

DSGD- 104: Introduction to Graphic Design

Syllabus

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San José State University
Department of Design
Graphic Design Program
Section 4
Spring 2020

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Diane Lee (she/her/hers)
Office Location:	Art 118
Office Telephone:	408-924-4381
Mobile Telephone:	415-361-8107 (for emergencies only)
Email:	diane.lee@sjsu.edu (preferred contact)
Office Hours:	Monday and Wednesday 3:15–4:15 P.M.
Class Days/Time:	Monday and Wednesday 8:00–10:50 A.M.
Classroom:	Art 216
Prerequisites:	This class is restricted to students who have declared majors: Art, Design Studies, Graphic Design, Interior Design, Industrial Design, Fine Arts, Advertising. Students must complete DSGD-99 and DSGD-100 to be eligible for this course.

Course Format: Technology Intensive

This is a studio-intensive course where a series of 5 projects and 1 project archive address San José State Graphic Design program learning objectives. (Program learning objectives can be referenced on the department's website: [http://www.sjsu.edu/design/design_programs/graphic_design_program/gd_learning_objectives/.](http://www.sjsu.edu/design/design_programs/graphic_design_program/gd_learning_objectives/))

Modes of learning will include: making in the classroom (drawing, sketching, photographing, and designing on the computer); short lectures, demonstrations, and presentations; research; individual and group critiques, work-in-progress discussions; homework assignments, and reflective writing. During critique, you will be encouraged—and expected—to develop evaluative positions on work presented in class, and to articulate those positions in group discussions.

Course Materials and Faculty Communication:

Course materials, like the syllabus, assignment sheets, notes, instructions, etc. will be posted to Canvas. The website is: <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking your SJSU email to learn of any class updates.

Supplementary resources will be posted to the following website: <https://www.are.na/diane-lee/dsgd-104-introduction-to-graphic-design>

Course Description:

Familiarization to form and message development. Emphasis on visual concepts and fundamental design theory. (From course catalog.)

Course Goals:

The goal of this course is to contribute to students' ability to develop an integrated visual system—or in other words—to communicate a design idea across multiple outputs & formats. The goal of this course is to further develop your understanding of the basic objectives, principles, and methods used in graphic design. The projects you'll be assigned in this class are designed to provide a range of opportunities for creative problem solving within practical constraints.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO):

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

CLO 1	identify design elements and techniques used in visual compositions;
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CLO 2	use interrelated design principles to build and work with design elements;
CLO 3	apply design theories as a foundation for the design decisions you make;
CLO 4	arrange and compose information to make compelling and effective visual messages;
CLO 5	demonstrate care and attention to detail while crafting prototypes and final design outcomes;
CLO 6	develop an effective design process for solving visual problems, which will allow you to develop, iterate, refine, and ultimately transmit an idea through visual form;
CLO 7	engage in thoughtful discussion, critique, and debate about visual communication;
CLO 8	think critically about the relationship between form and content, methods and tools;
CLO 9	use the library, the internet, and other research methods (observational, experiential) to search for information relevant to your topic, and to support your design outcomes.

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Class Materials & Supplies

Computer/Software Requirements:

- Laptop computer with Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign installed)
- Adobe Typekit “Portfolio Collection” (included with Creative Cloud subscription).
(Link to SJSU eCampus website for information about subscribing:
<http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/adobe/index.html>)
- Reliable data backup (See ‘Note About Backups’ on p.9)
- WIFI Access (Link to SJSU IT: <http://its.sjsu.edu/services/sjsuone/>)
- Flash drive or external hard drive (Link to Wirecutter article *The Best Portable Hard Drive for 2019*: <https://thewirecutter.com/reviews/best-portable-hard-drive/>)

Equipment:

- Reliable access to a high quality digital camera
- Reliable access to a scanner
- Reliable access to laser & inkjet printers

Supplies:

You likely already possess a kit of supplies that will cover your needs for this class. Please make sure you have—with you at all times—a notebook, a pen, a pencil and eraser, a metal ruler, and a fresh pack of sharp blades for your X-Acto or Olfa knives.

