VIC5006 – Foundations of Design for Communicators

Academic Term: Fall 2026
3 **Credit Hours**

Instructor
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Course Description and Prerequisites

Course Description:
In this course, the students will be introduced to the principles of visual communication design and examine those principles through the lens of Public Interest Communications. Students will experiment with type, image, color, and shape to design visual messages and apply the design method to solve a communication problem. Students will apply the design method through a hands-on approach to weekly projects that build on one another and accumulate to the final project.

Course Prerequisites – N/A

Course Expectations

This course is fully online; you must log in to Canvas with your Gatorlink username and password to access the materials and assignments. The course is organized into modules with due dates. Unless otherwise specified, each module begins on Monday at 12:00 AM ET and ends on Sunday at 11:59 PM ET.

Time Commitment & Student Workload Expectations
Expect to spend 10 to 20 hours per week per course watching or attending lectures, reading, working on assignments and projects, and engaging in discussions.

Expectations for Writing Assignments: Writing Style
To meet the academic rigor and standards of a graduate program, all students must use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition style in their courses when appropriate for the assignment. The APA 7th Edition Manual has a plethora of guidelines that include scholarly writing, publishing principles, elements and format for your papers, writing style and grammar, bias-free language guidelines, mechanics of style, in-text citing references, etc. For additional information on notable changes, see changes between APA 6th Edition and APA 7th Edition.

Attendance Policy
Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. Click here to read the university attendance policies for information on absences, religious holidays,

illness, and the twelve-day rule. Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the Graduate Catalog and require appropriate documentation.

Late Assignment Policy
Late assignments will not be accepted unless it is a University excused absence, as stated in the attendance policies. ***Due to the university grading deadlines, no late work will be accepted for final projects or work due in the final week of class.*** Students should contact their instructors before submitting the assignment deadline if potential issues arise concerning submitting the final work.

1. Late Assignment Grade Reductions
   a. 0-24 Hours Late: 10% reduction in grade.
   b. Over 24 Hours (24 hours and 1 minute) to 7 Calendar Days Late: 20% reduction in grade.
   c. After the 7th Calendar Day: Work will not be accepted.
2. Late Discussions will not be accepted.

Student Guidelines for Course Challenges
A student with questions regarding course content such as assignments, assessments, instructional materials, lectures, meetings, course objectives, course module objectives, or other areas of the course, please adhere to the following guidelines: First, *approach the faculty member who is teaching the course* to ask for clarifications regarding the course assignments, assessments, materials, lectures, meetings, etc. Use the instructor's contact information to request an appointment where you can address any concerns and/or questions. If, after meeting with *the faculty member teaching the course,* you are still unclear on the course assignments, assessments, materials, lectures, meetings, etc., then the next step would be to contact online advising (onlineadvising@jou.ufl.edu) for additional guidance.

Accessibility/Students with Disabilities Information
Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/It is important for students to share their accommodation letters with their instructors and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation
Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals,
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or
3. The central portal at https://my-ufl.bluera.com

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/."

Course-Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the role of design in communication. (CO: 1)
2. Examine the influence of art in design. (CO: 2)

3. Evaluate a design's visual form. (CO: 3)
4. Analyze design principles. (CO: 4)
5. Create compositions using the Gestalt theory and principles of design. (CO: 5)
6. Examine the relationship of word and image. (CO: 6)
7. Apply typographic elements. (CO: 7)
8. Create hierarchy and narrative to communicate a message. (CO: 8)
9. Apply the design method to solve a communication problem. (CO: 9)
10. Identify the role of a designer in the design industry. (CO: 10)
11. Apply methods of critique to design work. (CO: 11)

(CO = Course-Level Objective)

Textbooks and Materials

Required Course Textbook(s)

Balliet, A. (2020). Killer Visual Strategies. John Wiley & Sons. 51-114.

- ISBN 9781119680222
- ISBN 1119680220

DiMarco, J. (2010). Digital design for print and web: An introduction to theory, principles, and techniques. *Wiley and Sons*. Available as e-book in UF Libraries (VPN required for access).

