Course Objectives
This class provides a foundation for thinking critically, creatively and independently about digital media design and production within the context of visual communication principles and theories. After completing this course, you should be able to understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information in digital media.

The class projects teach and reinforce those digital communication theories and practices. Using the computer as a communication tool, you will design, produce, and distribute messages that combine digital text, imagery and sound through multiple media. We will use software to develop your media production skills, as well as to develop a broad understanding of the technology that will be useful across communication specializations. This reinforces the interdisciplinary nature of digital technology and exposes students to the widest possible variety of digital technologies with a focus on how they work together. This also recognizes that you don’t need to master every application of computer technology to produce quality media content.


(Available on-line)

This class has two elements: lecture/demonstration and lab work. The lecture/demonstrations cover the theory and concepts needed for the hands-on work done during the lab time. In the weeks when project assignments are due, you must submit them by the beginning of the first class meeting of the week. We critique each project as a class, so it is essential that you finish your projects and turn them in on time. If you cannot meet a due date, contact me as soon as possible, and at least before to the due date, to discuss options.
We cover several useful industry-standard software packages: primarily Adobe Photoshop, Apple Final Cut Pro and Adobe Dreamweaver. The goal of this class is not to master each software package, but to understand the basics of what each package offers visual communication practices, and how each fits into the spectrum of contemporary media production technologies.

**Attendance is essential.** More than 3 unexcused absences affect your grade. This is a hands-on learning class, with exercises, activities, and demonstrations taking place in each class. Missed class sessions cannot be made up or repeated. To be considered excused, you must clear it with me BEFORE class. Only true documented emergencies – hospitalization, car crashes, family emergencies – can be excused after the fact. If you are just sick, call or e-mail me before class starts.

**Lateness disrupts the class.** If you are more than 5 minutes late, I count you absent. Be on time.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Final Project</td>
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<td>Attendance/ Participation</td>
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Grades are posted on Blackboard. Check your grades often. Let me know if you are missing any grades for completed projects.

Before each project, and as a class, we will determine a set of evaluation criteria. Your project will be evaluated based on these criteria, making it possible for you to have some input on the skills you wish to acquire from this course; however, I will make final decisions on all grading criteria.

At the end of the semester, I total the points you receive for each assignment. Your grade is weighted according to the above scale, and scored based on the following:

| 90 - 100 | A |
| 86 - 89  | B+|
| 80 - 85  | B |
| 76 - 79  | C+|
| 70 - 75  | C |
| 66 - 69  | D+|
| 60 - 65  | D |
| below 60 | F |

**I do not accept late work** except under extreme circumstances, such as documented illness or family emergency. If you anticipate being unable to meet a due date for any other reason, contact me before the due date to discuss options. I am the final arbiter of what is an emergency, so don’t chance it.

To earn a high grade, you need to attend every class session (lectures and labs), continue to
work on projects outside of class, and see the professor during office hours or by appointment if you are having any problems.

**Grading**
Projects, take-home, and in-class assignments grades will be graded on the following criteria:

1. Message delivery
2. Presentation (visual and verbal)
3. Creativity/visual concept/idea execution
4. Typography (use of)
5. Color (use of)
6. Layout and design (use of imagery and/or text)
7. Problem solving techniques
8. Clarity of message/theme
9. Effective use of software/materials
10. Experimentation, refinement and manipulation
11. Following specific assignment and project parameters

**Projects:**
Details for each project are available on the class Web site. We will discuss in greater detail the specific goals and objectives of each project, as well as criteria for evaluation, in class.

All projects must be turned in using the class “drop folder” unless otherwise noted.

1) **Manipulating the Image: Self-Portrait** - Bring a picture of yourself. Create a new self-portrait image in Photoshop using different techniques and tool sets as discussed in class. Consider background, framing ideas, etc. to develop a clean presentation.

2) **Combining Images: Triptych** - Using Photoshop, create a Triptych image using concept and graphic design principles like line, shape, color, composition, space, and texture. The result is a new ‘gestalt’ experience through combining imagery to create a new message or narrative. Consider background, framing ideas, etc. to develop a clean presentation.

3) **Design & Distribution of Text and Images: Personal Web Site** - Build an on-line presence with a personal Web site using Adobe Dreamweaver. This site also includes a gallery of work from this class. The specific design is up to you, but challenge yourself to excel in the layout and implementation of the site within the visual identity you have developed for yourself. E-mail the URL to the instructor.

4) **PICK ONE:**

- **Moving Images and Sound: Video Poem** - Identify a “text,” which we define broadly as a meaningful idea, or more narrowly as the text of an actual poem or song. Using Final Cut Pro, create a 2-4 minute video presentation that includes visual imagery, sound, effects, etc. inspired by the chosen text. Project can include text, stock video and images, video and images you create/shoot, and other media sources. Post on your Web site as a Flash movie and podcast. Turn in a one-page critique of the project including the genesis of your idea, theoretical underpinnings, creative inspiration, etc.