Other materials that may prove useful:

- Self-healing cutting mat (9x12")
- Pencil Sharpener
- Tracing paper (12" Roll)
- Black Sharpies
- Fine line Micron Pens
- Clear Push-pins
- Olfa or X-acto knife (Recommended: Olfa 9mm Stainless Steel knife)
- Extra blades (9mm Snap-Off Art blades—pointed tip)

Required Texts/Readings:

No book purchase is required for this class. Required readings and/or viewings will be provided to you as links or PDFs. I heartily recommend the books listed below, if you are interested and your budget allows. I suspect that some of you might be interested in purchasing books throughout the semester, and I would be happy to make further recommendations tailored to your interests.

Recommended Readings:

- *Understanding Comics* by Scott McCloud
ISBN: 006097625X
- *Ways of Seeing* by John Berger
ISBN: 9780140135152

Note: Additional resources and readings are provided with each project.

While you can almost always find these items on Amazon, it is not always the most economical resource for buying supplies. Some items on Amazon are only available to purchase as multiples, or are only available at a higher cost than at traditional retail stores. I recommend seeking materials at other nearby stores including Michaels, Dick Blicks (nearest locations in Oakland and San Francisco), or Arch Art Supplies in San Francisco. When possible, I recommend buying used books and/or supporting your local independent bookstores: Recycle Books, Books, Inc., William Stout Architectural Books, SFMoMA Museum Store, etc.

Here is a link to view the books, equipment, and supplies on Amazon: <http://a.co/64mQaqq>

Expenses (Not course fees):

The cost for semester supplies and materials will vary according to the individual: whether you choose to buy books, whether you purchase used books, what you already have, how quickly you run through paper/ink, how resourceful you are, etc. Please budget \$200 to account for the material & supplies (listed above) and printing expenses.

Course Printing Allowance:

Students may access the graphic design program's printing facilities during the class session's open lab hours. All students must respect the print lab policies, including the procedures for wireless printing. Your printing allowance is only applicable to course-related materials, and includes black and white (8.5x11" or 11x17") and color (8.5x11" or 11x17") prints.

Library:

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 online at: <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/design/GraphicDesign>.

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Course Requirements and Assignments

Project Overview

Please note: Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities.

Studio Expectations

This course is an essential culmination of your design curriculum at SJSU, and in order for each student to have a meaningful experience in this class, it is critical that we establish & maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect. This is everyone's responsibility, students and instructor alike.

I aspire to create a learning environment in which people of all identities are encouraged to contribute their perspectives. It is my intent that students from all backgrounds be well-served by this course, and that the experiences and perspectives each of you brings to this studio be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. I request that each of you honor fellow

students' requested names and pronouns, and practice using gender-inclusive/non-sexist language. Doing so helps to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment, enriches discussion, and reflects best professional practices.

Please let me know if you think of ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. Your suggestions are both encouraged and appreciated.

As a member of this class, I expect each of you to do everything you can to contribute to a supportive, productive, and collaborative learning environment:

- Take every step necessary to minimize distractions during class. (Phones kept on silent and put away so as not to distract you or your classmates.) In class, laptops are to be used for course-related purposes only.
- Come to class prepared with the necessary tools, materials, working digital files, and/or research and reference materials. (Please remember your chargers, and see note about backups on p.9.)
- Arrive on time and to remain until the class is over or **excuse yourself** if you must leave before the end of class, please inform me before class and try your best not to disturb other students when you leave.
- If you are late to class, and a critique is already in progress, you may not add your work to the wall. You are, however, still expected to contribute to the critique through thoughtful feedback. It is your responsibility to learn about announcements that you miss due to a late arrival, early departure, or absence. Please do not interrupt class to ask about these.
- If you are absent, find out what you missed from a classmate, and come to the next class prepared, as if you did not miss a class. If you have specific questions that cannot be answered by your classmates, you may email me. (Please do not email me asking, simply, "What did I miss?")
- Be respectful during lectures and when other students are presenting. Keep your attention on the presenter, take notes, and ask for clarification when it's needed.
- Do not use spray-mount adhesive in the classroom, or in the building.
- Do not use tabletops as a cutting surface.
- Do not wear headphones during class. I will play music softly during class working sessions, and will happily take requests. It is important that you can hear any comments, discussions, or announcements.
- Tidy your workspace at the end of the day. Trash and recycling should be disposed of, cutting mats and extension cords returned to their place, table surfaces wiped clean, and chair tucked under the table.

