Course Syllabus: Graphic Design II ART 2713-101 / ART 3703 - 101

MW 9:00 am-11:50 am; C115F

Fall, 2025

Contact Information:

Instructor: Ernest Nsimbe, Assistant Professor

Office: C107 Fain Fine Arts

Office hours: Tues: 10:00 am - 12 noon; Thur: 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm; Fridays 11:00 am - noon and by

appointment. **(Email Subject: ART 2713-101 / ART 3703-101)**

Office phone: (940) 397-2801

E-mail: ernest.nsimbe@msutexas.edu

Syllabus Disclaimer

The information in this syllabus is subject to change. Changes to the course syllabus will be provided in writing and announced via course-wide announcements.

Course Description

Prerequisite(s): No prerequisite, but if you are an art major, you must complete Computers for Artists, and Graphic Design I before this course.

This course aims to reinforce and further explore the fundamental skills, principles, and tools required for effective visual communication.

Course Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will have completed an introduction to:

1. An understanding of visual communication core competencies
2. An understanding of design processes and methods [i.e., making]
3. An understanding of professional practice
4. An understanding of ethical practices in graphic design

5. An understanding of copyright, trademark laws, and how to navigate intellectual property issues in professional practice

6. An understanding to vocabulary so they can be able to talk to vendors, service providers and their employers for professional practice in graphic design.

Course Objective:

During this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a knowledge of the Macintosh operating system/Windows operating system.

2. Define the basic computer terminology used in graphic design.

3. Demonstrate a basic/ further their knowledge of the Adobe Creative Suite.

4. Further their knowledge of scanners and the printing process.

5. Apply the elements of design, principles of design, and Gestalt principles for both compositional and communication purposes.

6. Employ research and documentation in the design process, addressing precedent and audience to develop informed design decisions.

7. Learn to create a concept to amplify content, while also developing sensitivity to typography, symbolism, language, and text.

8. Utilize analog and digital production methods and refine the use of graphic design software. (Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign) with attention to detail and craft.

9. Employ a systematic understanding of productivity best practices such as version control, file naming & organization, efficiency, speed, intuition, and time management.

10. An introduction to and discussion of the ethical use of copyright and image sourcing, artificial intelligence (AI), accessibility, and communicating with sensitivity to context, audience, and culture.

11. Create excellent portfolio pieces that visually communicate through the embodiment of form and function.

Course Materials

Have the required materials with you every day. I will specify any additional materials for the assignments. There is no required textbook. I will provide links for the required readings.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance 10% (Should we move to remote learning? Your attendance will be counted through D2L login and access.)
2. In-class exercises 15%
3. Artwork and Research 60%
4. Critiques 15%

Required materials

o Laptop with Creative Cloud installed.

o Sketchbook and drawing/note-taking materials of your choice.

o Cell phone camera.

o External hard drive.

Optional materials

o Mouse, Wacom tablet, or another alternative to a trackpad.

o An iPad or other drawing tablet with the necessary software.

o Graph paper.

o Small ruler.

Software Used in This Class

In this course, students will use industry-standard software as needed for project requirements. Training and resources will be provided by instructors as necessary to ensure students have the skills to work effectively and meet course objectives.

o Adobe Illustrator (foundational level)

o Adobe Photoshop (foundational level)

o Adobe InDesign (foundational level)

o Adobe Acrobat

Learning Activities

o Watch lectures and or other media

o Read D2L instructions and any assigned readings.

o Participate in workshops or exercises.

- Participate in discussions. (group/ small groups, progress reviews, critiques)
- Execute assignments.

Learning resources

Recommended Text:

These textbooks are not required. All but one are online. I need no textbooks for this course, although other sections might.

