekly quizzes based on the readings, and weekly critiques of your projects. It is imperative that you show up on time, do the assigned reading and work promptly, etc. It's very easy to fall behind with such a schedule. There will not be a "mid-term exam", but there will be a final critique of class final projects on "final exam day."

## CLASS DISCUSSIONS AND CRITIQUES

Given the nature of this class, we'll be having discussions and lectures, in addition to weekly critiques. You are expected to participate in these exchanges in a professional manner. Participation in critiques and reviews is not optional and is a percentage of your final grade. You are expected to both comment on your peers' work as well as offer your work for feedback. When you're discussing someone else's work, treat them with respect. When someone else is talking about your work, don't take it personally. **Attendance on critique days is mandatory. If you have uploaded your project to D2L on time, yet fail to attend class on critique day, your project grade will be lowered by 1 letter.**

## GRADING

Projects will be graded on preparedness and professionalism of student; ability to articulate ideas and effectively respond to feedback; design concept; effectiveness of design solution; visual communication of elements and principles of design; effectiveness of typography and layout; and attention to detail, *including following directions* and utilizing exceptional craft in execution.

93–100%	A	73–76%	C	20%	Participation & Quizzes
90–92%	A-	70–72%	C-	50%	Weekly Projects
87–89%	B+	67–69%	D+	30%	Final Project
83–86%	B	60–66%	D		
80–82%	B-	59–0%	F		
77–79%	C+				

A = Superior performance; work excels consistently in all areas above

B = Exceeds basic expectations for all projects

C = Average performance; completion of all assignments on time and at an acceptable level

D = Less than satisfactory performance

F = Failure

## TURNING IN ASSIGNMENTS TO D2L.DEPAUL.EDU

All course-related documents and assignments will be posted to the DePaul D2L site. Unless instructed otherwise, all assigned work must be completed and submitted through the D2L system by the date and time specified under each assignment posting. There may be file size limits within the system around 20mb. You may also try compressing the file in a ZIP format. **DO NOT WAIT until the last minute to post your work.** Plan ahead and consider upload times, computer glitches, etc. To make sure a file has successfully uploaded, I advise you to download it to your computer and re-open it after posting to ensure success.

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## **ADDITIONAL POLICIES**

The use of cell phones, tablets, headphones, and gaming devices during class is strictly prohibited. The use of laptops and computers is also prohibited during lectures unless otherwise instructed. Turn off your phone before entering class. In addition, keep all food and drink out of the classroom. I reserve the right to lower a student's class participation grade in the event these policies are disregarded.

If you require assistance with a project/software or have questions about your performance, please schedule time during my office hours or pull me aside during class. I will do my best to respond to email inquiries, but there is no guarantee I will respond to specific questions swiftly. Don't take it personally—I have a lot of students to communicate with. Let's chat in class or my office.

## **COMPUTER LABS**

Computer labs are available for your use outside of class. For schedule information, please check here: [www.cdm.depaul.edu/cim/academics/Pages/CIMLabResources.aspx](http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/cim/academics/Pages/CIMLabResources.aspx). You'll need to swipe into the rooms with your DePaul ID, so please be sure it's activated.

## **ADDITIONAL WEB RESOURCES**

Please sign up for the DePaul Graphic Design Mail List:  
[mailman.depaul.edu/mailman/listinfo/design](http://mailman.depaul.edu/mailman/listinfo/design).

DePaul has recently acquired an institution-wide license for lynda.com, which is a fantastic resource for all kinds of technical training. You'll need to sign in with your DePaul user and password using the link found at [software.depaul.edu/training](http://software.depaul.edu/training). Lynda.com offers software tutorials for programs such as Photoshop, Illustrator, Flash, and loads of others.

## **ADDITIONAL TEXT RESOURCES**

*A Primer of Visual Literacy*, Dondis, MIT Paperback Press, 1973.

*Graphic Design: The New Basics*, Lupton and Phillips, Princeton Architectural Press, 2008.

*Principles of Two-Dimensional Design*, Wong, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1972

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at [academicintegrity.depaul.edu](http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu).

## **PLAGIARISM**

The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work any assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

## **RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (csd) at: Student Center, lpc, Suite #370; phone number: (773) 325 1677; fax: (773) 325 3720; tty: (773) 325 7296.

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## **WITHDRAWAL**

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system ([campusconnect.depaul.edu](http://campusconnect.depaul.edu)). Withdrawals processed via this system are effective the day on which they are made. Simply ceasing to attend, or notifying the instructor, or non-payment of tuition, does not constitute an official withdrawal from class and will result in academic as well as financial penalty.

## **RETROACTIVE WITHDRAWAL**

This policy exists to assist students for whom extenuating circumstances prevented them from meeting the withdrawal deadline. During their college career students may be allowed one medical/personal administrative withdrawal and one college office administrative withdrawal, each for one or more courses in a single term. Repeated requests will not be considered. Submitting an appeal for retroactive withdrawal does not guarantee approval.

College office appeals for CDM students must be submitted online via MyCDM. The deadlines for submitting appeals are as follows:

Autumn: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent winter quarter

Winter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent spring quarter

Spring: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter

Summer: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter

## **INCOMPLETE**

An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. cdm policy requires the student to initiate the request for incomplete grade before the end of the term in which the course is taken. Prior to submitting the incomplete request, the student must discuss the circumstances with the instructor. Students may initiate the incomplete request process in MyCDM.

- All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a cdm Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval.
- If approved, students are required to complete all remaining course requirement independently in consultation with the instructor by the deadline indicated on the incomplete request form.
- By default, an incomplete grade will automatically change to a grade of F after two quarters have elapsed (excluding summer) unless another grade is recorded by the instructor
- An incomplete grade does not grant the student permission to attend the same course in a future quarter.

*\*course syllabus and schedule subject to change at anytime throughout the quarter*

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Due dates and project details will be posted on D2L throughout the quarter  
Quiz dates will be announced in class

WEEK	DATE	ARNHEIM	TOPIC
One	Jan 6, 8	1–41	Balance
Two	13, 15	42–95	Shape
Three	20, 22	96–133	Form and Type
Four	27, 29	372–443	Animation
Five	Feb 3, 5		Movement
Six	10, 12	218–57	Space
Seven	17, 19	258–302	Space
Eight	24, 26	303–329	Light
Nine	Mar 3, 5	330–371	Color
Ten	10, 12		
Eleven	17	8:45–11:00 am	Final Critique

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