CMMN 201 -- Digital Communication
Syllabus Spring 2009

Instructor

David Zemmels
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School of Mass Communication

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Office Hours: T & TR 10-11
W & F 10-12

Class Sections:
CMMN-A201-001 TR, 11:00-12:15 p.m., Classroom 439
CMMN-A201-002 TR, 02:00-03:15 p.m., Classroom 439

Class Web Site: http://loyno.edu/~zemmels

Loyola University New Orleans, a Jesuit and Catholic institution of higher education, welcomes students of diverse backgrounds and prepares them to lead meaningful lives with and for others; to pursue truth, wisdom, and virtue; and to work for a more just world. Inspired by Ignatius of Loyola’s vision of finding God in all things, the university is grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, while also offering opportunities for professional studies in undergraduate and selected graduate programs. Through teaching, research, creative activities, and service, the faculty, in cooperation with the staff, strives to educate the whole student and to benefit the larger community. Approved by Loyola University New Orleans Board of Trustees - March 5, 2004.

This class serves to provide a foundation for thinking critically, creatively and independently about digital media design and production within the context of visual communication principles and theories.

The goal is to understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information in digitally mediated communication environments. The class projects challenge and engage your relationship with visual communication theory and digital media practices. Using the computer as a communication tool, you will demonstrate your aesthetic sensibilities by designing, producing, and distributing messages and expressions that combine digital text, imagery and sound across multiple media channels.

You are introduced to a variety of digital media authoring software tools to develop specific media production skills, as well as a broad understanding of the technology within and across the various 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 no one individual need master every application of computer technology to produce quality media content.
**Textbooks**

**Required Textbooks:**

by Paul Martin Lester. ISBN: 0534637205

The Non-Designers Web Book (3rd Edition)  
by Robin Williams and John Tollett. ISBN: 0201710382

**Recommended Textbook:**


**Course Structure**

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. There will be exceptions, but generally:

- Classes have lecture/demonstration on Tuesdays, and Thursdays are lab times dedicated to working on in-class assignments and projects.

**In the weeks when project assignments are due, they must be submitted by the beginning of the first class meeting of the week.** We critique each project as a class on due dates, so it is essential that projects are finished and turned in on-time. If you anticipate being unable to meet a due date, contact the professor prior to the due date to discuss options.

We cover several useful industry standard software packages: primarily Adobe Photoshop, Apple Final Cut Pro, 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 & Participation**

**Attendance is essential.** More than 3 unexcused absences affects 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. Excusable reasons include illness and family emergencies.

**Lateness disrupts the class.** If you are more than 15 minutes late, it is counted as an absence. Please be on time.

**In-class participation and collaboration are important to this class.** Visual communication media design and production are often group efforts. Collaboration on ideas and designs is encouraged: in formal critiques of work; during informal class discussions; during lab times; outside of class; etc. Group projects are encouraged after prior approval and with special grading requirements.
Grading

Projects 50%
Mid-term Exam 15%
Final Project 20%
Attendance/ Participation 15%

Grades are posted on Blackboard. Check your grades often. Let the professor 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, the professor will make final decisions on all grading criteria.

At the end of the semester, the points you receive for each assignment are totaled. Your grade is determined by that percentage of the total points possible, based on the following scale:

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<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91 - 100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>86 - 90</td>
<td>B+</td>
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**Late work cannot be accepted** except under extreme circumstances, such as serious illness or family emergency. Evidentiary support is expected. If you anticipate being unable to meet a due date for any other reason, contact the professor prior to the due date to discuss options.

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 Criteria

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

1. Presentation (visual and verbal)
2. Creativity/visual concept/idea execution
3. Typography (use of)
4. Color (use of)
5. Layout and design (use of imagery and/or text)
6. Problem solving techniques
7. Clarity of message/theme
8. Effective use of software/materials
9. Experimentation, refinement and manipulation
10. Following specific assignment and project parameters
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 pod cast. 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 pod cast. 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, and replaces a traditional final exam. 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).
**Daily assignments and due dates are subject to change.** Changes to the schedule will be announced in class and on the class web site. You are responsible for being aware of them.