Final Examination

In lieu of a final exam, your project archive will be due during our class' designated final exam time.

Grading Information:

Each assignment is graded, and will count toward your final grade for the course. Each project will be assigned a letter grade upon completion, according to University policy. An incomplete will be granted to students with documented extenuating circumstances e.g. debilitating illness, family emergency etc.

The bases for grading are:

Iteration/Experimentation CLO 9

Exhibiting distinct approaches, perspectives, and/or uses of material in preliminary iterations. Testing a surprising variety of approaches during the initial stages of exercises and projects.

Concept Development / Critical Thinking CLO 4, 5, 10

Responding creatively to, and meeting, the constraints of the project. Discovering and leveraging creative opportunities arising from form, content, methods, and tools.

Demonstrating the integration of research, analysis, iteration/drafting/sketching, and practice making.

Formgiving CLO 1, 2, 3

Synthesizing design elements, principles, and attributes into effective and evocative messages. Demonstrating the quality necessary for effective visual communication.

Craft/Presentation CLO 5

Exhibiting skill, sensitivity, dexterity, and attention to detail in design outcomes and their presentation.

Participation/ Preparation CLO 10

Engaging in class activities and critiques. Showing initiative and commitment. Progressing steadily between classes, and arriving to class prepared to participate.

Typographic and Visual Literacy CLO 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Understanding and manipulating the meaning of visual communication, through the use of images, design elements, typographic elements, and visual hierarchies. Using design and typographic terminology to speak effectively about graphic design.

Project Weights

Project grades will be weighted according to the following percentages:

- Project 1: Content Map—17%
- Project 2: Poster—17%
- Project 3: Exhibition Guide—17%
- Project 4: Dimensional Outdoor Installation—17%
- Project 5: Animated Graphic—17%
- Project Archive—15%

Grading Scale

Excellence (A-, A, A+)

You consistently deliver creative and high-quality work and demonstrate the ability to explore a wide range of alternatives. This is evident in thoughtful, informed decisions that lead to a coherent, compelling final outcome. You thoughtfully integrate feedback. You communicate ideas clearly and completely, both visually and verbally. You support your design decisions with well-crafted and informed arguments. You complete all assignments and turn them in on time. You use precise language to talk about design principles, design elements, and typography. You maintain a positive attitude and show a strong interest and commitment toward the studio environment, and to your own development. You generously offer thoughtful feedback to your classmates. You participate in all regularly scheduled classes. You meet and exceed the requirements of the course.

Very good work (B-, B, B+)

Your work is complete and shows no craft or technical problems. You demonstrate the ability to communicate a rationale for design decisions and show improvements in your development as a designer. You integrate feedback. You maintain a positive attitude and involvement in all coursework and class activities.

Adequate, average work (C-, C, C+)

You meet the minimum work required at an average quality level, and you provide basic explanations for your design decisions. You demonstrate a basic understanding of the principles presented in class and may have some craft and technical problem areas. You demonstrate average participation in all regularly scheduled classes.

Poor work and lack of effort (D- , D, D+)

You meet the minimum work required at below-average quality and demonstrate little understanding of the principles.

