This in-depth studies course focuses on research concerning current issues in visual communication/information/graphic design fields. This course is for procuring the undergraduate degree in BFA Graphic Design degree where the student will develop an individual design approach, process, and methodology for the application of graphic design solutions as the thesis project that will fulfill the criteria expected for graduation. Prerequisites: Pass BFA Portfolio Review, DSGD 105, DSGD 186

The course presents an increased opportunity for guided and self-directed design research and exploration of appropriate media and execution methods; sustained investigation and integration of visual communication skills in a semester long project; and public presentation of the outcome from this semester is the final graduation requirement for the BFA Degree—visiting critics will join the faculty to review the completed projects.

Group discussions and critiques are balanced with individual meetings with faculty and visit with guest critics. Participation in discussions and critiques is vital to students’ success in this class. You will be encouraged to develop evaluative skills, and articulate them in the critique format. You will also be challenged to determine goals and to make observations and decisions that result in concise, informative, and engaging visual statements.

The BFA Graphic Design thesis project is conceived as an open framework within which each student’s visual methods are deployed across many diverse projects during his or her study at SJSU. The thesis can be socially driven, entrepreneurial, or practical. It can be executed in any medium, including print, video, animation, writing/publishing, web, or installation.

While every thesis project is unique, there are several common features: a focus on methodology, the application of a visual method to studio work, and the organization of the work in a thoughtfully argued written document known as the “Thesis Book.” An outcome(s) of your thesis proposal is expected at the end of the semester, at your final presentation.

The individual collection of graphic design work by each student is supported on several levels simultaneously: studio work and small three to four-person thesis
groups led by weekly faculty meetings; individual sessions with writing and editing tutors from the SJSU Writing Center; lectures, presentations, and workshops. At your earliest convenience, and sooner than later, a self-appointed three member thesis review committee (including the key faculty) must be established. Committee members can consist SJSU faculty, or other visual communication educators, or professionals from the community at large. You are responsible for scheduling individual sessions with thesis review committee members through the semester; please note your committee members should be available for your end of the semester public presentation. In addition, SJSU faculty will conduct at least two “mid-semeter” thesis reviews, day and time TBD.

**Student Learning Objectives**

This is a studio-intensive course where projects will address the graphic design program Student Learning Objectives, to view please visit: [http://www.sjsu.edu/design/design_programs/graphic_design_program/](http://www.sjsu.edu/design/design_programs/graphic_design_program/)

Critiques, work-in-progress discussions, and assigned project reviews form the basis for group discussions within this class. You will be encouraged to develop evaluative skills, and articulate them in the critique format. You will also be challenged to determine goals and to make observations and decisions that result in concise, informative, and engaging visual statements.

**Course Content Learning Outcomes**

The goal of this course is to contribute to the student’s discovery and understanding of the objectives, principles, and methods used in visual communication. Upon successful completion of this course, you will, through experimentation, careful analysis, and evaluation, fashion a capstone experience in visual problem solving utilizing the following interrelated theories:

**LO 1** – Create work that communicates on its own to a broad audience;

**LO 2** – Develop a formal language in visual form-making, and awareness of aesthetic values (why things look good or bad, and how things can be improved);

**LO 3** – Express his/her creativity and be able to assess his/her personal interests;

**LO 4** – Develop a visual research methodology to identify, analyze, define problems, and to orchestrate complex variables into a satisfying solution (how to use creative design methods)

**LO 5** – Develop a capacity to communicate concepts and requirements, verbally as well as visually;

**LO 6** – Understand the role of the design professional in society.

**Recommended Texts/Readings**

A Designer’s Research Manual: Succeed in Design by Knowing Your Clients and What They Really Need (Design Field Guide) - by Jennifer Visocky O’Grady (Author), Ken O’Grady (Author)
Value Proposition Design: How to Create Products and Services Customers Want (Strategyzer) Paperback – by Alexander Osterwalder (Author), Yves Pigneur (Author), Gregory Bernarda (Author), Alan Smith (Author), Trish Papadakos (Designer)

