

Course Syllabus

What you will learn in this course



Digital Design 1a: Introduction

Are you an artistic person drawn to the idea of creating graphic elements? Then a career in digital design may be for you! In this course, you will learn the basic principles of design, the tools needed to succeed in the industry and how to design objects for specific purposes and audiences. You'll also learn how to market yourself and open your own design business all while building a portfolio. Let's align your skills and dreams today for a career in digital design!

Unit 1: What Is Graphic Design?

Humans have always communicated with visuals. Today, our world is filled with visual communications that were crafted by graphic designers who plan, arrange, and create the visual elements in pages and screens. The purpose of the graphic designer is to design objects that are easy to use, appealing, and effective for their specific purpose and audience. Graphic design is constantly changing to keep up with new technologies and ways of communicating, which means that career opportunities in this field will continue to increase. Even if

you don't want to become a full-time designer, it's important to understand basic design principles because our daily lives are saturated with communications that have designs on us.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Define graphic design and describe how it has developed as a field
2. Outline the ways in which technology shapes the field of graphic design
3. Explain why graphic design is inseparable from its cultural environment

Unit 1 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: Design and Graphic Design	Lesson
Lesson 02: Technology and Graphic Design	Lesson
Lesson 03: Graphic Design and Culture	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Activity 1: Technology Education	Submission
Activity 2: The Story of Design Audio	Submission
Activity 3: A Cultural Design Guide	Submission
Unit 1 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 1 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 1 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Unit 2: Careers in Graphic Design

Because graphic design is all around us, there is also a significant job market for talented graphic artists. One of the most exciting aspects of a career in graphic design is the number of different paths, or specialties, you can choose from. No matter which path you take, your work will entail finding ways to apply design principles to an object, whether that object exists in the physical world or is a digital object made of 0s and 1s. If you're interested in a career that includes graphic design, you can start now by learning about the different jobs you might be interested in and participating in student organizations that will put you a step ahead of the competition.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Categorize several types of graphic design careers
2. Identify the skills, education, and experience necessary for graphic design careers
3. Explain how student professional organizations can help you prepare for design careers

Unit 2 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: Careers in Graphic Design	Lesson
Lesson 02: What You Need to Compete	Lesson
Lesson 03: Let's Get This Party Started	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Activity 1: Job Fair Presentation	Submission
Activity 2: Record PSAs for SkillsUSA	Submission
Activity 3: Write a Job Posting	Submission
Unit 2 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 2 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 2 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Unit 3: Skills for Success

Graphic designers are experts at using several graphics-based software platforms. But they also need a solid understanding of foundational computer terms, file management skills, and extensive knowledge about how digital images are described and measured. Knowing the best practices for written communication, especially when it comes to working with clients, is also essential.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Define foundational computer-related terms
2. Describe methods for the effective naming and organization of files
3. Articulate foundational concepts for creating, storing, and distributing digital images and text files
4. Explain best practices for professional written communication skills

Unit 3 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: Computer Basics	Lesson
Lesson 02: Managing Your Files	Lesson
Lesson 03: Digital Image Basics	Lesson
Lesson 04: Written Text	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Activity 1: Create a Measurement Job Aid	Submission
Activity 2: Develop a File and Folder Naming Convention	Submission
Activity 3: Writing Instructions for Two Audiences	Submission
Unit 3 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 3 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 3 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Unit 4: Finding the Right Tools

The work of graphic designers and artists changed drastically in the early 1990s when digital software for creating and manipulating images and photos became available. In today's market, graphic design is always a computer-based skill: you can't get work without expertise in the industry-standard software platforms. No matter what type of design you're creating, there is a specialized software platform (probably several) to make the job easier. Although some of the industry-standard platforms are too complex and pricey for a beginner, there are several open-source and free options you can use to learn the basics.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Describe the difference between raster- and vector-based software and how raster-based software is used in graphic design
2. Explain how vector-based software platforms are used in graphic design and digital publishing
3. Identify industry-standard UX/UI design software and its functionality for creating interface designs

Unit 4 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: Raster-Based Software	Lesson
Lesson 02: Vector-Based Software	Lesson
Lesson 03: UI/UX Design Software	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Activity 1: Create a Company Logo	Submission
Activity 2: Create Logo Variations	Submission
Activity 3: Client Logo Presentation	Submission
Unit 4 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 4 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 4 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Midterm Exam

1. Review information acquired and mastered from this course up to this point.
2. Take a course exam based on material from the **first half** of the course (**Note:** You will be able to open this exam only one time.)

