

Fall 2020

## Intro to Visual Communication 1001-004

Thursdays, 6:30–9:30 p.m. in Sharp 1114 *or* Online

Instructor: Ali Tomek / atomek1@saic.edu

Introduction to Visual Communication is organized around the question: *How do graphic designers communicate ideas visually?* In this course, we'll be studying five foundational design elements—**Composition**, **Symbol**, **Color**, **Motion**, **Sequence**—and examining how we can use each to create engaging designs that produce meaning for an audience.

We will also cover:

**The Design Process:** what the basic stages are, what it means to engage in a thorough design process, and how professional designers approach their work

**Relevant Design Theories:** including gestalt, semiotics, and color theory

**Critique Approaches:** how designers talk about their work, what makes successful work, and how to give and receive kind, yet critical feedback

**Basic Production Skills:** craftsmanship and some Photoshop

**Documentation and Presentation Skills:** how to document and present work online for feedback and how to describe design decisions to others

### Learning Goals

- \*To articulate and apply basic visual principles
- \*To articulate one's personal voice through visual work, writing, and critiques
- \*To develop critical thinking and “seeing” skills
- \*To successfully plan, manage, develop, and refine a project
- \*To edit, document, and present work
- \*To effectively interact, critique, and collaborate with others online or in-person

### Structure

This course is listed as in person, modified. You may also choose to take the course 100% online.

For students attending in person, we will meet once per week on Thursdays for three hours starting at 6:30 p.m. In-person meetings will focus on lectures, project progress discussions, group activities, and critiques. In a typical semester, this course allows ample in-class work time. This semester, you will be expected to work on your projects mostly outside of class to maximize in-person meetings.

To stay below classroom capacity, we will use a rotation system: every week, 3–4 students will be assigned to meet online on Tuesday instead of in person on Thursday. *See the document Rotation System for details.*

Students working online will have access to recorded lectures. Online students should plan to meet with me on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. CST via Zoom.

Everyone will post work to Slack, so both groups will be able to view and respond to each other's work. Assignments will always be due on Thursdays at 6 p.m. CST.

**Semester Overview**

<b>Week 1</b> 9.3	<b>Composition</b>
<b>Week 2</b> 9.8 & 10	<b>Composition</b>
<b>Week 3</b> 9.15 & 17	<b>Composition</b>
<b>Week 4</b> 9.22 & 24	<b>Composition Due, Symbol</b>
<b>Week 5</b> 9.29 & 10.1	<b>Symbol</b>
<b>Week 6</b> 10.6 & 8	<b>Symbol</b>
<b>Week 7</b> 10.13 & 15	<b>Symbol Due</b>
<b>Week 8</b> 10.20 & 22	<b>Color</b>
<b>Week 9</b> 10.27 & 29	<b>Color Due, Motion</b>
<b>Week 10</b> 11.3 & 5	<b>Motion</b>
<b>Week 11</b> 11.10 & 12	<b>Motion</b>
<b>Week 12</b> 11.17 & 19	<b>Motion Due, Sequence</b>
<b>Week 13</b> 11.24 & 26	Thanksgiving, <i>No Class</i>
<b>Week 14</b> 12.1 & 3	<b>Sequence</b>
<b>Week 15</b> 12.8 & 10	<b>Sequence Due</b>
<b>Week 16</b> 12.15 & 17	<i>No Class, Any Revised Work Due</i>

**Projects**

**Composition:** Design nine, visually engaging compositions

**Symbol:** Design a symbol using the letters in your initials

**Color:** Research and critically evaluate one color

**Motion:** Design an animated graphic that means “Wait”

**Sequence:** Design an animated GIF

**Online Tools**

We will be using several digital platforms this semester to communicate online.

**Course Website:** [alitomek.com/viscom.html](http://alitomek.com/viscom.html)

This is where the detailed course schedule will be posted, along with links to the lectures, project PDFs, and additional resources.

**Canvas:** All course materials will also be posted to Canvas.

**Slack:** We will use Slack to upload and respond to work virtually. You will receive an email inviting you to join our course “workspace.”



Project colors are inspired by Milton Glaser's *Color Fuses* mural.

**Vimeo:** Recorded lecture content will be posted to Vimeo. Links will be provided on the course website.

**Instagram:** During the Color project, we will upload work to a course Instagram account. More info will be provided at that time.

### **Communication**

It's very important that we stay in touch with each other this semester through frequent communication. Message me via Slack, Canvas, or email ([atomek1@saic.edu](mailto:atomek1@saic.edu)) with questions, updates, or just to check in!

### **Digital Devices**

You may use digital devices to record notes and review course content during class. But be respectful: when someone is speaking, always put away devices and give the speaker your full attention.

### **Attendance**

If you need to miss class, email me at [atomek1@saic.edu](mailto:atomek1@saic.edu). This is a responsible habit to start practicing, and it ensures I am not waiting for you to begin class. Refer to our course website to review what you missed. Note that assignments are still due, whether you attend class or not.

Please do not come to class if you are feeling sick!

### **Grading**

Each project in the course will be graded on a 10 point scale:

**10:** Work is conceptually and formally engaging / Tests many different ways to approach a project through sketching and iteration / Implements feedback / Frequently participates during in-person or online critiques / Takes initiative to ask questions and improve work / Excellent craft

**8–9:** Solid, well-done work / Could improve on the items noted in the 10-list such as: better process, more solutions, stronger concepts, better craft and attention to detail, more participation

**7:** Average work / Fulfills projects but not much else / Assignments are submitted late / Little participation / Lack of enthusiasm

**6 or below:** Limited effort / Incomplete work / Lack of skill and enthusiasm / Project does not follow instructions / Assignments are submitted late

Course Credit will be given to students who earn a cumulative grade of 35 or more out of 50 total points.

