

Syllabus

JOU 3213 Design, Class #13031,
Fall 2025, 3 Credits

Time & Location

Mondays 6:15 - 8:10 PM
Weimer Hall, Room 2052

Office Hours

Tuesdays & Thursdays
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Instructor

David Kofahl
davidkofahl@jou.ufl.edu

You may also email me to make an appointment outside of normal office hours. I am available in person, zoom, or over the phone. Please allow me 48 hours to respond.

Course Description

This course provides an overview of the foundational principles of design, which includes composition, user-experience (UX) and usability, typography, multimedia, color theory, and information hierarchy. Classes are divided between lectures, tutorials, and production time. In lectures, students learn the fundamentals of design within the contexts of both digital communication and storytelling. Tutorials will teach the practical skills necessary for a basic proficiency in the tools used by professionals. The class heavily relies on participation through class discussion. We will review case-studies, debate the efficacy and merit of published news stories and digital campaigns, and hold in-class critiques of assignments. Students will take responsibility for participating in discussions and critiques, researching to find answers and sources of information, documenting and sharing information, problem solving, and asking questions. The class is largely project-based. The first four assignments will build on the basics of design and culminate in the final project, where students will combine everything they've learned to design a news story about a topic of their choosing.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be able to effectively communicate through the application of design knowledge and tools. This course will focus on the fundamentals of design along with learning how to conduct research, apply design methods, communicate with design language, identify strategies, produce content, and pitch design proposals.

We will focus on these main topics:

- **Design:** Understand and properly use design concepts and terminology.
- **Color:** Appreciate and apply color theory.
- **Typography:** Demonstrate mastery of typography.
- **Application:** Recognize and apply basic design principles and elements.
- **Art:** Make appropriate visual editing decisions and use of artwork.
- **Tools:** Show proficiency in Figma with an understanding of Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop.
- **Creativity:** Embrace creativity and explore unique ways to visually communicate ideas.

Platforms

Canvas is our central hub for the semester. Be sure to turn “on” notifications. LinkedIn Learning is our textbook. Weekly viewing links are posted in Canvas Announcements.

Textbook & Required Materials

There are no required textbooks for this class. All reading assignments will either be posted on Canvas or provided as handouts in class. However, you will be required to log into LinkedInLearning.com to watch software training tutorials throughout the semester. These are available for free to UF students [here](#) (this will be linked on Canvas).

Figma is the primary design software used in this course and will be required for all design assignments. You can acquire a free education account by following the instructions at <https://www.figma.com/education/apply>.

Adobe Creative Cloud Suite software, like Photoshop and Illustrator, may be useful in conjunction with Figma for class assignments. The classroom lab will have computers with this software on it. However, if you would like to purchase it for your own computer, UF IT offers students a discounted rate at <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/software-services/adobe/>.

And lastly, bring a sketch book and pen/pencil to every class so you can collect sketches, research, notes, etc.

Assignments & Grading

Breakdown of total possible points for each assignment (for a total of 1,000 points):

Project 1	100 points
Project 2	100 points
Project 3	100 points
Project 4	300 points
Labs (5 total)	100 points
Homework (5 total)	100 points
Attendance	200 points

Evaluation of Grades

These are the four main categories that will make up your final grade:

- **60% Projects** Includes four (4) projects.
- **10% Labs** LinkedIn Learning tutorials assigned as necessary.
- **10% Homework** Includes five (5) homework assignments.
- **20% Attendance.** Points are accumulated for only 10 sessions.

Please review the project rubrics on Canvas to understand the grading scales specific to each assignment.

Grading Scale

A	1000 - 940
A-	939 - 900
B+	899 - 870
B	869 - 830
B-	829 - 800
C+	799 - 770
C	769 - 730
C-	729 - 700
D+	699 - 670
D	669 - 630
D-	629 - 600
E	590 - 0

More information on grades and grading policies is here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Deadlines

Deadlines are a necessary part of the communication and journalism world and a missed due-date represents an empty story page or lost client work. Projects, homework, and labs are due to Canvas on the assigned due date.

For every day past the deadline on Canvas, your labs, homework, and projects will lose points:

LABS/HOMEWORK

Due to Canvas = -2 points (10%) per day after the deadline.

PROJECTS

(1) Final Critique = -15% if you miss critique. (2) Due to Canvas = -10% if submitted late.