Failure to meet the course requirements (F)

You lack an understanding of the basic principles discussed in class and are unable to convey creative, craft and technical ability as required. You are seldom involved in class discussions, repeatedly miss deadlines or critiques, and demonstrate little commitment to learning and to your own development. You are consistently late for class.

Letter Grade	Percentage
A+	96% and above
A	93–95%
A-	90–92%
B+	86–89%
B	83–85%
B-	80–82%
C+	76–79%
C	73–75%
C-	70–72%
D+	66–69%
D	63–65%
D-	60–62%
F	Below 60%

Effect of participation on Grading

Participation is included as part of each assignment’s grading rubric. Coming to class prepared, making progress between class meetings, and presenting your work on time (including both preliminary rough drafts and prototypes, as well as final outcomes) will be noted towards participation and preparation for each project. The progress you make during in-class working sessions will also be noted. “On time” means that work is ready to be shared,

as specified, prior to the start of any critique or presentation. If a student must miss class, work can be sent to me via email before class to be considered on time.

Deadlines

I will not grant extensions except in cases of documented emergencies, serious illness. If such a circumstance should arise, please contact me as early as possible so we can plan accordingly.

Late Assignments

It is critical that you keep up with the course work and submit all assignments on time. Assignments will lose 10% for each day that it's late. Assignments that are more than one week late will not be accepted. If you are absent on the day an assignment is due, it is late. If you are sick, and cannot bring your completed work to class, arrange for a friend or classmate to bring your project to class for you.

Extra Credit

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

Revisions and Refinement

I encourage you to revisit and rework projects as you develop your skills throughout the semester. Each student may select one project to re-submit before the end of the semester. Revised projects will be accepted until Wednesday, December 4. I will not change assignment grades for projects that were turned in late. Project revisions are strongly encouraged to all students, but particularly to BFA applicants, as they will help you develop a stronger portfolio.

Academic Integrity

Your commitment to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San José State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy F15-7 requires you to be honest in all your academic coursework. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. Visit the Student Conduct and Ethical Development website for more information: <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Additional Information

A Note about Plagiarism and Appropriation in Art & Design

School is an appropriate place to take things apart and put them back together to figure out how it works, so to speak. That said, if your work is too close to your reference, and if you

present it as your own without citing the source, it could be considered plagiarism. How you integrate what you see, what you like, and what inspires you, makes the difference between inspiration, re-mix, appropriation, plagiarism, copying and stealing.

When you see something you're inspired by, a good practice is to try to understand why it looks the way it does. What constraints was the designer working with? What was the design responding to? What did it communicate, and to whom? The more we understand what leads other designers to make the decisions they do, the more their work can help us generate new ideas that suit the unique needs and constraints of our own project. It's unlikely that your project is exactly the same as someone else's, and even if it is, it's unlikely that you share the same values, interests, and skills as them.

Referencing another person's work might make sense if it aligns with your concept (parody, homage, etc). If you're not sure, it's best to check with me to see how to properly cite the work you're inspired by, and how best you can make your work truly your own.

If you notice heavy appropriation, let's talk about it. If you're not comfortable addressing your classmate directly, please speak with me, or with another graphic design faculty member so that we can check in with that student.

A Note about Font Licensing

Fonts are creative, intellectual property. They are the result of extensive study, research, experimentation, and endless refinement. For type designers, the creation of fonts is their livelihood. I will not accept projects that use pirated fonts in this class. Please license all fonts appropriately, and be prepared to show documentation for the fonts you choose to use.

A Note about Backups

Back-ups are critical for your studies, your practice, your life: BACK UP YOUR WORK. You are strongly urged to set up and maintain a solid backup and archiving strategy for your work. Operate on the assumption that your hard drive will die, usually when you least expect it. You will not be excused for preventable loss of data. A solid backup setup means a so-called three-legged strategy:

- On-site (e.g. external drive with Time Machine)
- Off-site (e.g. \$5/month cloud backup like Backblaze)
- Bootable clone (e.g. separate external drive with Carbon Copy Cloner)

Read more about a three-legged backup strategy here.

