

## **J364, Section 2: Introduction to Visual Communications**

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Class time:	TTH 9:30–10:45 a.m.	Email:	weintraub@sc.edu
Classroom:	COL 3001	Office hours:	M–TH 1–2 p.m.
Office:	Col 2044		and by appointment

### **Course Description and Requirements**

This course is designed to introduce students to the theory and history of visual communications in the mass media, with an emphasis on informational and persuasive messages created by graphic, photographic, and multimedia processes. Students will complete assignments that require them to explore design principles as they gain an understanding of design tools and techniques. Students will also work in groups to create a video based on assigned course-related material.

To complete the required assignments and your group's video, you will need to learn and use the software programs Adobe InDesign and Apple iMovie, which are on the school's computers. I will demonstrate both of these programs in class. You should become familiar with and take advantage of the free tutorials for InDesign and iMovie offered on the Adobe and Apple websites. Many students also find it helpful to subscribe to [lynda.com](http://lynda.com), where additional tutorial help is available. You will also need to become familiar with uploading and downloading material to and from the SJMC server, Blackboard, and YouTube. VisCom students should keep their best work for use in the portfolio required in J564.

You must have a USB drive to backup your work. Name your drive with your last name in case you leave it in a lab. You must have a working Internet connection and email that you check every day. It is your responsibility to keep your university email address up to date so you can receive course-related communications. You are also required regularly to check Blackboard under Course Documents, Assignments, and External Links to make sure you have all the latest course information, assignments, grading information, and other useful materials.

I expect you to come class prepared. I expect you to do the assigned reading by the due dates and to familiarize yourself with the websites posted on Blackboard under External Links. I will call on students to answer questions in class. I expect you to participate in class discussions and critiques. Please do not eat, read, talk to your neighbors, or sleep in class. These activities are distracting to your fellow students and disrespectful to me. Students ignoring these requests will be asked to leave class immediately.

**The use of laptops, tablets, mobile phones, or any other electronic device during class is not permitted.**

Please note that I am unable to reply to all student emails in a timely fashion, and I will not reply to emails from students with questions that can be answered by referring to the course materials posted on Blackboard or from your class notes. Your communication with me should be primarily in class and during office hours.

Upon written verification, I will make every effort to accommodate students with disabilities.

## Learning Outcomes

In order to succeed in this course, students must meet the following learning outcomes, as determined by results of assignments, tests, participation in class discussions and critiques, and overall mastery of the course material:

- Think critically, creatively, and independently.
- Evaluate your own work and the work of others for accuracy, fairness, clarity, style, and correctness.
- Demonstrate the ability to apply tools and technologies appropriate for the production, editing, and presentation of visual, aural, textual, or other media content.
- Master the principles of design, typography, color, photography, illustration, and printing through lectures, readings, and assignments.
- Complete a series of InDesign assignments.
- Prepare a group video on an assigned course-related topic.
- Understand the theory and history of visual communications in the mass media.
- Engage in the critique process.

## Required Books and Other Course Materials

The required books are *Graphic Communications Today* (4th edition), by William Ryan, and *Design and InDesign*, by Scott Farrand. Ryan's book is available at the university bookstores; Farrand's book is available only online from [University Readers](#).

**You will not be able to complete the required assignments, study for the tests, or participate in class discussions without these two books. Make sure you have both books by the second week of class—no excuses!**

All the other printed materials required for this course will be posted on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to download, print, and bring these to class. Check frequently during the first few weeks of the semester to make sure you have the latest materials. I will let you know by email when I have posted something new.

## Assignments

### *InDesign Assignments*

There are five assignments that require you to use the software program Adobe InDesign, which is part of the Adobe Creative Suite. You will need the book *Design and InDesign*, by Scott Farrand, to complete the assignments. Assignment due dates are listed in the schedule, below. I will demonstrate each InDesign assignment in class; dates for these demonstrations are in the schedule. Mastering InDesign takes time and patience. It is up to you to become proficient with InDesign through practice, trial, and error.

The first three InDesign assignments use templates to teach you the program's basic tools and techniques. As you progress through these three assignments, you will learn about lines, shapes, typography, and color. The fourth and fifth InDesign assignments are opportunities to showcase your personal creativity and use all the design principles you have learned in this course. These two InDesign assignments use both photographs and text. In the case of Assignment 4, photographs and text are provided. For InDesign 5, photographs are provided, but you must create your own original text.

You must create new, original work for all of the assignments in this course. Use of work done in previous courses is not allowed and will result in a zero grade for the assignment. All of the necessary templates, photographs, and text are posted in the J364 folder on the SJMC server.