Make-up Work

You are eligible for make-up work only in the event of an excused absence. Work may be different from what is originally assigned. It is your responsibility to ask for make-up work within a week of the absence. If you are absent or tardy it is your responsibility to obtain missed information from another student in the class. If you cannot reach out to another student, please reach out to me. But please give me at least a 48 hour time frame to reply to all Canvas and email messaging.

Process Book

This is a collection of your progress both in and out of class. You are encouraged to record anything interesting in your journal as you see fit. The postings can include sketches, photographs, type in interesting places, designers, thoughts, concepts, ideas, process and much more. This sketchbook will help you build ideas, improve your concepts, or revisit old ideas. Your process notebook will be checked after every project submission, in order to help observe your process and concepts.

These process books will be graded along with your project submission. Minimum of one (1) page required.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. This class is categorized as mostly in-classroom, however there may be occasions when I need to travel for work. Any class that falls on a day when I am out of town will be held online. I will provide two-weeks notice for classes held over Zoom.

You are permitted two (2) unexcused absences in the semester without penalty to your grade. No explanation necessary. After your second unexcused absence, the instructor may lower your attendance grade 10 points (out of 200 points total) for each additional absence. Excused absences include religious holidays, a verifiable death in the immediate family, or with a doctor's note. If you are sick, please stay home.

Requirements for class attendance, make-up assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. [Click here to read the university attendance policies.](#)

Academic Honesty Policy

Honesty: All students are required to adhere to the University of Florida Honor Code. Plagiarism, such as turning in or altering the work of others, will result in a failing final grade.

There is a huge difference between inspiration and blatantly copying someone's work. All designs submitted for class assignments must be produced during the 2024 fall semester. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

Full information regarding these policies is available at www.registrar.ufl.edu and www.dso.ufl.edu.

Respect

The University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications Department of Journalism embraces a commitment toward an intellectual community enriched and enhanced by respect for fellow students.. We expect each of our journalism courses to help foster an understanding of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society. Furthermore, I would like to create a learning environment for my students that supports a range of perspectives and experiences. To help accomplish this:

- If you have a name that differs from that which appears in your official records, please let me know.
- If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me.

- If you prefer to speak with someone outside of the course, Joanna Hernandez, CJC Director of Community and Culture, is an excellent resource. You can email her at jhernandez@jou.ufl.edu.
- If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should first register with the Disability Resource Center at (352) 392-8565 or <https://disability.ufl.edu/> by providing appropriate documentation.

Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Counseling & Wellness

Resources are available on campus for students who experience personal problems or lack clear career and academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance. Find out more information at <https://counseling.ufl.edu> or (352) 392-1575.

University Police Department: (352) 392-1111 or 911 for emergencies.

Course Schedule

(Schedule, lecture topics, and deadlines are subject to modification)

	Lesson	Project	Homework	Labs
Week 1 Aug 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Course Overview and Syllabus			
Week 2 Sep 1	Holiday, No Class			
Week 3 Sep 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Overview of Graphic Design PrinciplesHistory of Graphic Design, Part I	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Project 1 Assigned	Homework 1 Due	
Week 4 Sep 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fundamentals of Shape and Color	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Final Critique Project 1		
Week 5 Sep 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fundamentals of Typography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Project 1 DueProject 2 Assigned		
Week 6 Sep 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Layout, User Experience, and Responsive DesignThe Design Process and Production Workflow		Homework 2 Due	
Week 7 Oct 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Developing a Visual Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Final Critique Project 2		
Week 8 Oct 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Storyboarding and the Design Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Project 2 DueProject 3 Assigned		
Week 9 Oct 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Visual Storytelling Techniques and Incorporating Multimedia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Project 1 DueProject 3 Assigned		
Week 10 Oct 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Design Workflows and Processes of the Newsroom		Homework 3 Due	
Week 11 Nov 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">AI and the Contemporary Media Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Final Critique Project 3		
Week 12 Nov 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Research-Based Design & User Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Project 3 DueProject 4 Assigned		
Week 13 Nov 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Creating and Pitching Design Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Final Critique Project 4	Homework 4 Due	
Week 14 Nov 24	Holiday, No Class			
Week 15 Dec 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Project 4 Class Presentations		Homework 5 Due	
Week 16 Dec 8	Reading Week, No Class or final exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Project 4 Due 12/8/24		