There are no extra credit opportunities. You can, however, revisit previous assignments at any time to demonstrate improvement and receive a better grade.



## Portfolio Review

To advance to intermediate and upper-level courses in the Visual Communication Design department, you must submit a collection of your work for evaluation after you have completed this course along with Image Studio, Beginning Typography, and Beginning Graphic Design.

Work from this course must be included in the portfolio, so save all projects and produce the best-quality work that you can this semester!

## Course Supplies

The main supplies this semester are basic sketching materials: paper and pencils or pens of your choice.

For the first two projects, you will need a few additional supplies. The following can be purchased online via Blick Art Materials or Amazon:

- \*Thick white cardstock *or* Smooth (plate) finish bristol board
- \*Ruler
- \*Drawing compass
- \*Black Chroma Opaque Poster Color and a paintbrush *or* Nice black markers
- \*Chroma Opaque Poster Color in colors of your choice *or* Color Markers
- \*Rubber cement *or* Double-sided tape *or* Glue stick
- \*Scissors

Necessary supplies will also be outlined in each project PDF. If you ever have difficulty acquiring the supplies, email me and we will work together to find alternative materials that you can use.

## Downloading Photoshop

For the final two projects, you will need Adobe Photoshop. You have access to the entire Adobe Creative Suite for free via your SAIC email address. To install Photoshop, follow the instructions at this link: [saic.edu/t4/crit/adobe](http://saic.edu/t4/crit/adobe)

The remainder of this Syllabus contains policies and resources provided by SAIC that are applicable to all courses.

## General Classroom Health and Safety Expectations

Masks must be worn at all times in classrooms and campus buildings (except when eating in designated spaces).

Maintain 6 feet (or more) of distance from everyone as much as possible.

When it is necessary to be within 6 feet of someone, it must be less than 15 minutes in close contact.

It is essential to adhere to these guidelines to lower the risk of Covid19 infection for everyone in the SAIC community.

If you follow these rules, you will not be considered a “contact” even if someone in your class tests positive or develops symptoms of Covid19.

If you do not follow these rules and someone with whom you have been in extended close contact (under 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) tests positive or develops symptoms of Covid19, you will automatically be considered a “contact” and will have to quarantine for 14 days. This does not mean that you will develop Covid19, but it does mean that you will have to remain in quarantine for 14 days, regardless of whether or not you test positive for Covid19 or develop symptoms.

If you feel ill, have a temperature, or develop symptoms of Covid19, stay home and call the Wellness Center. Do not return to campus until you have been advised it is okay to do so by the Wellness Center.

Health Services: [healthservices@saic.edu](mailto:healthservices@saic.edu) and 312.499.4288

### **Academic Misconduct**

From the SAIC Student Handbook:

“Academic misconduct includes both plagiarism and cheating, and may consist of: the submission of the work of another as one’s own; unauthorized assistance on a test or assignment; submission of the same work for more than one class without the knowledge and consent of all instructors; or the failure to properly cite texts or ideas from other sources. Academic misconduct also includes the falsification of academic or student-related records, such as transcripts, evaluations and letters of recommendation. Academic misconduct extends to all spaces on campus, including satellite locations and online education. Academic integrity is expected in all coursework, including online learning. It is assumed that the person receiving the credit for the course is the person completing the work. SAIC has processes in place, including LDAP authentication, to verify student identity.”

The penalty for academic misconduct ranges from a failing project grade to receiving No Credit for the course.

### **Accommodations**

SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) to schedule an appointment.

DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you with a letter outlining the approved accommodations for you to deliver to your instructors. This letter must be presented before any accommodations will be implemented. You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible. The DLRC is located within the Wellness Center on the 13th floor of 116 S Michigan Ave and can be reached via phone at 312.499.4278 or email at [dlrc@saic.edu](mailto:dlrc@saic.edu).

**Support Resources**

The Office of Students Affairs at SAIC is here to support all students with resources to aid in their success inside and outside of the classroom. If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing food everyday, and/or do not have a safe and stable place to live, please contact the Office of Student Affairs: 312.629.6800 or [studenthelp@saic.edu](mailto:studenthelp@saic.edu) during business hours. If you contact them after hours, someone will respond the next business day.

The SAIC Wellness Center, which includes Counseling Services Health Services, is also here to support students' mental health.

**Counseling Services:** [counselingservices@saic.edu](mailto:counselingservices@saic.edu) and 312.499.4271 (press 1 to speak to a counselor after hours)

In case of an emergency, please contact SAIC Campus Security, 24 hours a day, by visiting any campus security desk or calling 312.899.1230.

**The Writing Center**

Tutors are available for VIRTUAL APPOINTMENTS to help all currently enrolled degree-seeking students with their brainstorming, writing, and editing. Tutors can assist with artist statements, application materials, essays, presentation texts, thesis drafts, proposals, and creative projects.

To sign up for an appointment, please visit our website: [saic.edu/academics/writing-center](https://saic.edu/academics/writing-center) (links to an external site)

Here you'll find information about tutors and directions about how to schedule an appointment through our new appointment system, EAB Navigate. Once your appointment is set, you'll receive a confirmation with a Zoom link, which you'll use to meet with your tutor online. To prepare for your appointment, please have your writing ready to share with your tutor in a Google Doc and click on your Zoom link in your confirmation email at the scheduled time.

Hours:

Monday–Thursday: 8 AM–8 PM (CST)

Friday: 8 AM–6 PM (CST)

Please email us with any questions! [wcenter@saic.edu](mailto:wcenter@saic.edu)