

COMM 4570-070

Visual Design & Editing

Summer 2024

SANDY IO3

Mondays - 6:00pm-8:00pm



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Course Information

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to pragmatically apply principles of media design to editing visual messaging. Together we will learn concepts, strategies, and pragmatic skills for integrating persuasive, strategic communication messages into visual designs using image editing and layout software.

We will also discuss considerations for using generative AI in design, including legal, ethical, and practical issues.

This is a practical skills-focused course, meaning instruction is primarily hands-on lab work using Adobe Photoshop.

Learning Objectives

The purpose of this course is to:

- Explore strategic communication and rhetorical principles related to digital communication
- Enhance problem-solving skills by analyzing complex problems
- Build a portfolio to showcase strategic communication work

Prerequisites

- This course has no formal prerequisite requirements.
- You do not need to have completed any other courses prior to taking this course.

Course Format

- This course is a hybrid course. This means that half of the class instruction will take place online via Canvas and the other half will take place in-person.
- This class is “flipped” which means that I expect you to complete the hybrid instruction before coming to class. We will use about half of our in-person class time looking at specific design and communication principles and about half of our in-person class time for answering questions and work on assignments.

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Course Information

General Education Credit

This course does not fulfill any university general education requirements.

This course does qualify as an elective credit for Communication major students in all four emphases. Note that this course is primarily a strategic communication-focused course.

Required Course Materials

We will use the following textbook (available on Canvas through Inclusive Access):

Chavez, C. & Faulkner, A. (2023). *Adobe Photoshop classroom in a book (2024 release)*. Adobe Press.

If you do not want to participate in Inclusive Access, you must actively opt out before May 22nd.

Learning content, including lectures (written, video), coding demos, reading, and links to various websites, will be posted in modules on Canvas.

Of Tools and Toys...

Our classroom is a computing lab. You may choose to bring your own laptop computer. Writing, proofreading, and debugging code requires using a computer.

Electronic devices make finding information much easier. Laptops, in particular, also contribute to improved note taking (although not to improved memory retention - taking notes by hand using a tactile (pen/pencil) tool continues to be more effective).

That said, be cautious about the distracting nature of electronic devices. **Use your tools as tools** to aid your learning. Off-topic device usage (i.e., texting friends, playing non-course-related games, scrolling social media, etc.) impedes learning, reduces memory retention, and leads to lower educational and grade outcomes.

See [Distraction, not the device.](#)

Instructor Information

Instructor: Jeremy Freed

Email: jeremy.freed@utah.edu

Office: LNCO 2960

Office Hours: By appointment (in-person or remote; email to discuss scheduling)

It is a FERPA violation for me to discuss your coursework or grades via outside electronic communication (e.g., Gmail). I will only respond to communication from your Umail or Canvas Inbox.

Please do not call or text my cell phone.

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Expectations

I expect you to...

Be self-motivated. You need to budget sufficient time to complete the hybrid content. You will need to budget nine (9) total hours per week for successful completion of this course. This includes 1.5 hours per week of in-class time, 1-3 hours of online instruction (including completing assigned readings), 1-2 hours per week working on assignments, and 2-3 hours per week practicing image editing. Use your time effectively.

Be curious. Design requires a willingness to practice, play around, and often fail. Photoshop becomes easier the more time you spend using it.

Ask questions. Don't be shy about bringing questions to class. The only dumb questions are questions that are not asked. Let's engage in dialogue.

Exercise caution. Save and save often. CTRL+S/CMND+S are your best friends. A good workflow can prevent losing hours of work if catastrophe strikes.

Carefully read. Attention to detail is a highly sought after skill in most fields. Carefully read this syllabus. Fully read assignment descriptions. Read assignment rubrics. Read the assigned readings.

Understand your rights and responsibilities as a student: [Student Handbook](#) and [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

You should expect me to...

Curate course content. I curate and create content that is intended to help you understand concepts (i.e., audience-focused design), pragmatics (i.e., image editing), etc., with the intent of helping you achieve the course learning objectives.