- **Visual Communication Design:** Introduction to Design Concepts in Everyday Experience (2017), by Meredith Davis and Jamer Hunt
- **Design Elements:** Form and Space by Dennis M. Puhalla, 2021. Second edition, first digital edition (2011)
- **Making and Breaking the Grid:** A Graphic Design Layout Workbook, Timothy Samara, Rockport Publishers; New Ed edition, 2017)
- **Graphic Design and Print Production Fundamentals**, by Collins/Hass/Jeffery/Martin/Medeiros/Tomljanovic
- **Layout Essentials Revised and Updated: 100 Design Principles for Using Grids**, by Beth Tondreau
- **The Production Manual, 2nd Edition,** by Gavin Ambrose & Paul Harris
- **The Design Process, Third Edition,** by Karl Aspelund
- **Graphic Design Thinking: Beyond Brainstorming**, by Ellen Lupton
- **Guide to Graphic Design,** by Scott W. Santoro
- **Know Your Onions (Graphic Design),** by Drew de Soto
- **Graphic Design for Everyone,** by Cath Caldwell
- **Graphic Artists Guild Handbook: Pricing & Ethical Guidelines, 16th Edition,** by The Graphic Artists Guild
- **Graphic Design Fundamentals: An Introduction & Workbook for Beginners, by Kris Taft Miller Graphic Design School: The Principles and Practice of Graphic Design,** by David Dabner
- **The Graphic Design Reference & Specification Book,** by Poppy Evans
- **Design is Storytelling,** by Ellen Lupton

Learning resources

https://www.Linkedin.com/learning/

http://bezier.method.ac (learning Pen Tool)

http://type.method.ac (learning Kerning)

Additional Resources

- o Graphic Design Sources, by Kenneth Hiebert
- o Graphic Design Processes, by Kenneth Heibert
- o http://designobserver.com
- o http://www.atissuejournal.com
- o http://www.aiga.org/
- o http://www.typography.com/
- o https://fonts.adobe.com

Expectations

Engagement and Professionalism:

- o Actively engage with the material and cultivate curiosity.
- o Participate in discussions, ask questions, and show genuine interest.
- o Demonstrate professionalism by being punctual, prepared, and organized.
- o Take detailed notes, carefully follow instructions, and meet deadlines.
- o Embrace revisions as a critical part of the creative process.
- o Communicate proactively; for example, if an emergency requires you to take a personal call, notify me in advance.

Class time and conduct.

- o Use class time exclusively for activities related to this course, such as sketching, ideation, production, and research.
- o Avoid working on assignments for other courses during class hours
- o Headphones are allowed during individual work periods to support focus
- o Silence your phone and turn off notifications to prevent disruptions
- o Be on time (or better yet, be a little early).
- o On work in class days, please set mobile devices to vibrate.

- Please turn mobile devices off on critique, lecture, and presentation days.
- Submit projects neat and orderly and ensure that your name, course number, and project number are included on every single file you submit.
- Digital craft will be stressed throughout the semester. This includes image quality, file organization, and overall presentation for anything submitted (Keynote, PDF, etc.). The understanding is that to complete the assignments well, you will need to spend at least as much time outside of class working as the class is scheduled for in a week. There will be in-class time devoted to working to get help with troubleshooting, but this will not be enough time to complete the assignments satisfactorily. Back up your digital work. With storage devices' current size and affordability, there is no excuse for losing digital files. Get in the habit of doing regular back-ups.

Commitment:

Studio Access

Expected Workload: The generally accepted ratio of outside-of-class study and preparation for college-level coursework is two to three times the amount of in-class contact with your professor. Therefore, you should invest 6-10 hours per week outside of class to complete coursework successfully outside of class meetings.

The Mac lab is available whenever scheduled classes are not in session.

IF YOU ARE IN THE BUILDING AFTER CLASS HOURS, YOU MUST BE ABLE TO PROVIDE YOUR STUDENT ID AND PROOF OF ENROLLMENT IN CLASS IF AN OFFICER ASKS FOR IT. IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM AND NEED ASSISTANCE, CALL THE CAMPUS POLICE AT 397-4239.