Midterm Exam Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Midterm Exam	Multiple Choice
Midterm Discussion	Discussion

Unit 5: Graphic Design Basics

The twenty-first century is an image-saturated time to be alive. Visual communication is everywhere around us: in the posts we scroll through on social media, in the websites we visit each day, in the billboard advertisements we glance at as we drive down the highway, in magazines as we flip through the pages, and in the video games we play. Graphic designers are involved in the creation of all these communication types. In this unit, you'll learn about the basic building blocks in an image and the principles designers use to create effective visual communication. Understanding these foundational concepts is an important first step toward creating great designs of your own.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Define the elements of design (line, space, shape, texture, form, value, and color)
2. Identify and apply the principles of design (emphasis, movement, balance, variety, rule of thirds)
3. Articulate the elements of an effective design portfolio and apply the principles of design to create one

Unit 5 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: Elements of Design	Lesson
Lesson 02: Principles of Design	Lesson
Lesson 03: Graphic Design Portfolios	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Activity 1: Choosing a Portfolio Platform	Submission
Activity 2: Add Work to Your Portfolio	Submission
Activity 3: A Primer in Perspective	Submission
Activity 4: Picturing the Rule of Thirds	Submission
Unit 5 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 5 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 5 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Unit 6: Print Design

Although some designers are generalists, able to create both print and online designs, most graphic designers specialize in either online design that will be viewed on screens, or print design that will be physically printed on paper, plastic, textiles, or some other printable material. Print and online designers use the same basic elements and principles of design to create appealing layouts. However, because their designs must go through the extra phase of being printed, and because their designs are sometimes hundreds of pages long, print designers must learn an additional set of skills.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Describe the work of print designers and apply the principles of effective design to various print layouts
2. Identify the elements of document design and describe how to use them effectively
3. Explain the various printing processes used for commercial print jobs

Unit 6 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: Print Design Layout	Lesson
Lesson 02: Document Design	Lesson
Lesson 03: Printing Your Designs	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Activity 1: Create a Manual Offset Print	Submission
Activity 2: Create a Brochure	Submission
Cumulative Project 1: Add Work to Your Portfolio	Submission
Unit 6 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 6 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 6 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Unit 7: The Art of Typography

Typography is using the style, arrangement, and appearance of letters to effectively communicate a message. If you learn to use typography well, it will structure your designs and help to create a brand or mood. Because typography has a long history and its terminology comes from that history, it's important to understand the evolution of typeface from letters chiseled in stone to words read on a smartphone screen. Once you've learned the basic typeface styles and their characteristics, you can use the principles of design to create effective, readable, and pleasing designs.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of typographic terminology and the anatomy of letters
2. Describe the history, classification, characteristics, and psychology of the serif and sans serif typeface families
3. Apply design principles to typography

Unit 7 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: Typographic Terminology	Lesson
Lesson 02: Typeface Families	Lesson
Lesson 03: Typographic Design	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Activity 1: Create a Quote Meme	Submission
Cumulative Project 2: Create a Home Décor Magazine Spread	Submission
Activity 2: Signage Safari	Submission
Unit 7 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 7 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 7 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Unit 8: Understanding Color

Humans' primary sense, the one we use the most to take in and interpret our world, is sight. We can distinguish about 10 million colors, and colors are often associated with moods, feelings, and emotions. For a graphic designer, this means color is one of the most powerful methods for creating visual distinctions and interest in a design. Color theory is a considerably involved subject, but having a good understanding of some basic principles can help you design with impact and elegance.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Define the characteristics of color and how we perceive it
2. Explain color theory and apply color harmonies to create effective designs
3. Identify the most often used color formats, explain how they differ, and choose the appropriate format for your design context

Unit 8 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: Characteristics of Color	Lesson
Lesson 02: Designing with Color	Lesson
Lesson 03: Color Formats	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Cumulative Project 3: Choose Your Client's Palette	Submission
Cumulative Project 4: Make Your Client's Logo	Submission
Cumulative Project 5: Lay out the Client's Home Page	Submission
Cumulative Project 6: Assemble Your Client Work Portfolio Page	Submission
Unit 8 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 8 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 8 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Final Exam

1. Review information acquired and mastered from this course up to this point.
2. Take a course exam based on material from the **second half** of the course (**Note:** You will be able to open this exam only one time.)

Final Exam Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Final Exam	Multiple Choice
Final Discussion	Discussion