Respond to your emails. I will do my best to respond to electronic communication (email) within 48 hours. This does not count holidays or weekends. If you have not received a response after 48 hours, then contact again until I respond.

Promptly evaluate your work. I will do my best to grade all assignments within seven (7) days. If an assignment is ungraded after fourteen (14) days, please contact me and hold me accountable. Note that I do not prioritize late work. If you miss the due dates anticipate delays in receiving grades for the late work.

Foster a classroom experience that respects the dignity of each member.

Find the answer. I may not always remember every tool, option, or strategy, but I will make sure I find the answers when you bring the questions. Sometimes this process may take a little time, so don't always expect an immediate answer. But do expect an answer.

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Course Policies

Attendance Policy

You control your learning. Attendance in this course is not factored into your grade. Note that all research into learning shows that time spent in class correlates with increased learning outcomes. If you are not coming to our in-person class, that is time you don't have to answer questions and receive direct instruction.

If you are ill and possibly contagious, please stay home.

Assignments will remain open after the assigned due dates. Late work will receive a 15% penalty from the maximum points possible. For example, if an assignment is worth 10 points, if submitted late the assignment would receive a maximum of 8.5 points. Note that this penalty is subtracted from the maximum possible and does not reflect the quality of your work.

Assignments submitted more than two weeks (14 days) after the due date or after August 2nd will receive no points and not be evaluated.

If you are undergoing a serious life event, contact the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling Center, and/or the Office of Disability and Access for assistance.

Late Work

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Course Policies

Content Accommodations

I select course content as a vehicle for learning, to help illustrate core principles, and to promote critical thinking. You may be exposed to ideas or concepts you might find discomforting or offensive, including concepts grounded in critical and cultural studies and rhetoric. I will not make accommodations to course content, requirements, or expectations. I suggest you try and keep an open mind and be willing to face challenging intellectual arguments. I will not suggest that you change deeply held beliefs, but you may be exposed to arguments and viewpoints that differ from those beliefs. **If you believe that exposure to course content will place an undue burden on your sincerely-held core beliefs, drop the class.**

Other Accommodations

Contact me at the beginning of the semester if you need accommodations for:

- Religious Practice
- Active Duty Military
- University-Sanctioned Events
- Disability/Access

Contact me as soon as possible if an extreme personal circumstance (e.g., hospitalization, death of a close loved one, etc.) is interfering with your ability to complete work.

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Mutual Respect

Think of the classroom as a working environment. Respect both the facilities employees who have to clean the room and your peers by not making a mess. Be cautious with liquids since liquids are hazardous to electronics. If you need to leave the room, do so, but try to minimize disruption both when exiting and when returning. In general, be considerate of your peers and expect that they show consideration in return.

Always sign out of and shut down lab computers when you are finished.

Note that the Sandy Center does not allow food in the classrooms.

Generative AI

Generative AI (i.e., ChatGPT, Adobe Express/Firefly, etc.) is a new technology (LLM and machine learning) that has substantial potential for both benefit and harm. We will engage directly with generative AI in this course, as Adobe has integrated their LLM (Sensei) into Creative Cloud apps. Use generative AI for good, not for evil.

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Drop
&
Withdrawal

This course may not suit your needs or expectations. You might also find an unexpected life event interfering with your ability to succeed this semester.

If you elect to drop or withdraw from the course, you are solely responsible for doing so by the appropriate deadline. The last day to drop the course is May 22nd. The last day to withdraw from the course is June 21st.

[Registrar's Drop Policy](#); [Registrar's Withdraw Policy](#)

Creating
Content

You are responsible for curating images to edit and incorporate in your designs. You may not use pornographic or illegal content. You are responsible for ensuring that any content you use is under an appropriate license or that you personally created the content (i.e., you took the photograph for the image). Use of inappropriately licensed content is considered a form of plagiarism/academic misconduct. You may use AI-generated content (i.e., images from Adobe Express/Firefly, text from ChatGPT, etc.) that you personally generated writing prompts. Note that using generative AI to create content is a gray area, but for our purposes (content-ONLY for education) seems like a reasonable use case.