Studio Maintenance

General studio clean-up will be the last 10 minutes of each class session. Students will maintain discipline in studio safety precautions, maintenance, and upkeep throughout the semester. The instructor will drop those students unwilling to participate actively in those goals. Follow the lab rules posted in the lab.

Feedback:

You will receive frequent feedback from your instructor and classmates throughout the course. Regular opportunities for self-reflections / evaluations and discussions will also be provided to support your development.

Process:

For this course, you will be asked to be thoughtful and creative in approaching your projects. You will also be asked to demonstrate how you arrived at every submission. To do this, you will need to document, collect, and organize your research throughout the entire semester.

This final process documentation will be in printed and digital form. Process documentation will be graded on the thoroughness of the investigation, creativity in approach, and diversity in the exploration. It will contain sketches, storyboards, documentation (images of photos/videos), critical analysis, reflections, observations, research findings, & etc. Everything should be included with intent. This means that things like images and texts that you've collected include notes and analysis. Do not simply post pages or content from the web. It will show if you haven't taken time to analyze and reflect on what you are including as part of your research. Save all your processes and keep them organized. When working to design a book, it is easy to lose track of your process as you move from one phase of a project to another.

Work Submissions:

All work must include digital submissions, which must be made via electronic file transfer (not email). The following are requirements for digital submissions. Failure to adhere to any of these will result in a project grade deduction:

o   artwork must be packaged appropriately (image files, fonts, etc., made available)

o   artwork for logos, applications, and sign design should NOT be rasterized

o   must be submitted via electronic transfer (no thumb-drive submissions)

If your document doesn't open wholly and accurately, it receives a zero. Your folders must be named in the following format: all files inside that folder must be named the same, with their various extensions as appropriate.

For example:

2713/ 3703_Lastname_projX (outer folder)

2713/ 3703_Lastname_projX.indd

2713/ 3703_Lastname_projX.pdf

2713/ 3703_Lastname_projX.docx

Any file that does NOT arrive in the correct format will not be accepted. Points will be taken off for each missing or incorrectly formatted item, which could affect your final grade dramatically. **This is a non-negotiable policy.** Your final designs will be kept on file in a digital archive. We reserve the right to use these in the future as educational aids in the graphic design program.

Course standards and instructional methods

We meet twice a week. I will typically present content to the class for the first 20 - 60 minutes. **PLEASE TAKE NOTES** — do not trust your brain to retain new information you passively receive while listening to a lecture. Active student participation is encouraged through learning activities, including individual and/or collaborative learning, lecture, guided discussion and feedback sessions, student presentations, and personal/group-based exercises and projects. Students should bring all materials they need to work to class. Lack of preparation and preparedness will affect grades. Not following instructions can result in the loss of a full letter grade. Time management is an integral part of any learning process or creative project. Review of student work can take several forms, ranging from wall critiques that engage the entire class at one time to one-on-one Critiques (Crits) or feedback sessions with individual students.

Critiques/presentations

Critiques: Critiques are formal discussions that sometimes can happen as group discussions and sometimes can be individual discussions. During a critique, every project will be evaluated. It is essential to bring all research, sketches, notes, ideation, and project development for discussion. Critiques and presentation skills are a crucial part of the learning environment. Your dialog with your fellow students about your work helps you grow and learn as a designer. The discussions you have about their work help you build your skills to analyze and communicate about the work of others. Attending every critique and being entirely prepared is in your best interest. Class critiques cannot be made up should you be absent. In this class, there will be one-on-one desk critiques, minor group critiques, and complete class critiques at key points within the project. During small group and complete class critiques, everyone involved is expected to participate for the entire time. These will be identified on the schedule for each project.

During the critique, you will be given a lot of feedback and information in a very short amount of time. It is up to you to determine a method for capturing this information that works best for you. The discussions that occur during a critique or in a presentation are impossible to recall later, and it is, therefore, recommended that if you do not already have a strategy for this, you should develop one. At a minimum, you should be taking notes. Consider asking another student to take notes for you.