- ISBN-10: 0470398361
- ISBN-13: 978-0-470-39836-4

Lankow, J., Ritchie, J., & Crooks, R. (2012*).* Infographics: The power of visual storytelling. *Wiley and Sons*. Available as e-book in UF Libraries (VPN required for access).

- ISBN-10: 1118314042
- ISBN-13: 978-1118314043

Lupton, E. (2010). Thinking with Type: A critical guide for designers, writers, editors, and students. (Revised, Expanded ed.). *Princeton Architectural Press*.

- ISBN-10: 1568989695
- ISBN-13: 978-1568989693

Walter, E., & Gioglio, J. (2014). *The power of visual storytelling: how to use visuals, videos, and social media to market your brand*. Mcgraw-Hill.

- ISBN-13: 978-0071823937
- ISBN-10: 007182393X

Sam & Rosie the Riveter. Chapter 4. In Signs of resistance: A visual history of protest in AmericaLinks to an external site.

- ISBN-13: 978-1579658663
- ISBN-10: 1579658660

Recommended Textbook(s)

This textbook is recommended in all CJC Online classes to support student expectations for writing style.

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style* (7th ed.).

- ISBN-13: 978-1433832161
- ISBN-10: 143383216X

Materials (Supplies can be obtained from Staples, Michael's, Walmart)

- Sketch pad with grid paper or blank copy paper to document the process.
- 8.5 x 11 Tracing Paper.
- Black ink pens, sharpie markers, pencils.
- Steel ruler with cork backing (18").
- Digital Camera (phone camera is acceptable).

Instructional materials for this course consist of only those materials specifically reviewed, selected, and assigned by the instructor(s). The instructor(s) is only responsible for these instructional materials.

University and Course Grading Policies

University Honor Code

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. 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." The Conduct Code specifies the number of behaviors that violate this code and the possible sanctions. Click here to read the Conduct Code. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unacceptable, especially in academic communities. All academic work must be an original work of your own thought, research, or self-expression. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to, prohibited collaboration, consultation, and submission of academic work that has been purchased or obtained (see the UF Policy: Student Conduct Violation). In addition, self-plagiarism is also unacceptable. Self-plagiarism is defined as recycling or reusing one's own specific words from previously submitted assignments or published texts. Remember that plagiarism is unacceptable in any of your work, including all discussion board posts, journal entries, wikis, and other written and oral presentation assignments. It's important to always cite your sources in your assignments.

Grading Criterion

Your grade will be calculated based on the following:

Discussion Boards (10%)

You will be provided with 4 discussion prompts that require you to think critically about the module materials and respond with a substantive and scholarly submission. To encourage discussion amongst the class, reply to at least two other students' posts with a substantive and scholarly response. A substantive response adds scholarly value to the discussion by bringing new ideas, research, evidence, etc. to the conversation. Responses should be open-ended and

add value to the conversation, short statements such as “I agree,” “Ditto,” etc., are not acceptable replies and the rules of Netiquette must be followed. Replies should be professional and proper rules of writing must be applied including citations and references (do not plagiarize).

Visual Journal (20%)
You will submit 5 journal entries. The purpose of the journal in this course is to practice analyzing visual communication images critically, applying the principles you learn throughout the course to current and historical visual communications to understand why certain compositions are more effective than others. Analyzing various design compositions will help you critically think about the course learning materials and synthesize the information, developing a critical eye for design to make informed decisions. Use proper grammar, word choice, syntax (arrangement of words to create well-formed sentences), and writing mechanics (capitalization, punctuation, and spelling) in your journal as well as proper citing and referencing of all your sources.

Design Challenges (35%)
You will complete 6 design challenges. The design challenges in this course were designed for you to learn by doing, applying the principles in the course to small projects that require you to manipulate graphical elements and think critically about the decisions you make. Each design challenge will have a specific set of guidelines that must be met, showing that you understand the principles. You will be required to complete the design challenge and then present your work and summarize the process and design decisions made. You will prepare talking points to present your final solutions, referencing the principles learned in the materials provided. Depending on the complexity of the design challenge, you will be required to submit sketches first to show how you thought through the design solution, and then finalize 1-3 concepts depending on the feedback you receive.