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Assignment Submission

You are responsible for submitting assignments with the required naming convention, correct file extension, and using the software type and version required for the assignment. All assignments are due at midnight (11:59pm Mountain Time) and will be submitted via Canvas.

Do not wait until the last second to submit your assignments.

Not a Contract

This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course. Please note that I may modify it with reasonable notice to you. I may also modify the course schedule to accommodate the needs of our class. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas under Announcements.

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Evaluating Learning - Learning Objectives

Student Learning Objectives

Learning objectives are the goals for students to demonstrate that you have met the course learning outcomes. Each objective has associated assignments that serve as criteria showing that you met the objective.

Develop a media campaign for a brand that incorporates audience-centric principles that draw on visual rhetoric and design concepts.

Design specific composited strategic communication content for the media campaigns.

Compile a portfolio to display your media campaign and designs.

Demonstrating Meeting the Objectives

Completing these assignments will demonstrate progress towards meeting the student learning objectives.

Related Objective	Assignment	Value (%)
Develop	Market Survey	15
	Written Campaign Plan	15
	Brand Guide	15
Design	Sample Content	20
	Development Process	15
Compile	Portfolio	20
Total		100

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Evaluating Learning - Assignment Descriptions

Market Survey

You will decide on a brand (your own or fictional) to design a media campaign for. You will then survey the market for the brand by analyzing the prospective audience, analyzing the existing brand presence (if applicable), and analyzing competitors.

Written Campaign Plan

Building on your Market Survey, you will write SMART objectives for your brand campaign, then write a specific plan for achieving those objectives.

Brand Guide

Style guides establish your brand's look and voice and help maintain brand consistency across different components of your design. You will document specific information for the brand including a logo, color palette, typography rules, layout and spacing rules, iconography, and media-specific appearances (i.e., sizes, states of buttons, nav menus, platform-specific elements, etc.).

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Evaluating Learning - Assignment Descriptions

Sample Content

You will create a variety of sample content for your media campaign. Content samples might include designs suitable for Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, or other platforms. Your content should reflect consistency with your campaign plan and brand guide.

Development Process

Part of your portfolio will be a story of your development process. How do you, as a designer, start and work through various steps to create a design? You will document your process for brainstorming, initial design sketching, audience considerations, etc., from the beginning to completion of one design sample.

Portfolio

You will compile your media campaign into a portfolio that is suitable for showing to prospective clients/employers.

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Evaluating Learning

Grading Scale

Minimum Points	Maximum Points	Letter Grade
94.0	100.0	A
90.0	93.9	A-
87.0	89.9	B+
84.0	86.9	B
80.0	83.9	B-
77.0	79.9	C+
74.0	76.9	C
70.0	73.9	C-
67.0	69.9	D+
64.0	66.9	D
60.0	63.9	D-
0	59.9	E

University Achievement & GPA Equivalence

Letter Grade	GPA Equivalence	University Performance & Achievement
A	4.0	Excellent performance, superior achievement
A-	3.7	
B+	3.3	Good performance, substantial achievement
B	3.0	
B-	2.7	
C+	2.3	Standard performance and achievement
C	2.0	
C-	1.7	
D+	1.3	Substandard performance, marginal achievement
D	1.0	
D-	0.7	
E	0.0	Unsatisfactory performance and achievement

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Semester Schedule

May 13

Topic	Course Introduction
Location	In-Person (Sandy 103)
Complete the following as soon as possible:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the course syllabus • Read all assignment instructions and grading rubrics on Canvas 	
NOTE: You are responsible for carefully reading and understanding all syllabus policies and assignment requirements. If something is unclear, ask for clarification.	