- **or-Moving Images and Sound: Video Essay** - Storyboard and shoot a 3-5 minutes
narrative video project. Non-traditional narrative and technical approaches are encouraged, including shooting with your cell phone and other ideas we discuss. Post the final product on YouTube (or similar) and your personal Web site as a Flash movie and podcast. Turn in your story boards, script, and/or other supporting materials.

5) **Final Project** - Discuss in depth during class. This is a culmination of what you have learned in this class. The project should ask us to think critically about a subject of social, cultural, or intellectual significance. Methods to turn in and/or post this project will vary depending on the project type and intended medium(s).

**Schedule**

**Daily assignments and due dates are subject to change.** Changes to the schedule will be announced in class. You are responsible for being aware of them.

**Projects** are due by the beginning of the first class meeting of the week noted below. This gives you the weekend to finish. We critique each project as a class on due dates, so it is essential that projects are finished and turned in on time. You will have the opportunity to revise projects after the critique.

**Readings** need be completed prior to the week assigned and will be referenced throughout that week, but not always addressed specifically. Please ask if you have questions about or want to discuss any specifics of the readings.

All assignments must be submitted through the MassComm server “Drop Box” unless noted otherwise.

**Week 1 – Aug. 31**
Course Overview & Digital File Management
Reading: Lester, Section 1, Chapter 1-3
Discussion: Visual Communication Theory and Practice
Software: None
In-class Workshop: TBA

**Week 2 – Sept. 7:** Visual Communication
Monday: Labor Day Holiday
Due: None
Reading: Lester, Section 2, Chapter 4 & 5
Discussion: Visual Communication Theory and Practice
Discussion: Raster Graphic Techniques (selection, effects, filters, etc.)
Software: Adobe Photoshop
In-class Workshop: Photo retouching

**Week 3 – Sept. 14:** Computer Graphics
Due: None
Reading: Lester, Section 2, Chapter 4 & 5
Discussion: Adv. Raster Graphic Techniques
Software: Adobe Photoshop
Project: Self Portrait
**Week 4 – Sept. 21**
Due: Self Portrait  
Reading: Lester, Section 3, Chapter 6 & 7  
Discussion: Intro to Design and Layout  
Software: Adobe Photoshop  
Project: Triptych Image

**Week 5 – Sept. 28**
Due: Triptych Image  
Reading: Lester, Section 4, p111-118, Chapter 15-17  
Discussion: Intro to Design and Layout Techniques  
Software: Adobe Photoshop  
In-class Project:

**Week 6 – Oct. 5**
Due:
Reading: Williams & Tollett, Part 1 & 2 Using and Making Web Pages  
Discussion: Design and Layout Techniques  
Software: Adobe Photoshop  
In-class Project: Personal Logo

**Week 7 – Oct. 12: Web Design**
Due: None  
Reading: Williams & Tollett, Part 3: Design Issues on the Web  
Discussion: Elements and Principles of Design (PARC)  
Software: Adobe Dreamweaver  
In-class Project: bare bones Web site structure

**Week 8 – Oct. 19**
Monday Off: Fall Break  
Due: None  
Reading: Williams & Tollett, Part 4: Color Graphics, and Type  
Discussion: Authoring for the Web  
Software: Adobe Dreamweaver  
Project: Personal Web Site  
**Midterm Exam on Friday, Oct. 8**

**Week 9 – Oct. 26**
Due: None  
Reading: TBA  
Discussion: Authoring for the Web  
Software: Adobe Dreamweaver  
Project: Personal Web Site

**Week 10 – Nov. 2: Time-based Visual Communication**
Due: Personal Web site  
Reading: TBA  
Discussion: Videography & The Camera  
Software: Apple Final Cut Pro
Project: Video Project of your choice

**Week 11 – Nov. 9: Video Editing**
Due: None
Reading: TBA
Discussion: NL Digital Video Editing
Software: Apple Final Cut Pro
Project: Video Project of your choice

**Final Project proposals are due Friday, Nov. 13.**

Detailed guidelines are available on the class Web site. Specific project goals, content, context, and evaluation criteria are discussed in class. E-mail your proposal as an MS Word or PDF attachment to the professor by 5 p.m.

**Week 12 – Nov. 16**
Due: Video Project
Reading: TBA
Discussion:
Software: All
Project: Final Project

**Week 13 – Nov. 23 (Thanksgiving)**
Due: None
Reading: TBA
Discussion: In-class work
Software: All
Project: Final Project

**Week 14 – Nov. 30**
Due: None
Reading: TBA
Discussion: In-class work
Software: All
Project: Final Project

**Week 15 – Dec. 7**
**Final Project due date and presentations during final week of class**
It is mandatory that you present your final project at the assigned time. It is an essential component of the grading. Contact the professor immediately if a problem arises prior to the presentation.