Design challenges will be evaluated according to three criteria. Conceptual Development, Design Execution, and Craftsmanship. Each design challenge can be revised once for a higher grade if there is a significant improvement to the composition, revisions must be approved by the instructor. Revising your work will help you internalize the information and apply it to the following projects. Each assignment builds on the previous one, so it will be important that you meet deadlines, participate in design critiques, and are open and willing to learn and evolve throughout the course.

5-Part Final Project (35%)
The course will culminate with one final project broken up into 5 modules: Gathering and defining the problem, developing a creative brief, gathering inspiration, developing, and pitching concepts, and presenting the final designs. The purpose of the final project is to guide you to solve a specific community problem using the design method. You will be required to not only present the final outcome of the design method, but you will also have to document the process you took to arrive at the solution by explaining the method of discovery, outlining various possibilities derived through brainstorming, showing design sketches and explorations in typography and composition, and finally executing the final design. Each module builds on the previous one, so it will be important that you meet deadlines, participate in design critiques, and are open and willing to learn and evolve throughout the process.

Expectations for Writing Assignments: Writing Style
To meet the academic rigor and standards of a graduate program, all students are required to use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition style in their courses. The APA 7th Edition Manual has a plethora of guidelines that includes scholarly writing, publishing principles, elements, and format for your papers, writing style and grammar, bias-free language guidelines, mechanics of style, intext citing and references, etc. For additional information on notable changes, see changes between APA 6th Edition and APA 7th Edition.

Expectations for Design Assignments: Design is a craft, and the only way to learn how to think critically about design and visual communication is to experience the process. Whether you pursue a career as an individual contributor, direct creative projects, or collaborate in teams to execute visual communication challenges experiencing the art of making is an important part of the process. The expectation for this course is you will willingly participate in the design challenges with curiosity and a willingness to learn about the craft of design, following all the required steps in the assignments is required to arrive at the final solution. Documenting the process of your work will be included in the final grade for the assignment.

The course is structured to adapt to the range of experience you have with design and every assignment has been created with layers of complexity depending on your skill level. This is not a course about software, you will not receive instruction on how to use software, although resources will be provided should you need assistance.

Assignments/Assessments	Weight (%)
Course Orientation: These assignments are required; however, they not count towards the final grade. • Student Introduction • Course Evaluation	0%
4 Discussions • Worth up to 100 points each.	10%
5 Visual Journal Entries • Worth up to 100 points each.	20%
6 Design Challenges • Worth up to 100 points each.	35%
5-Part Final Project • Worth up to 100 points.	35%
TOTAL	**100%**

Grade	Percentage
A	**92.5-100%**
A-	**89.5-92.4%**
B+	**86.5-89.4%**
B	**82.5-86.4%**
B-	**79.5-82.4%**
C+	**76.5-79.4%**
C	**72.5-76.4%**
C-	**69.5-72.4%**
D+	**66.5-69.4%**
D	**62.5-66.4%**
D-	**59.5-62.4%**
E	**0 – 59.4%**

The only passing grades for graduate students are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, and C. Letter grades of C-, D+, D, D- or E are not considered passing at the graduate level. However, the grade points associated with these letter grades are included in grade point average calculations. See the Graduate Catalog and UF graduate school grading policy for more information.

Student Privacy
Federal laws protect your privacy regarding grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the Notification to Students of FERPA Rights.

Technology Requirements

Software Use
All faculty, staff, and students at the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Software

- Microsoft Office 365.
- UF Apps – access UF software applications from any device from any location at any time.
- Adobe Reader
- Zoom
- Adobe Illustrator or Spark/ Express / Canva
- Adobe Sketch

Technical Support

If you have technical difficulties with your course, don't hesitate to contact the UF Computing Help Desk by filling out an online request form or calling 352-392-4357 (HELP).

If your technical difficulties cause you to miss a due date, you must report the problem to the Help Desk and then email your instructor. Include the ticket number you are given from the Help Desk in an email to the instructor to explain the late assignment/quiz/test.