May 14-17

Topic	Tools of the Trade
Location	Hybrid (on Canvas)
Complete the following as soon as possible:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Module 1 on Canvas • Read Chavez, Chapter 1 (Getting to know the work area) 	
Graded Assignments Due:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assignments this week 	

May 20

Topic	Strategic Marketing
Location	In-Person (Sandy 103)
We will work on the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class lecture on branding, aesthetics, and marketing campaigns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice modifying an image • Brand selection

May 21-24

Topic	Understanding Layers
Location	Hybrid (on Canvas)
Complete the following as soon as possible:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Module 2 on Canvas • Read Chavez, Chapter 4 (Layer basics) 	
Graded Assignments Due:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assignments this week 	

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Semester Schedule

May 27

Topic	Memorial Day Holiday
Location	N/A
<i>Enjoy the holiday</i>	

May 28-31

Topic	Selections & Campaign Planning
Location	Hybrid (on Canvas)
Complete the following as soon as possible:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Module 3 on Canvas • Read Chavez, Chapter 3 (Working with selections) 	
Graded Assignments Due:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assignments this week 	

June 03

Topic	Campaign Research
Location	In-Person (Sandy 103)
We will work on the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding and Market Research • Market Survey & Needs Assessment 	

June 04-07

Topic	Rhetoric and Masks
Location	Hybrid (on Canvas)
Complete the following as soon as possible:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Module 4 on Canvas • Read Chavez, Chapter 6 (Masks and patterns) 	
Graded Assignments Due:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markey Survey due Friday before midnight (11:59pm Mountain Time) 	

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Semester Schedule

June 10

Topic	Campaign Plan Workshop
Location	In-Person (Sandy 103)
We will work on the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing a campaign plan 	

June 11-14

Topic	Aesthetics and Typography
Location	Hybrid (on Canvas)
Complete the following as soon as possible:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Module 5 on Canvas • Read Chavez, Chapter 7 (Typographic design) 	
Graded Assignments Due:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Campaign Plan due Friday before midnight (11:59pm Mountain Time) 	

June 17

Topic	Juneteenth Holiday
Location	N/A
<i>Enjoy the holiday</i>	

June 18-21

Topic	Vectors and Brand Guides
Location	Hybrid (on Canvas)
Complete the following as soon as possible:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Module 6 on Canvas • Read Chavez, Chapter 8 (Vector drawing techniques) 	
Graded Assignments Due:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assignments due this week 	

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Semester Schedule

June 24

Topic	Playing with Color
Location	In-Person (Sandy 103)
We will work on the following:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding functional mockups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generating color palettes Finding fonts 	

June 25-28

Topic	Complex Design (Compositing)
Location	Hybrid (on Canvas)
Complete the following as soon as possible:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Module 7 on Canvas Read Chavez, Chapter 9 (Advanced Compositing)
Graded Assignments Due:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No assignments due this week

July 01

Topic	Independence Day Holiday
Location	N/A
<i>Enjoy the holiday</i>	

July 02-05

Topic	Social Media Samples
Location	Hybrid (on Canvas)
Work on:	Creating sample designs for at least three social media platforms
Graded Assignments Due:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No assignments due this week BUT START DESIGNING SAMPLES

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Semester Schedule

80
July
08

Topic	Samples and Your Campaign
Location	In-Person (Sandy 103)
We will work on the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting your sample content and the campaign plan. 	

21-60
July
09-12

Topic	Samples
Location	Hybrid (on Canvas)
Work on:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completing your sample content. 	
Graded Assignments Due:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample Content due Friday before midnight (11:59pm Mountain Time) 	

31
July
13

Topic	Development Process & Painting
Location	In-Person (Sandy 103)
We will work on the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Composing your development process Play with brushes 	

61-91
July
16-19

Topic	Digital Painting
Location	Hybrid (on Canvas)
Complete the following as soon as possible:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Module 9 on Canvas Read Chavez, Chapter 10 (Painting with the mixer brush) 	
Graded Assignments Due:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development Process due Friday before midnight (11:59pm Mountain Time) 	