**The templates are created specifically for the section of J364 in which you are enrolled. Use of any other templates will result in a zero grade for the assignment.**

InDesign is on the computers in rooms 3004, 3008, and 3012. There is a gray-scale printer in room 3004. There are two color printers available from rooms 3008 and 3012. The School of Journalism and Mass Communications provides technical support only for its hardware and software. This does *not* include computers or printers located on other parts of the campus, such as in the Library.

If you plan to use your own computer, software, or printer, you are responsible for your own technical support. Remember that you may have a different version of InDesign, which may not work on the school's computers or printers.

**If in doubt, do your work on the school's computers and printers using the school's software.**

*Do not* leave any work assignments on the lab computer. Instead, always keep copies of your assignments on your USB drive and on your personal computer. Remove all files from the desktop and empty the trash (Finder >>> Empty Trash), so no one else will have access to your work. Do not leave any printed copies of your assignment in the lab; take them home with you.

Deadlines for the InDesign assignments are in the syllabus. You must turn in a printed copy of your assignment on the due date. You must also upload your digital InDesign file to the J364 folder called "Dropbox" on the SJMC server in order to get credit for the assignment. Both are required—printed copy *and* digital file.

**I do not accept late work. If you fail to turn in a printed copy of the assignment by the due date, you will get a zero, even if you uploaded the digital file on time.**

If you know in advance that you will be unable to complete an assignment on time, please discuss this with me *prior* to the assignment's due date; otherwise, you will get a zero grade for the assignment. *Note:* you can always turn work in early!

Check the lab schedules to make sure you can devote enough time to complete each assignment by the due date—many students use the lab computers, along with regularly scheduled classes. Make allowances for the fact that there will be competition for computers and possible printing problems and other snafus. Remember Murphy's law: "If something can go wrong, it will"—right before an assignment is due!

You are responsible for keeping all original graded assignments. If you believe a grade has not been recorded correctly, you must produce the original graded assignment to have it changed.

I am happy to look at your work before the due date and provide feedback. However, you must print your work and bring to me during office hours. I am unable to review work via email. **I will not review work on the day it is due.**

## **Video**

Students will work in groups to produce a single two-minute video that covers an assigned topic relevant to the course material. Each group will produce one video.

At the beginning of the course, I will provide instruction on how to use the school's video cameras and video-editing software (iMovie). After that, it is up to your group to plan the video, sign out the video camera, shoot and edit your video, upload it to YouTube, and also upload it to the J364 folder called "Dropbox" on the SJMC server.

Due dates for each video are in the course schedule, below. I will show some sample videos in class so you can see what the assignment calls for. Make sure you are assigned to a video group!

Details about the videos, groups, and topics are in handouts I will post on Blackboard. Please check for these documents during the first weeks of the semester, then download, print them, and bring to class.

If one or more group members do not contribute to the video, it is up to the remaining members to alert me. Do not include in the video credits the names of students who do not participate. Students who do not participate will get a zero grade for the video.

Remember, it is each group's responsibility to prepare its video and have it uploaded to YouTube and to the SJMC server on the due date.

I will grade the videos at the end of the semester, after we have watched and critiqued all of them.

**If I can't view your group's video on both YouTube *and* the SJMC server by 8:30 a.m. on the due date, you will not get credit for it.**

## **Tests**

During the semester you will have three in-class tests. The last test will be held on the date of the final exam, but it is not cumulative and counts the same as the other two tests. Classes immediately prior to the tests will be devoted to review.

Test dates are firm, and you are expected to take the test on the date it is given. In the interest of fairness and academic integrity, no early tests will be given. It is university policy that you are not permitted to retake a test for any reason.

If you are unable to take the test on the day it is given because of health reasons or other emergency, you must notify me by email *prior* to the start of the test. In order to make up the test, you must provide written documentation that adequately explains your absence, i.e., a written and signed doctor's note.

## **Academic Integrity**

The School of Journalism and Mass Communications has zero tolerance for any violation of academic integrity. It is unacceptable to copy, duplicate, or otherwise reproduce someone else's work, whether it is the work of a fellow student or any other person: this is a violation of The Carolina Creed and also of federal copyright law. It is also unacceptable to allow your work to be copied or duplicated by a fellow student.

You must do your own work in completing any assignments; this is the only way I can grade your work fairly and accurately. Any students who turn in work that is not their own—including elements or parts of the assignment—will receive a zero for that assignment. Two or more students turning in substantially similar work—including elements or parts of the assignment—will each receive at minimum a zero for the assignment with no opportunity to redo.

