

NAF Graphic Design

Course Scope and Sequence

July 2021

The Graphic Design course provides a hands-on introduction to the technical and creative skills of a professional designer. First, students learn the distinguishing features of communicating visually through graphic design. Next, they gain technical skills in Adobe Photoshop to equip them for graphic design work. From there, students master the basic principles of graphic design and then delve into elements of graphic design such as color, typography, and images.

The course includes a culminating project where students create a design portfolio for a client such as a nonprofit organization, a small business, or a school club. They learn about identity design and then create a logo, a business card, and at least one other piece of collateral to include in the portfolio they create for their client. To place all that they have learned in the context of the professional world, students explore the types of careers available to graphic designers today.

This course is expected to take 79 50-minute class periods.

Unit 1: Designing for Communication

Lesson 1: Course Introduction

Estimated # of Class Periods: 2

Learning Objectives

- Infer the skills and knowledge about graphic design needed to be successful in an authentic project
- Identify general graphic design terms with which to build a taxonomy

Lesson 2: What Is Graphic Design?

Estimated # of Class Periods: 4

Learning Objectives

- Describe the components used in visual communication
- Explain how signs and symbols communicate meaning
- Compare and contrast different levels of visual perception
- List the skill set used by professional graphic designers

Lesson 3: The Graphic Design Process

Estimated # of Class Periods: 3

Learning Objectives

- Explain how to conduct research to solve a visual problem
- Develop a creative brief that outlines the strategy for a graphic design
- Identify the steps in the graphic design process
- Identify the goals, roles, and deliverables of a professional doing graphic design work

Unit 2: Photoshop Basics

Note: The Photoshop material in this course is written for Photoshop 2021. The Photoshop skills are basic enough that schools with earlier versions should be able to easily adapt these lessons. Many Photoshop skills will be included as “just in time” training in later lessons. This unit is intended to let students get their hands on Photoshop and understand how it works.

Lesson 4: Getting Started with Photoshop

Estimated # of Class Periods: 6

Learning Objectives

- Identify the main menu, Options bar, Tools panel, Application bar, and floating panels in the Photoshop work area
- Demonstrate the ability to pan around a document using the Navigator panel and the Hand tool in Photoshop
- Define image size, image resolution, and canvas size
- Demonstrate the ability to use the Crop tool effectively in Photoshop
- Explain the purpose of the History panel in Photoshop and describe how it works
- Explain the concept of layers and how layers are used in graphic design
- Explain how to use the Layers panel
- Demonstrate the ability to move, copy, and transform layers
- Demonstrate the ability to use the Marquee, Lasso, Quick Selection, and Magic Wand selection tools

Lesson 5: Working with Masks

Estimated # of Class Periods: 5

Learning Objectives

- Explain what a mask is and how masks are used in graphic design
- Compare and contrast masks, selections, and layers
- Demonstrate the ability to use layer masks effectively

Lesson 6: Basic Photo Corrections

Estimated # of Class Periods: 3

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the ability to use Adobe Photoshop to edit photographs
- Identify the main purpose of the following tools: Healing Brush, Spot Healing Brush, Patch, Clone Stamp, Dodge, Burn, and Sponge
- Demonstrate the ability to use toning tools and healing tools
- Demonstrate the ability to adjust color
- Demonstrate the ability to adjust contrast using Levels or Curves
- Demonstrate the ability to sharpen an image using the Unsharp Mask filter

- Explain how to save photos for different media and when to use each file format (including JPEG, TIFF, GIF, PDF, PNG, and BMP)

Unit 3: Principles of Graphic Design

Lesson 7: Proximity, Alignment, Repetition, and Contrast

Estimated # of Class Periods: 7

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate how well various graphic designs incorporate the principles of proximity, alignment, repetition, and contrast
- Demonstrate the ability to use repetition to unify and strengthen a design
- Demonstrate the ability to use alignment to connect design elements
- Demonstrate the ability to use proximity to group related items together
- Demonstrate the ability to use contrast to add visual interest, by making elements that are different appear really different to the eye
- Demonstrate the ability to build a design gradually using thumbnail sketches and mockups
- Create a product that demonstrates the four principles of graphic design