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Semester Schedule

July 22

Topic	Memes
Location	In-Person (Sandy 103)
We will work on the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memes • Brand guides 	

July 23-26

Topic	Animated GIFs and Parallax
Location	Hybrid (on Canvas)
Complete the following as soon as possible:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Module 10 on Canvas • Read, Chavez, Chapter 11 (Editing video) 	
Graded Assignments Due:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand Guide due Friday before midnight (11:59pm Mountain Time) 	

July 29

Topic	The End
Location	In-Person (Sandy 103)
We will work on the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishing up your portfolio 	

July 30-Aug 02

Topic	Portfolios
Location	Hybrid (on Canvas)
Complete the following as soon as possible:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishing up your portfolio 	
Graded Assignments Due:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio due August 2nd before midnight (11:59pm Mountain Time) 	

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University Policies

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism means passing off someone else's work as your own or not giving credit to someone when you use their ideas, including generative AI.

Academic misconduct includes submitting graded work for multiple classes, completing work for others, and making false claims.

You do not have any permission to use any graded assignments in this class for any other class (you also cannot use graded work from previous courses for this class).

Names and Pronouns

I receive class rosters with your name as well as "Preferred first name" (if previously entered by you in the Student Profile section of your CIS account, which managed can be managed at any time). While CIS refers to this as merely a preference, I will honor you by referring to you with the name and pronoun that feels best for you in class or on assignments. Please advise me of any name or pronoun changes so I can help create a learning environment in which you, your name, and your pronoun are respected. If you need any assistance or support, please reach out to the LGBT Resource Center



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University Policies

Misconduct
Sexual
Harassment



Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677 (COPS). **As an employee of the University of Utah, I am a mandatory reporter for all cases of sexual violence** (this includes reports of cases that happened out-of-state, occurred many years ago, or have already been prosecuted).

There are several resources on campus that will support you with your language development, including:

- [English Language Institute](#)
- [International Student & Scholar Resources](#)
- [English for Academic Success \(EAS\) Program](#)
- [Writing Center](#)

Please let me know if there is any additional support you would like to discuss for this class.

Languages
&
Resources

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Wellness & Success



Your personal health and wellness are essential to your success as a student. Personal concerns like stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, or cross-cultural differences can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive in this course and at the University of Utah. The University has many resources available to aid you in achieving success as a student. Resources can be accessed through the university's [Basic Needs Collective](#).

Campus Safety

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677) or Sandy Police (801-799-3000) if you are at the Sandy Center. You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.



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Americans
with Disabilities Act



The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives will be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class will be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture.

Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally.



Individual Perspectives

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Technical Support



If you have technical issues with the course Canvas site, contact [Digital Learning Technologies](#).



For help with other university-related technology (e.g., UConnect, Two-Factor Authentication), you can find help through the [University IT help desk](#).

Immigration is a complex phenomenon with broad impact—those who are directly affected by it, as well as those who are indirectly affected by their relationships with family members, friends, and loved ones. If your immigration status presents obstacles to engaging in specific course activities or fulfilling specific course criteria, confidential arrangements may be requested from the Dream Center. Arrangements with the Dream Center will not jeopardize your student status, your financial aid, or any other part of your residence. The Dream Center offers a wide range of resources to support undocumented students (with and without DACA) as well as students from mixed status families. To learn more please contact the Dream Center at 801-213-3697.



Undocumented Students

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Veterans



If you are a student veteran, the U of Utah has a Veterans Support Center located in Room 161 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm.

Please visit their website for more information about what support they offer, a list of ongoing events and links to outside resources.

Please also let me know if you need any additional support in this class for any reason.

Grievances

If you have any concerns about the course, please contact me via email or in person to discuss your concerns as soon as possible. If we are not able to resolve your concerns, contact [Jakob Jensen](#), the course supervisor. If you are still not able to resolve the issue, contact [Travis Ciaramella](#), the Director of Undergraduate Studies