There are two kinds of analysis of student work:

Pin-up Critiques: These informal group discussions use student exercises, projects, and research as touchstones for further exploration. All students participate where a class that looks for common themes and problems—examples of successful and unsuccessful solutions. Not every student's work will be discussed. The goal is to generate a group dialogue.

Grading

Your course and project grades will be based on the process and the final work. Each project rubric will outline the specific expectations and criteria. For information on how to view your grades, please refer to D2L.

You are allowed two class absences for the semester, no exceptions. Each absence beyond the second absence will reduce your final grade by one full letter grade, for example, from an A to a B, from a B to a C, etc.

Course Grading

All assignments must be completed and presented in the specified formats on the due dates given. Failure to submit a finished design presentation solution, as specified, will result in an F for that assignment. Assignments will not be accepted after the specified due date and time.

A 100% – 93.0 % **A-** <93.00% – 90.0%

B+ < 90.0 % – 87.0% **B** < 87.0 % – 83.0% **B-** < 83.0 % – 80.0%

C+ < 80.0 % – 77.0% **C** < 77.0 % – 73.0% **C-** < 73.0 % – 70.0%

D+ < 70.0 % – 67.0% **D** < 67.0 % – 63.0% **D-** < 63.0 % – 60.0%

F < 60.0 % – 0.0%

Evaluation Explanation:

A=Superior work. Excellent development in skill, exploration, and expression.

B=Above average development in skill, exploration, and expression.

C=Average work. Meeting the assignment requirements. Recommend a greater need for study in academic comprehension and technical skills.

Below average performance. Requires greater study to improve academic understanding, perceptual, and technical skills.

Performance indicates little progress in academic understanding, perceptual, and technical skills.

Quality of work is not on the level of the necessary time and study. Showing little willingness or effort to improve skills.

All work is expected to be completed and ready for presentation at the assigned date. It is essential to stay up to date with assignments and projects. Late work is unacceptable. Every effort must be made to turn projects in on time. YOU are responsible for finding out what work was missed during your absence, and turning in work missed due to your absence. I will not remind you that a project was due during your absence.

Attendance, Absence, and Lateness: Department–Wide Policy as of Spring 2016

Students enrolled in the Juanita and Ralph Harvey School of Visual Arts must comply with the following department-wide Attendance, Absence, and Lateness Policy:

- Students arriving ten minutes after class begins will be considered late and counted absent.

- THREE late arrivals count as a single absence.

- Students may be absent from class **TWO** times without penalty and without providing any documentation regarding the absence.

- If students incur a **THIRD** absence, their final course evaluation will be reduced by a full letter grade.

- If students are absent or late FIVE times, whatever the reason, they will receive a FAILING GRADE, be dropped from the class roll, and be asked to stop attending class.

- Students are required to remain in class for the entire class session. Students will earn an absence if they leave BEFORE the professor has dismissed class.

Faculty members can make exceptions to this policy based on individual circumstances.

Project evaluation

Research and Process: You will submit a PDF containing all research, process, and development for every project submitted in this course.

Your Research and Process will include:

- o Both native files and a high-resolution PDF
- o Research (include how research relates to your project and include all URLs
- o Ideation, analysis, and process: thumbnails, sketches, type, grid tests, color studies, photo/image manipulation experiments, laser output, inspirational samples, notes to self, etc.
- o Creative Strategy
- o Visual Language: Explain how your font(s), color(s), image(s), live area/page size, etc., relate to your creative strategy.

Course breakdown

CLIENT: Who is your client?

OBJECT: What object or objects will your design be applied to?

TOPIC: What is the subject or theme that connects to your proposal?

Each assignment will involve custom art design through symbolism built to a specific order. The client usually gives directions or asks designers for suggestions to create something unique. Custom designs include anything, from dresses to utensils, t-shirts, and shoes. If something is custom-made, it is made according to someone's special requirements. In the proposals, you must use symbolism, which refers to the use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities.

