

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY
COMM 5304.002 Principles of Visual Communication

Fall 2025
T/TH 2p-3:45p
BAB 304

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Regular Office Hours:
12-1:45pm M/W @ Mocap Soundstage
and
2-3pm T/TH@ Mocap Soundstage
on a walk-in basis. Or by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to Visual Communication. This course is broken into three sections: 1) theories and foundation, 2) the world of typography, logos, and layouts, and 3) visual design messaging.

As we live in an era dominated by video communication, much of our study will be centered on this medium. We will, however, look at other mediums for contrast and understanding.

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

Student Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to meet one or more of the program learning outcomes applied to all Communication majors.

At the end of this course:

- 1: Students will be able to analyze communication content for argument, including identification of major elements, such as claim, warrants, and data.
- 2: Students will be able to effectively construct messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context; including electronic media technologies.
- 3: Students will be able to apply Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts to the analysis of communication situations.

Communication Program Marketable Skills

1. Informative and Persuasive Speaking
2. Audience-centered Writing
3. Critical Analysis
4. Research
5. Effective Message Construction Using Technology

Course Requirements: Attendance is MANDATORY. Much of what we cover in the class is experiential; if you aren't here, you won't get it, and your classmates' notes can't help you.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this class, students will:

- Demonstrate proficiency with the concepts of visual encoding, mise-en-scene, and color theory
- Understand the relationship between image/sound and story
- Analyze both narrative and single-image projects for messaging, both intentional and inherent.
- Evaluate and critique merit and functionality of various kinds of visual storytelling on a case-by-case basis.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1) Architectural analysis
- 2) Advertising analysis
- 3) Media/movie analysis
- 4) Final Exam

Required Textbooks for this class:

The Visual Story - Block, Bruce; 2nd Ed. Focal Press, 2007.

CLASS DATES: Assignments and Deadlines

Note that these dates and the details of each class are subject to change at the instructor's discretion

Week 1	Blackboard assignments; <i>The Visual Story</i> reading
Week 2	Elements of Visual Design
Week 3	Elements of Visual Design
Week 4	Elements of Visual Design
Week 5	Segment 1 project due at end of week
Week 6	Typography
Week 7	Fonts and font design
Week 8	Fonts in layout and design
Week 9	Hieroglyphs and symbols
Week 10	Logos and symbolic meanings

Week 11	Segment 2 Project due.
Week 12	Messaging through images
Week 13	Photography, TV, Movies, and mise-en-scene
Week 14	Movies/TV visual analysis
Week 15	How advertising works visually
Week 15	Advertising visual analysis. Segment 3 project due at end of week.
May 5 – Final Exam, Tuesday, May 5, 8am-10am	

GRADING

Assignments are valued as follows:

1) Architectural analysis	20%
2) Advertising analysis	20%
3) Media/movie analysis	20%
4) Final Exam	20%
5) Attendance/Participation	20%

Grading Criteria:

A = Exceptional. Demonstrates mastery of material beyond expectation. Professional quality of work. Highest level of scholarship.

B = Above average. Demonstrates mastery of material. Work is of better-than-expected quality, but not quite professional. High level of scholarship.

C = Average. Demonstrates proficiency with material. Work is of amateur quality. Ordinary level of scholarship.

D = Below Average. Less than proficient with material. Work shows errors, careless mistakes, or is just plain wrong. Poor scholarship.

F – Failure. Material incomplete. Work grossly negligent or incomplete. No evidence of scholarship present.

LATE PAPERS

Deadlines are an inescapable part of responsible, professional, adult life. Late papers will lose a letter grade for each day that the paper is late.

If you discover, ***a week or more in advance***, that you have multiple deadlines converging on the same day, you may request a change in deadline> Such a change may be granted at the instructor's discretion. Once the deadline has passed, it's too late to ask for exceptions. Manage your time and deadlines wisely.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1973. Any student who because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. If an accommodation is needed, students must present their accommodation letter, obtained from Accessibility Services, as soon as possible. Please note that instructors are not permitted to provide classroom accommodations to a student until the appropriate verification has been received. Accessibility Services is in Ferguson Hall room 112. You can make an appointment by calling Mary Schwartz Grisham at 432 837-8203.