The Lean Startup: How Today’s Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses Hardcover – by Eric Ries

Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday ThingsPaperback – by Don Norman

Experience Design: A Framework for Integrating Brand, Experience, and Value Paperback – by Patrick Newbery (Author), Kevin Farnham (Author)

Additional reading list will be provided throughout the semester

Library Resources (liaison) The San Jose State University Library supports student access to information with in-person reference at the King Library Reference Desk and specialized support for Design on-line at http://libguides.sjsu.edu/design or by appointment with Librarian Teresa Slobuski. She may be contacted at teresa.slobuski@sjsu.edu or 808-2318.

Material and Software Requirements • Wireless laptop computer • Appropriate type fonts • Always have your working digital files, and research and reference materials • Reliable data backup • Wireless network access: https://sisuone.sjsu.edu/ • Digital color printer (capable of 13x19 output if practical) • Drawing implements and papers as in project description • Clear push pins

Expenses Estimated cost for semester supplies/materials will vary according to the individual. There is a $45 printing fee for this course to cover software licensing, printing consumables, and related infrastructure.

Administrative Policies This course is an essential component of your curriculum at SJSU. We have a good amount of work to complete in this course. So, in order to professionally and effectively deliver the curriculum it is necessary to establish some ground rules. Students are expected to read this syllabus thoroughly and to observe all of the regulations laid out below.

Classroom Protocol We are involved in a mutually beneficial communal learning experience, one that requires full attention and respectful behavior toward all members of the class. In order to maximize the learning experience, students are requested to observe the following etiquette guidelines:
• Students must take every step necessary to minimize distractions during class.

• Students are expected to arrive on time and to remain in class until the class is over, or excused. If you have a prior engagement that requires you leave before the end of class, please inform the instructor before class and take pains not to disturb other students when you leave.

• Announcements, handouts, and assignments are issued at the beginning of class. All critiques begin 15 minutes after official class start time; no work is to be added to the wall after a critique begins. It is your responsibility to inform yourself of any announcements or requirements that you miss due to late arrivals. Please do not interrupt class to ask about these. Remain after class if you have questions.

• Electronic devices not directly pertaining to your participation in this class must be turned off and put away before class starts. This means you may not place or receive calls, messages, play games, check e-mails, surf the web, pop into Facebook, Twitter, etc.

• Laptops are to be used for course related purposes only.

• Please do not eat during class.

• Socializing during lectures or when other students are presenting material for the benefit of the class is counterproductive and inconsiderate.

• No spray-mount adhesive spraying in the class.

• Do not use tabletops as a cutting surface.

• It is expected that there will be 2 to 3+ hours of homework for each hour of class.

• You are required to join the course Facebook group for readings, discussions and announcements. Additionally, this course will be adopting Slack for communications.

**Dropping and Adding**  Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester’s Catalog Policies section at [http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html). Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic calendar web page located at [http://www.sjsu.edu/academics/](http://www.sjsu.edu/academics/). The Late Drop Policy is available at: [http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/). Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at
Grading Policy

Thesis project and course performance will be evaluated according to the following components. Each project will be graded upon completion and assigned a letter grade according to the University policy—A through F. An incomplete will be granted to students with documented extenuating circumstances e.g. debilitating illness, family emergency etc. Bases for the grading are:

Problem solving skills - LO 1~5
Planning, organizing, research and content gathering (message development), analysis, sketching and content integration.

Form-giving skills - LO 1, 2, and 3
Design exploration, development, and refinement. The synthesis of the elements, principles, and attributes of form into an effective, evocative product. The verbal/visual investigation of form and function.

Presentation skills - LO 4 and 5
The skill, dexterity, and attention to detail exhibited in presentation. The quality of line and form necessary for effective visual communication.

