CMMN A201 -- Digital Communication  
Syllabus Spring 2011

Instructor

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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**
None
On-line readings are assigned as needed. See class web site for assignments.

**Required**
4-8 GB SDHC (Minimum) - High Capacity Flash Memory for the video cameras.

**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 Monday/Tuesday, and Wednesday/Thursday 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 and online tools: primarily Adobe Photoshop, Apple Final Cut Pro, Adobe Dreamweaver, and Wordpress. The goal of this class is not to master each software package and tools, but to understand the basics of what each offers visual communication practices, and how each fits into the spectrum of contemporary media production technologies.

**Attendance & Participation**
Attendance is essential. Any unexcused absence affects your grade. Missing 3 or more classes results in a grade reduction. This is a hands-on learning class, with exercises, activities, and demonstrations taking place in each class. Missed information in a class session cannot be made up in any other way. 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.

**Camera Equipment Checkout**
Video cameras and tripods are available for check out. Details are forthcoming.

**After Class Software Access**
You have 24/7 access to computers and class software in CM 439 outside of regular class meeting times by using the Loyola ID card reader.
Projects 50%
Mid-term Exam 10%
Final Project 20%
Attendance/Participation 20%
(including in-class workshop projects)

Grades are posted on Blackboard. Check your grades often. Let the professor know if you are missing grades for any completed projects.

Before each project, and as a class, we will discuss a set of evaluation criteria. Your project will be evaluated based on these 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:

- 94 - 100 A
- 90 - 93 A-
- 87 - 89 B+
- 83 - 86 B
- 80 - 82 B-
- 77 - 79 C+
- 73 - 76 C
- 70 - 72 C-
- 67 - 70 D+
- 61 - 66 D
- 60 - 00 E

Late work will result in a reduced grade 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. Layout and design (use of imagery and/or text)
4. Problem solving techniques
5. Clarity of message/theme
6. Effective use of software/materials
7. Experimentation, refinement and manipulation
8. Following specific assignment and project parameters
Details for each project are available on the class Web site. Check the web site often.

In addition to these major projects, there are several in-class workshop assignments, as noted on the schedule.

1) **Manipulating Images: 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) **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. Create a 2-4 minute video presentation that includes visual imagery, sound, effects, etc. inspired by the text, and write a self-critique. Project must include images/video you create/shoot, and other media sources. Post the final product on mass comm as a pod cast. 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. Work needs to make a claim and support it. Post the final product on your personal web site as a Flash movie and pod cast, and YouTube (or similar) upon approval. Turn in your story boards, script, and/or other supporting materials.

4) **Design & Distribution of Text and Images: Personal Web Site** - Build an on-line presence with Wordpress.com to create a personal portfolio web site. The site should include examples of work from this class, a photo, resume, and contact information. The specific design is up to you, but challenge yourself to excel in customizing the layout and implementation of the site within the visual identity you want to project.

5) **Final Project** - 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. Due during finals week.
Schedule

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.

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.

You are responsible for being aware of any schedule changes.

Week 1 – Jan. 10: Class Overview
Course Overview & Digital File Management
Reading: See Web Site
Discussion: Class Overview and File Management
Discussion: Visual Literacy & What’s New About New Media?
Software: Mac OSX
Homework: On-line Reading

Week 2 – Jan. 17: Manipulating Images
Monday: MLK Day Holiday
Due: None
Reading: See Web Site
Discussion: Digital Basics
Software: Adobe Photoshop
In-class Workshop: Raster Graphic Techniques - Photo retouching

Week 3 – Jan. 24: Visual Communication
Due: Photo retouching
Reading: See Web Site
Discussion: Visual Cues & Perceptual Theories
Software: Adobe Photoshop
Project: Self Portrait

Week 4 – Jan. 31: Combining Images
Due: Self Portrait
Reading: See Web Site
Discussion: Analyzing Images
Software: Adobe Photoshop
Project: Triptych Image
Week 5 – Feb. 7: Time-based Visual Communication
Due: Triptych Image
Due: None
Reading: See Web Site
Discussion: Videography & The Camera
Software: Apple Final Cut Pro

Week 6 – Feb. 14: Time-based Visual Communication
Due: None
Reading: See Web Site
Discussion: NL Digital Video Editing
Software: Apple Final Cut Pro
In-class Workshop: editing video

Week 7 – Feb. 21: Copyright
Midterm Exam (Mon/Tues)
Due: None
Reading: See Web Site
Discussion: TBA
In-class Workshop: editing video

Week 8 – Feb. 28: Video Project
Due: None
Reading: See Web Site
Discussion: Posting on YouTube & Copyright Issues
Software: Final Cut
Project: Video Project Assignment

Week 9 - Mar. 7: Mardi Gras Break

Week 10 - Mar. 14: Video Project
Due: None
Reading: See Web Site
Discussion: Work on Video Project
Software: Final Cut
In-class Workshop: Posting video projects on-line

Week 11 – Mar. 21: Web Basics
Due: Video Project Project (posted online)
Reading: See Web Site
Discussion: Basic HTML
Software: Dreamweaver
In-class Workshop: bare bones web site structure and first web site

Week 12 – Mar. 28: Making Web Pages
Due: Basic HTML page(s)
Reading: See Web Site
Discussion: Working with CMS
Software: Wordpress.com
In-class Workshop: Themes, etc.
Week 13 – Apr. 4: Personal Web Site
Due: None
Reading: See Web Site
Discussion: Authoring for the Web in CMS
Software: Wordpress.com
Project: Work on Personal Portfolio Web Site

Final Project proposals are due Wednesday Apr. 13 at Noon. Detailed guidelines are available on the class web site. Specific project goals, content, context, and evaluation criteria are discussed in class. Drop your proposal as an MS Word or PDF in the class drop box by 12:00 PM.

Week 14 - Apr. 11: Web Design
Due Thursday: Web Project
Reading: None
Discussion: Final Project
Software: All
Project: Final Project

Week 15 – Apr. 18: Spring Break

Week 16 - Apr. 25: Final Project
Due: None
Reading: None
Discussion: TBA
Software: All
Project: Final Project

Week 17 – May 2: Final Project
Due: None
Reading: None
Discussion: TBA
Software: All
Project: Final Project

Week 18 – May 9: Final’s Week

Final Project due date and presentations during final’s week:
  Section 1: Tuesday, May 10, 11:30 - 1:30 p.m.
  Section 2: Thursday, May 12, 11:30 - 1:30 p.m.
  Section 3: Monday, May 9, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

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

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.

- 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.

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.
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.

- **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.