<https://www.engadget.com/2014/06/18/the-novice-s-guide-to-excellent-mac-backups/>

A Note about Critiques

Critique is among the most valuable experiences of your design education, but it's also one of the most challenging. Critiques are a collaboration among all who participate (students and instructor alike), and learning to give feedback is as essential as learning to accept feedback. There are no explicit rules to the critique process, but I would like to establish a few guidelines to help promote a productive critique culture in our classroom:

Giving Feedback

Be kind. Aim to be kind instead of nice. A nice crit is telling someone their work is good to avoid hurting their feelings. A kind crit is telling someone honestly what needs to be addressed so that they can improve their work. Try your best to make sure that your feedback isn't derogatory, insulting, or dismissive.

What do you see? How does the work make you feel? If you're not sure what to say, a good way to start is to describe what you see. Telling the designer what you see can be useful, especially if it's not what they intended to show you. Telling them what you think they are trying to say will help them understand what the work actually communicates. Another good way to start is to tell the designer how the work makes you feel. Excited?

Confused? Bored? Angry? Calm? Sad? Your instinctive, emotional response is valid feedback, and can help the designer make their work more meaningful.

Avoid art direction. Try to avoid giving corrective comments like “I would do it like this,” or “try it this way.” The problem with these comments is that they often lead the designer to do exactly what’s said. Being given the “right” answer doesn’t let a designer develop their own exploratory process. It tends to make people rely on crits to tell them exactly what to do next, instead of letting them figure it out in their own way.

Receiving Feedback

Ask questions. Think about what you would like to get out of the crit, and prepare a list of specific questions relating to that. Have those questions with you during critique. General questions like “What do you think?” are not very useful for moving your work forward.

It’s not personal. One of the hardest things about critiques is learning to accept critical feedback without taking it personally or getting defensive. It’s not easy, and it takes practice. The feedback you’re being given is not a personal attack, it’s meant to help your work get better.

Take notes. Take notes during your critique, or better yet: ask a classmate to take notes for you. Consider recording the conversation with a voice memo app. (You must ask the group for permission before you record.) You will be getting a lot of feedback, and you will need to process all that information after the crit is over.

Evaluate and integrate. After the crit is over, decide what feedback you do and don’t care about. Not all advice is good advice (including advice from your instructors), and while you don’t need to act on everything that was said, ignoring everyone’s advice probably won’t help your work improve either.

Be active. People respond to crits differently, and so if you are not getting what you need from your critique, you can—and should—ask for additional feedback from trusted classmates and friends. If you need more feedback, or a different kind of feedback, it’s up to you to find it.

A Note about Email

Please regard email communication with me for what it is: professional communication. Here are some guidelines for email communication with me:

- Please address me by name. (“Hi/Hello Diane,” or “Dear Diane” are both appropriate ways to do so! “Diane!” or “Sup D” are not.)
- Please include a relevant subject in the subject line.
- Monday through Friday, I will respond to your email by the end of the next business day between 9 AM and 6 PM. (For example, if you email me on a Monday at 9 AM, I will get back to you by Tuesday at 6 PM.) If an email is incredibly time sensitive, indicate so in the subject line and I will do my best to respond sooner.
- I do not respond to emails over the weekend. If you email me over the weekend, I will see it on Monday morning.
- If your email takes more than 10 minutes to answer, I may ask that we resolve your question in class, or that you come to my office hours, or we set up an appointment to discuss.
- I will not respond to emails that use casual web parlance, including communicating using emoji or gifs. I love these things but not in this context.

University Policies & Resources

Please review the information at the link below, which contains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, resources, etc:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Campus Emergency Numbers

SJSU Campus Police: 408-924-2222 (from a cell phone), or 911 (from a campus phone)

Safety Escort / Safe Ride : 408-924-2000 (More information about the Safety Escort program available here: <http://www.sjsu.edu/police/programs/escort/index.html>)