**Any and all duplicates of the InDesign assignments—including elements or parts of the assignment—will result in a zero grade for that assignment for all students involved.**

**Those students will also be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity, which may make a permanent record of the incident in the students' files. Other penalties, including an F grade for the course, are also possible.**

### **Attendance Policy**

This course meets twice a week. It is important that you attend every class, arriving on time and staying for the entire class. Coming to class excessively late or leaving early also constitutes an absence. You will initial an attendance roster when you come to class. This is the official university record of your course attendance. Failure to sign the roster constitutes an absence.

More than three absences will lower your final grade; excessive absences will result in a failing grade. Signing someone else in is a violation of the Carolina Creed and will result in penalties for both students, including a possible F in the course.

If you miss a class because of illness, family emergency, or other unavoidable situation, you are still responsible for all the material covered in class. I suggest sharing phone numbers and email addresses with some of your fellow students, so you can keep up with the class if you are absent.

**It is up to you to sign in for every class and to keep a record of your absences. Please do not ask me to fill you in on course material you missed because of an absence—this is *your* responsibility.**

### **Grading Policy**

The five InDesign assignments and your video will be graded on a 10-point scale with half-point steps: a 10 represents flawless work, a 9.5 is excellent, a 9 is very good, an 8.5 is good, etc. Please refer to handouts that will be posted under Course Documents on Blackboard for specific information about how these assignments will be graded.

Keeping track of grades is your responsibility. Please do not ask me to compute or project your final grade. Your final grade will be posted on VIP at the end of the grading period.

Your final grade is based on the number of points you earn, weighted as follows:

- InDesign assignments 1, 2, & 3: each is worth 5 percent of your final grade.
- InDesign assignments 4 & 5: each is worth 10 percent of your final grade.
- Three tests: each is worth 20 percent of your final grade.
- Video: worth 5 percent of your final grade.

I am unable to discuss grades or other personal academic matters via email; this is what office hours are for, so please come see me in person with any questions.

### Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Point Range	Standards
A	92 to 100	Excellent undergraduate work
B+	87 to 91	Exceeds standards for undergraduate work
B	82 to 86	Exceeds standards for undergraduate work
C+	77 to 81	Slightly above average undergraduate work
C	72 to 76	Average undergraduate work
D+	67 to 71	Unsatisfactory undergraduate work
D	62 to 66	Unsatisfactory undergraduate work
F	61 or below	Fails to meet undergraduate work standards

### Course Schedule and Due Dates

Date	Class	Subject	Reading	Videos	Assignments
1/10	1	Introduction			
1/12	2	Using computers Video camera demo			
1/17	3	Shooting & editing video View sample videos			
1/19	4	InDesign Demo 1: basic shapes & lines			
1/24	5	Theories of visual perception	Chapter 1		
1/26	6	History of visual communications, part 1	Chapter 2		
1/31	7	History of visual communications, part 2			
2/2	8	History of visual communications, part 3		Group 1	
2/7	9	Review		Group 2	InDesign Assignment 1
2/9	10	<b>Test 1</b>			
2/14	11	InDesign Demo 2: using type Typography, part 1	Chapters 3 & 4	Group 3	
2/16	12	Typography, part 2		Group 4	
2/21	13	Design principles	Chapter 5	Group 5	
2/23	14	InDesign Demo 3: using color Color theory, part 1	Chapter 6	Group 6	
2/28	15	Color theory, part 2		Group 7	InDesign Assignment 2
3/1	16	Photography, part 1	Chapter 8	Group 8	
		<b>Spring break, no classes</b>			
3/13	17	Photography, part 2		Group 9	

<b>Date</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Videos</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
3/15	18	InDesign Demo 4: creative design with photographs Go over grading for InDesign assignments 4 & 5		Group 10	
3/20	19	Video & multimedia, part 1		Group 11	InDesign Assignment 3
3/22	20	Video & multimedia, part 2		Group 12	
3/27	21	Review		Groups 13 & 14	
3/29	22	<b>Test 2</b>			
4/3	23	Infographics, Part 1	Chapter 7	Group 15	
4/5	24	Infographics, Part 2 Critique Assignment 4 Explain InDesign Assignment 5	Chapter 13	Group 16	InDesign Assignment 4
4/10	25	Advertising	Chapter 14	Group 17	
4/12	26	Magazines & newspapers	Chapters 15 & 16	Group 18	
4/17	27	Printing processes Web design	Chapter 17	Group 19	
4/19	28	Wrap up & review	Chapter 9	Groups 20 & 21	InDesign Assignment 5
4/28		<b>Test 3, 2–3:15 p.m.* Room is COL 3001</b>			

**\*This is not our usual meeting time, so make sure you adjust your schedule!**