**Week 16 – Dec. 14**
**Final Exam**

**Copyright & Plagiarism**

**Copyright** shelters intellectual property that is considered fixed, original and creative expression, not the ideas or facts upon which the expression is based. Students need to know that one cannot incorporate copyrighted material (images, video, songs, poetry, from the Web or elsewhere) into one’s work without the express consent of the copyright holder. The
exception is **Fair Use**, which generally allows the reasonable use of copyrighted materials for educational purposes only (versus commercial purposes, etc.). Outside of educational settings, the Fair Use exception includes “any copying of copyrighted material done for a limited and “transformative” purpose such as to comment upon, criticize or parody a copyrighted work. Such uses can be done without permission from the copyright owner. Another way of putting this is that fair use is a defense against infringement. If your use qualifies under the definition above... then your use would not be considered an illegal infringement.” (Retrieved from http://fairuse.stanford.edu/index.html on June 16, 2008).

**Plagiarism** is defined the student handbook as “the unacknowledged inclusion of someone else’s words, structure, ideas, or data, failure to identify any source, published in any medium, or unpublished...” In other words, plagiarism is presenting others people’s original work as your own original work. You are being educated as a communications professional. If you plagiarize others, you lose the credibility that is so precious to our field. You are also guaranteed an F in this course, and possible expulsion from the university (see student handbook regarding plagiarism).

Information/data/quotation/opinion/statement of fact taken from any other source must be attributed. You may paraphrase statements of others, but must cite the source. If the material is taken directly from another source, it must be placed in quotes and reproduced with complete accuracy. Failure to do so is plagiarism and will be treated accordingly.

A student with a disability who qualifies for accommodations should contact Sarah Mead Smith, Director of Disability Services at 865-2990 (Academic Resource Center, Room 405, Monroe Hall). A student wishing to receive test accommodations (e.g., extended test time) should provide me with an official Accommodation Form from Disability Services in advance of the scheduled test date.

No food, drinks, or gum allowed in the computer lab.

**PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONES** or other similar electronic devices while you are in class. Talking on the phone, taking calls, checking messages, text messaging, sending e-mails, chatting on Facebook or any similar distraction is rude and will not be tolerated. And for the love of all things holy – no Twitter.

If the communication is so vital that you must take the call, please take the call outside the classroom, but please spare us a second interruption by repeatedly entering and leaving. You can gather your belongings after class lets out.

Printing is for class related work only. No transparencies in the printers.

**Camera Equipment Checkout**
Video cameras and tripods are available for check out in the Communication office.

**After Class Software Access**
You will have access to computers and class software outside of regular class meeting times in CM 439. Check the Web site for hours. Other labs on campus include the Mac lab in the Library, the Graphics Lab in Monroe Hall and the Music Lab downstairs. Bottom line:
computers will be available when you need them.

**INTERRUPTION OF THE SEMESTER:** In the event of an interruption to the semester (such as a hurricane), you must immediately e-mail me at mdgiusti@loyno.edu and mikegiusti@cox.net with your alternative (non-Loyno) e-mail address. We will continue instruction electronically via Blackboard. As soon as loyno.edu is reestablished, we will resume use of loyno.edu e-mail addresses. Additionally, during the disruption, regularly check http://loyno.blackboard.com for communication.

The Blackboard system can be accessed online at: http://loyno.blackboard.com. In the event of an evacuation, you will be required to check the system for announcements and responsible for all assignments posted therein. For Bb help, please call toll free 1-866-562-7278 or visit the Web support portal at http://supportcenteronline.com/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=4063.

I post most of the material we cover in class each week on Blackboard. It is a great resource, and I suggest you use it.

**Strategies for Success:**

- **Ask questions.** During presentations, if a software process is unclear, ask to see the process demonstrated again. Your question may even help others in the class.
- **Refer to this syllabus to plan ahead for readings, supplies and project due dates.**
- **Save all of your related files into organized project folders.**
- **Complete assigned reading prior to class.**
- **Spend some time after every class reviewing new software processes covered that day.**
- **Finish each project by the completion date.**
- **Don’t fall behind.**
- **Be sure projects are rendered in the correct media format and/or working properly before the day of class critiques/presentations.**
- **Relax and enjoy the process of creating professional quality media projects.**

**About your instructor:** Mike Giusti graduated from Loyola University in 2000. In school he was editor of the Maroon, founded the Wolf Magazine (it had previously been a dying yearbook), and graduated as print journalism student of the year. After school he moved to Daytona Beach, Fla., where he served as a crime and municipal government reporter for the 100,000 daily circulation newspaper, the Daytona Beach News Journal. From there he moved back to New Orleans to serve as the associate editor of the area business journal, CityBusiness. He moved up within that company to run the commercial printing division. After Hurricane Katrina he took a second job within the CityBusiness parent company and became the managing editor of the construction-industry trade journal the Daily Journal of Commerce. In 2006 he returned to Loyola to become the Maroon Adviser and to teach journalism. He still works as a professional journalist and submits freelance articles to Bankrate.com and a finance trade journal based in Chicago called ISO&Agent Magazine, and has freelanced for Time Inc. and New Orleans Magazine, among other publications.

**Please note:** Because this class is a foundation of much of the coursework you will take in the School of Mass Communication, we want your experience to mirror that of other sections of this class taught by other professors. In that spirit, many portions of this syllabus have been paraphrased, borrowed or lifted in whole (with permission) from the Cmmn A201 Syllabus created by Prof. David Zemmels.