Lesson 8: Visual Hierarchy

Estimated # of Class Periods: 4

Learning Objectives

- Explain the concepts of visual hierarchy and focal point and identify their importance in a design
- Explain how to determine what should be seen as more important on a page
- Identify ways visual hierarchy can be used to aid comprehension, reinforce a message, and guide viewers
- Demonstrate the ability to create emphasis using size, color, position, shape, texture, contrast, density, and movement

Lesson 9: Layout and Balance

Estimated # of Class Periods: 3

Learning Objectives

- Describe how to use a grid structure to achieve consistency
- Explain what constitutes a balanced design
- Demonstrate the ability to achieve balance through symmetrical or asymmetrical layout
- Demonstrate the ability to create grids in Photoshop
- Explain the importance and appropriate use of white space and margins
- Create attractive layouts that demonstrate balance

Unit 4: Elements of Graphic Design

Note: The lessons in this unit will combine conceptual teaching about each element with hands-on work in Photoshop. In each lesson, students will create some type of graphic design artifact for assessment.

Lesson 10: Fundamentals of Color

Estimated # of Class Periods: 5

Learning Objectives

- Explain the concepts and the major techniques involved in using color to communicate ideas
- Explain the basics of color theory as it relates to graphic design
- Compare and contrast grayscale, RGB, and CMYK color systems
- Demonstrate the ability to choose colors in Photoshop using the Eyedropper tool and the Color Picker

Lesson 11: Typography

Estimated # of Class Periods: 5

Learning Objectives

- Describe the proportions of roman letter forms
- Explain how to use line spacing and letter spacing effectively
- Demonstrate the ability to use antialiasing, leading, kerning, and tracking to smooth and format text in Photoshop
- Demonstrate the ability to use type along paths and shapes in Photoshop
- Identify appropriate typefaces to help communicate a visual solution
- Demonstrate the ability to use typography effectively in a design

Lesson 12: Images

Estimated # of Class Periods: 6

Learning Objectives

- Identify images appropriate for message and audience
- Describe the use of vector graphics and identify software that can produce vector graphics
- Explain how images can be used to attract a person's attention
- Compare and contrast commissioned artwork, stock illustrations, and photography and explain what to look for when selecting an image
- Create images in Photoshop using the Pen, Pencil, Paintbrush, and Drawing tools
- Explain how to create and modify brushes
- Define *depth of field* and explain how to achieve this in a Photoshop image
- Identify proper application of copyright law to graphic design activities

Unit 5: Creating a Design Portfolio

Note: In this unit, students complete their culminating project: a design portfolio for a client that includes a logo, business cards, and other collateral that adheres to the client's identity design.

Lesson 13: Identity Design

Estimated # of Class Periods: 8

Learning Objectives

- Explain how graphic elements and color can be used to visually represent core values, philosophy, and principles of a business or organization
- Evaluate designs for audience, meaning, and effectiveness
- Identify ways to maintain consistency across a client's entire identity system
- Demonstrate the ability to choose a style for a client's identity system
- Develop an identity design that meets a client's needs

Lesson 14: Creating Logos and Applying Identity to Printed Materials

Estimated # of Class Periods: 10

Learning Objectives

- Explain what makes a logo simple, unique, and memorable
- Synthesize the elements and principles of graphic design as they apply to logos
- Design a logo that tells the story of the client's history and of the quality and type of products or services offered by the client
- Identify different types of printed collateral where identity design can be used effectively
- Design a business card and letterhead that gives a business or organization instant recognition
- Demonstrate the ability to apply the same graphic elements and color palettes across multiple forms of communication

Unit 6: Careers in Graphic Design

Lesson 15: Exploring Graphic Design Careers and Learning from Industry Experts

Estimated # of Class Periods: 4

Learning Objectives

- List the types of graphic design-related jobs that are available
- Describe entry-level graphic design jobs and corresponding qualifications
- Evaluate which graphic design jobs are most suitable for the student, based on personal interests and skills
- Create a professional portfolio to present to a potential employer or to include in a school or scholarship application

Lesson 16: Project Presentation and Course Closure

Estimated # of Class Periods: 4

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate personal experience and performance in the course
- Summarize key learning across the whole subject of graphic design