You are responsible for being aware of any schedule changes.

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 instructor’s “Drop Box” unless noted otherwise.

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<tr>
<th><strong>Week 1 – Jan. 12</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Course Overview &amp; Digital File Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading: Lester, Section 1, Chapter 1-3</td>
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<td>Discussion: Visual Communication Theory and Practice</td>
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<td>Software: None</td>
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<td>In-class Workshop: TBA</td>
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| **Week 2 – Jan. 19**: Visual Communication | |
| Monday: MLK 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 – Jan. 26: Computer Graphics** | |
| Due: None | |
| Reading: Lester, Section 2, Chapter 4 & 5 | |
| Discussion: Adv. Raster Graphic Techniques | |
| Software: Adobe Photoshop | |
| Project: Self Portrait | |

| **Week 4 – Feb. 2** | |
| Due: Self Portrait | |
| Reading: Lester, Section 3, Chapter 6 & 7 | |
| Discussion: Intro to Design and Layout | |
| Software: Adobe Photoshop | |
| Project: Triptych Image | |
Week 5 – Feb. 9
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 – Feb. 16
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 – Feb. 23: Web Design
Monday Off: Mardi Gras
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 – Mar. 2
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 Thursday, March 5**

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

Week 10 – Mar. 16: 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 – Mar. 23: 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, March 27. 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 5:00 PM.

**Week 12 – Mar. 30**
Due: Video Project  
Reading: TBA  
Discussion:  
Software: All  
Project: Final Project

**Week 13 – Apr. 6 (Spring Break)**

**Week 14 - Apr. 13**
Due: None  
Reading: TBA  
Discussion: In-class work  
Software: All  
Project: Final Project

**Week 15 – Apr. 20**
Due: None  
Reading: TBA  
Discussion: In-class work  
Software: All  
Project: Final Project

**Week 16 – Apr. 27**  
(Tuesday only)
Due: None  
Reading: None  
Discussion: TBA  
Software: All  
Project: Final Project

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**Final Project due date and presentations during final’s week:**
Section 1: Tuesday, May 5, 11:30 - 1:30 p.m.  
Section 2: Thursday, May 7, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

It is mandatory that you present your final project at the assigned time for your section of our class. It is an essential component of the grading. Contact the professor immediately if a problem arises prior to the presentation.
Copyright & Plagiarism

Copyright shelters only 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 (verses 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.

Accommodation Policy

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Please contact the instructor of this course at the beginning of the semester to discuss any such accommodations for this course.

Computer Lab Policy

- No food, drinks, or gum allowed in the computer lab.
- Turn off your cellular phones.
- No texting, IMing, e-mailing, surfing, etc., during class time.
- 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. Details are forthcoming.

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.
Help Along the Way

If you have special needs (i.e., alternative testing, help with writing, etc.), please speak with the professor at the start of the term so that proper arrangements can be made. For more information about support services, contact Disability Services in the Office of Academic Enrichment, Monroe 405, 865-2990.

If you would like to speak with a personal counselor, contact Counseling & Career Services, DC 208, 865-3835.

The Academic and Career Excellence (ACE) Center, Room 101 Monroe Library, is an excellent resource. In effect, this is “one stop shopping” and one can work on projects there (using computers and other resources), and get instant advice from the following offices: Academic Enrichment, Counseling and Career Services, Disability Services, English Writing Lab, Mathematics Center, Monroe Library, Ross Foreign Language Center, and Writing Across the Curriculum. The information number is 864-7141.

There will be no class accommodations without certification from one of the above sources.

Interruption of the Semester

In the event of an interruption to the semester’s routine (such as a hurricane, earthquake, Divine intervention), you must immediately access the class site on Blackboard (http://loyno.blackboard.com). There will be an announcement on the opening page that gives you my alternative (non-loyno) e-mail address. You must immediately e-mail me at that address giving me your alternative e-mail address. We will continue instruction via e-mail and Blackboard. As soon as loyno.edu is reestablished, we will resume use of loyno.edu email addresses and Blackboard for all educational communication.

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.