Participation and Preparation – LO 3, 4 and 5
Producing appropriate solutions to all required phases of development on the thesis project both in quality and quantity. Engaged in class critiques, faculty reviews and activities.

Grading Scale
A-, A, A+ = Excellence (3.7–4.0)
Student consistently delivers creative and high quality work and demonstrates the ability to explore a wide range of alternative options as well as the ability to make intelligent and informed decisions on the final solution. Student is able to refine final solutions to instructor feedback. Student shows the ability to communicate ideas clearly and completely, both visually and verbally. Well-crafted and informed arguments support any and all design decisions. All project s are complete and on time. Student demonstrates a strong, engaged effort in work and in class. Student maintains at all times a positive attitude and commitment towards the profession, classmates, the instructor and their own development. Student participates in all regularly scheduled classes. Overall, student meets and exceeds the requirements of the course.

B-, B, B+ = Very good work (2.7–3.6)
Student demonstrates an above average effort in all areas. Work is complete and demonstrates no craft or technical problem areas. Student shows the ability to communicate decent rationale for design decisions and demonstrates improvement in all areas of professional development as a designer. Student maintains a positive attitude and involvement in all coursework and class activities.

C-, C, C+ = Adequate, average work (1.7–2.6)
Student produces the minimum work required at an average quality level and provides basic explanations for design decisions. Student demonstrates a basic understanding of the principles presented in class and may have some craft and technical problem areas. Student demonstrates average participation in all regularly scheduled classes.

D-, D, D+ = Poor work and lack of effort (0.7–1.6)
Student produces the minimum work required at below average quality and demonstrates little understanding of the principles

F = Failure to meet the course requirements (0.0–0.6)
Student demonstrates a lack of understanding of the basic principles discussed in class and is unable to convey creative and craft and technical ability as required. Student has little or no involvement in class discussions, repeatedly misses deadlines or critiques, and demonstrates little commitment to learning and their own development. Student shows little participation and/or is consistently late for class.

Semester grade will be weighted according to the following percentages

**Phase 1: Thesis proposal 25%**
- Observation(s)
- Proposition(s)
- Anticipated investigation

**Phase 2: Research 25%**
- Self evaluation(s)
- Developed framework(s) based on informed judgments
- In-depth exploration(s)

**Phase 3: Thesis project 25%**
- Appropriate form of your project
- Thought-out objectives contextualized by audience germane to the narrative

**Process book & Final Presentation 25%**
- Bound record of your thought and design process work in tandem with thesis project
- Final public presentation of your thesis project

**Important Notes about Grading**
All assignments are graded, therefore you should do your best on them or your course grade will be adversely affected. It is very important to complete all of them because:

1) Each develops a skill necessary for successful completion of assignments
2) Missing a portion of these assignments can lower your course grade substantially
Participation Effect on Grading

Project phases are graded on a scale of 0 to 4, corresponding to the letter grades F to A as outlined on this document. Each project phase is graded based on class engagement, participation, preparation; assignment performance and quality of the project’s outcome(s). Punctual presentations of all project phases, as well as progress during in-class sessions will be noted towards class participation, engagement and preparation.

Deadlines

No extensions will be given except in cases of documented emergencies, serious illness. If such a circumstance should arise, please contact the instructor as early as possible and be ready to provide documentation.

Late Assignments

It is essential that you keep up with the course work and submit all assignments in a timely manner. Assignments will lose a full letter grade for each day late. Graded assignments more than 3 days late will not be accepted. In such cases, a grade of zero credit will be entered.

Extra Credit

Out of general fairness to all students, there will be no opportunities for extra credit assignments given in this class.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University’s Academic Integrity policy, located at http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/studentaffairs/.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments and or projects are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/ to establish a record of their disability.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm,
slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

**Student Affairs**

The Division of Student Affairs provides a wide variety of services – career development, health and wellness, campus life, leadership development, cross cultural experiences, disability resources, psychological counseling, student housing, recreation, and co-curricular events. If you are interested in learning more about the departments and opportunities and services, please visit [http://www.sjsu.edu/studentaffairs/](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentaffairs/).

**SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at [http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/).

**Peer Connections**

The Student Services Center is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to inspire them to become independent learners. The Center’s tutors are trained and nationally certified by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). They provide content-based tutoring in many lower division courses (some upper division) as well as writing and study skills assistance. Small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring are available. Please visit the Peer Connections website for more information at: [http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/).

**Peer Mentor Center**

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. The Peer Mentoring website is located at [http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/mentoring/](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/mentoring/).

**Campus Emergency and Other Aid**

Emergency call: Call to the police office at 911 or pick up a Blue light phones. Escort Service: 4-2222. “Individuals with disabilities may contact the Disability Resource center on campus, 924-6000, Administration building 110, for a variety of formats such as Braille, large print, sign interpreters, assistive listening devices, audio tape, and accommodations for physical.
### COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>28 Thurs</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>2 Tues</td>
<td>Thesis topics and form groups</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Thurs</td>
<td>Thesis outline due (confirm committee members)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9 Tues</td>
<td>Work in Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 Thurs</td>
<td>Work in Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 Tues</td>
<td>Group A review (proposal due)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 Thurs</td>
<td>Group B review (proposal due)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>23 Tues</td>
<td>Group critique &amp; 5 minute group presentation (proposal revision)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>25 Thurs</td>
<td>1st round presentation package due</td>
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<td></td>
<td>26 Fri</td>
<td>1st round presentation &amp; faculty review for the approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>1 Tues</td>
<td>Group A group review (individual conference)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Thurs</td>
<td>Group B group review (individual conference)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 Tues</td>
<td>Self study (committee member meeting) &amp; off campus research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10 Thurs</td>
<td>Self study (committee member meeting) &amp; off campus research Work session, individual consultation</td>
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<td>15 Tues</td>
<td>Group critique &amp; 5 minute group presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>17 Thurs</td>
<td>Group A group review (individual conference)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>22 Tues</td>
<td>Group B group review (individual conference)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>24 Thurs</td>
<td>2nd round presentation package due</td>
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<td>25 Fri</td>
<td>2nd round presentation &amp; faculty review for the approval</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29 Tues</td>
<td>Spring Recess (No Class)</td>
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<td>31 Thurs</td>
<td>Cesar Chavez Day - Campus Closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>5 Tues</td>
<td>Group critique &amp; 5 minute group presentation</td>
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<td>7 Thurs</td>
<td>Self study (committee member meeting) &amp; off campus research Work session, individual consultation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12 Tues</td>
<td>Self study (committee member meeting) &amp; off campus research</td>
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<td>14 Thurs</td>
<td>Group critique &amp; 5 minute group presentation</td>
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<td>19 Tues</td>
<td>Group A group review (individual conference)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>21 Thurs</td>
<td>Group B group review (individual conference)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>26 Tues</td>
<td>Self study (committee member meeting) &amp; off campus research Work session, individual consultation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>28 Thurs</td>
<td>3rd round presentation package due</td>
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<td></td>
<td>29 Fri</td>
<td>Phase 3 Faculty review</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>3 Tues</td>
<td>Group critique &amp; 5 minute group presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 Thurs</td>
<td>Work session, individual consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 Tues</td>
<td>Presentation Preparation</td>
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</table>

Due: Thesis Outline

Due: Phase 1: Thesis Proposal

Due: Phase 2: Research

Due: Phase 3: Thesis project

Due: Process book Draft
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Thurs</td>
<td>Presentation Preparation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
<td>BFA Class of 2016 Senior Thesis Presentation Day 1</td>
<td>Process book &amp; Final Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
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<td>BFA Class of 2016 Senior Thesis Presentation Day 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
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<td>Professional day for BFA Class of 2016 Senior Show</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Commencement</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This is a tentative schedule. Any changes will be announced in class and online.