<div align="center">

Health and Safety

</div>

Department of Art will endeavor to comply with the intent of state laws or acts and the University Health and Safety Program to maintain a safe academic and working environment.

The mission of the Midwestern State University Counseling Center is to provide opportunities for students to know themselves as individuals, to form deeper relationships with their peers, and to increase their wellness. The staff of the MSU Counseling Center provides these opportunities through individual and group counseling services, consultation, and mental health educational programs focused on key student development issues and reflecting concern for holistic health and wellness. As providers of mental health services to the student population, the staff are guided by their profession's

highest professional and ethical standards. Our personal, academic, and career counseling services are directed towards enhancing the skills students bring to MSU and encouraging the development of skills that will increase their success both at MSU and beyond.

Meeting the Counseling Needs of MSU Students

LOCATION

Corner of Hampstead and Louis J. Rodriguez Drive

Hours of Operation:

8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday and Thursday

8:00. a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday

Phone: 940-397-4618

<h3 style="text-align:center">Academic Dishonesty and Student Creed</h3>

The university policy and procedures for academic dishonesty are outlined in the current Student Handbook in Appendix E. No cheating, collusion, or plagiarism will be tolerated in this class. Any student engaging in an academic dishonest act will be sanctioned appropriately.

Enrollment in this class constitutes an acceptance to adhere to the Student Honor Creed and all other student conduct policies outlined in the university Student Handbook.

Student Life and Conduct

Student Handbook 2017-18

<h3 style="text-align:center">Conduct Statement</h3>

Classroom behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the instruction will result in the instructor's removing the disruptive student(s) from the class, either temporarily or permanently (instructor drop), and receive a final lower grade, up to and including an F. Electronic devices (i.e. cell phones, iPods, iPads, personal computers, etc.) are not allowed to be used in class except with the expressed authorization of the instructor. No texting will be tolerated. Using recording devices or media during the class and lectures is strictly prohibited. Students violating these rules will be sanctioned at the instructor's discretion, and penalties may include lowering the student's grade, up to and including an F, and an instructor drop.

The instructor reserves the right to initiate an instructor drop with a grade or W, WF, or F, as specified in the Student Handbook (see link above), for reasons to include attendance issues, academic performance in the class, indifferent attitude, or disruptive conduct.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees, and room/board charges paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans, and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the refund amount. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request.)

Services for Students with Disabilities

By Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should apply for such assistance through Disability Support Services in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to Disability Support Services.

Student Handbook

Refer to: Student Handbook 2017-18

 Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

Student Handbook 2017-18

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place that prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

COVID-19 Pandemic Policy

You must wear a face mask covering your nose and mouth in the classroom. C115F is not conducive to maintaining 10 feet of distance from each other. Neck gaiters and face shields are unacceptable. You must leave the classroom if you do not adhere to this policy. If you forget your mask at home, our art secretary has masks available at her desk.

D2L is an official means of communication and repository for this class's recordings. Please check D2L content and email daily.

Cleaning Protocol: As stated previously, use hand sanitizer before using the E26 spray bottle to clean your keyboard and mouse before and after use.

MSU Coronavirus policies and updates can be found here:

https://msutexas.edu/coronavirus/index.php

Social distancing: You must maintain 6 feet of social distance from your peers and faculty in this room.

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog.](#)

Notice

The course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule changes may be made at the instructor's discretion.

Social Justice Defined

Social justice is one of Midwestern State University's stated core values. The classroom is where students will be treated and treated with respect as human beings, regardless of their worldview, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious or spiritual affiliation or lack thereof, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Diversity of thought is the keystone of practical, intellectual, and academic pursuits. The expression of differences of opinion is valued and encouraged.

A comprehensive course schedule will be distributed with each new project rubric and will include in-class exercises.