IT Support
For all Technical assistance questions, please get in touch with the UF Computing Help Desk.
Phone: 352-392-HELP (4357)
Email: helpdesk@ufl.edu

Communication Policies

Announcements
You are responsible for reading all announcements posted in the course each time you log in.

Email
You are responsible for reading all your course emails and responding promptly (within 24 hours).

Instructor Communications

Email Policy

Except for weekends, holidays, and University breaks, the instructor will typically respond to emails within 48 hours. For course-related questions, please post on the Canvas FAQ discussion board. If you have questions of a personal nature, please email me directly.

Assignment Feedback Policy

I will provide feedback/grades on submitted assignments within two weeks of the due date. Some assignments may require a longer review period, which I will communicate to you if necessary.

Course Policies

Video Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal, educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Privacy

If your course includes live synchronous meetings, the class sessions will all be recorded for students in the class to refer to and for enrolled students who cannot attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilized a profile image agree to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who unmute during class and participate agree to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. Please see UF's Information Technology policies for additional information.

Challenging Topics

In this course, we may cover subjects that may be sensitive and/or challenging. As in all our courses, we do this not to indoctrinate but to instruct, to prepare you to be the most effective and successful media professional or scholar you

can be. We encourage you to understand all concepts presented in class, but we know that what you personally believe is your choice. If you want to discuss anything regarding this, don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Academic and Student Resources

Academic Resources

- E-learning Technical Support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 (HELP) or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- Career Connection Center: Career assistance and counseling. Reitz Union, Phone: 352-392-1601.
- Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance concerning using the libraries or finding resources.
  UF Library Services for Distance Students
  Ask a Librarian – chat with librarians online.
  CJC Librarian - April Hines, Phone: 352-273-2728, Email: aprhine@uflib.ufl.edu.
- Writing Studio: Provides one-on-one consultations and workshops tailored to specific classes (graduate and undergraduate). 302 Tigert Hall, Phone: 352-846-1138.

Health and Wellness

- *U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, call 352-294-2273, or visit the website to refer or report a concern, and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center:* Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis and non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit the Student Health Care Center website.
- University Police Department: Visit the UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal well-being, including wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

Student Fees and Service Entitlement

Student Fees

There are fees mandated by the state and one local fee that ALL students must pay per credit hour. Visit the University Bursar for up-to-date fee rates.

- Capital Improvement Trust Fund Fee
- Technology Fee

- Student Financial Aid Fee [not applicable for certificate programs]

Student services and entitlements

The student services that the distance student is entitled to are comparable to those of the resident student and should include the following:

- Eligibility for financial aid and financial aid advising [not applicable for certificate programs]
- Student complaints and concerns
- Student counseling and advising
- Student organizations
- Technology assistance

Course Schedule Course Schedule	
Week Number	**Topic and Assignments**
1	THE VISUAL CONNECTION: Discussion 1 – **Classes Begin August 20th**
2	THE VISUAL FOUNDATIONS: Visual Journal 1, Design Challenge 1
3	THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES: Visual Journal 2, Design Challenge 2
4	DESIGN OF CHARACTER: Visual Journal 3, Design Challenge 3
5 & 6	SHAPING THE PAGE: Discussion 2, Design Challenge 4
7	VISUAL CLARITY THROUGH DESIGN: Visual Journal 4, Design Challenge 5
8 & 9	DESIGN FOR GOOD: Final Project Part 1, Design Critique (Work in Progress), Design Challenge 6
10	CREATIVITY: Discussion 3, Visual Journal 5
11	VISUAL TONE: Discussion 4, Final Project Part 2; Mood Boards
12	THE DESIGN METHOD: Discussion 5, Final Project Part 3; Promotional Piece
13 & 14	COMMUNICATION DESIGN: Final Project Part 4 (A), Final Part Four (B)
15	Thanksgiving Break
16	EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION: Final Project 5; Presentation – **Last Day of Class December 2nd**

The instructor reserves the right to adjust this syllabus as necessary.