

FA 2302-H01 — Intro to Digital Design

FALL 2026

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Class Format: Hybrid

Meeting Days: Tuesdays & Thursdays

Tuesday: In Person

Thursday: Online

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This introductory course focuses on visual communication and the development of ideas through design. Students will explore design principles, research, typography, imagery, composition, color, and visual hierarchy while developing skills in visual problem-solving and creative decision-making. The course emphasizes the design process through research, sketching, experimentation, refinement, critique, and presentation.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop an understanding of visual communication and fundamental design principles.
 - To develop skills in visual thinking, concept development, and problem-solving.
 - To explore typography, imagery, composition, color, abstraction, and visual hierarchy.
 - To develop the ability to research, develop, present, and explain design concepts.
 - To use critique and feedback to improve design work.
 - To develop technical familiarity with Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, and InDesign.
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ASSIGNMENTS

1. Symbol Design
 2. Design Principles Through Typography
 3. Logo Design: Place & Event
 4. Music Poster
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STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are expected to attend class regularly, arrive on time, participate actively in the learning process, complete assigned research and project work, and meet project deadlines.

Students are responsible for bringing the required materials and files to class and for presenting sketches, concepts, and works in progress when required for critiques.

Students are expected to participate in individual and group critiques and to contribute constructive comments and questions during discussions.

Students are responsible for maintaining organized process documentation for each major project and for completing both digital and printed submissions according to the requirements provided for each project.

Students are also responsible for maintaining backup copies of their sketches and digital work and for managing their time so that projects can be completed and submitted by the required deadlines.

ATTENDANCE AND GRADING POLICY

1. Regular Attendance

Regular attendance is essential in a studio-based course. A significant amount of information can be covered during a single class period, including demonstrations, project explanations, critiques, and feedback on work in progress.

Students are expected to attend both Tuesday in-person classes and Thursday online classes. Missing a class means missing information, instruction, critique, and project development time.

If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining the information and assignments covered during your absence. Students should review Blackboard, course materials, and class announcements and communicate with classmates when necessary.

Students are expected to arrive on time and remain engaged throughout the scheduled class period.

For online classes, students are expected to participate in the scheduled online activities and complete assigned work.

University attendance policies and requirements apply to this course.

2. Absence

If you are absent, you are responsible for all information, demonstrations, assignments, and project requirements given during your absence. If you are absent on a day when a project or assignment is due, you are still responsible for submitting the required work by the stated deadline unless other arrangements have been approved.

3. Arriving Late and Leaving Early

Promptness is expected. Students should arrive prepared to begin work at the scheduled class time. For online classes, students should be logged in and prepared to participate at the beginning of the scheduled class period. Three late arrivals will be counted as one absence.

4. Late Assignments

In design communication, meeting deadlines is an important part of professional practice. Students are expected to plan their work carefully and submit projects by the deadlines specified in the assignment and course schedule.

Students should allow sufficient time for final revisions, file preparation, printing, and uploading to Blackboard.

Late work may negatively affect the project grade. If an unexpected or documented circumstance prevents you from meeting a deadline, communicate with the instructor as soon as possible.

Technology problems, corrupted files, lost files, or last-minute printing problems are not automatically considered valid reasons for late work. Students are responsible for backing up their files and managing their time appropriately.

5. Cell Phone Policy

Cell phone disruptions will not be tolerated during class. Please silence your phone and resist the urge to text or use social media during class.

Phones may be used when appropriate for research, image searches, or project-related activities during designated work and brainstorming periods.

Using a cell phone during a critique or demonstration may negatively affect participation because it can be disruptive to others and distracting to the student.

6. Critiques

Individual and group critiques are a key component of this course. Critiques provide an opportunity for the instructor and classmates to give feedback, ask questions, and help guide the development of design work.

Students are expected to arrive prepared with the required work for each critique. Students should be able to explain their concepts and design decisions and should be willing to consider suggestions and criticism.

Students are expected to participate in critiques respectfully and constructively. Asking questions is encouraged. Critique is part of the design process and should be used to identify problems, explore possibilities, and improve the work.

7. Take Notes

It is important to take notes during lectures, presentations, demonstrations, and project discussions. Students are encouraged to develop their own system for recording information about design principles, techniques, terminology, and project requirements.

Your notes should be organized and maintained throughout the semester so that you can refer to them when working independently.

8. Process Book

Students must maintain a process book for each major project assigned in this course.

The process book should document the development of the project from research and inspiration through sketching, experimentation, digital development, revisions, and final work.

The process book may include research, visual references, mood boards, sketches, thumbnails, color exploration, digital versions, drafts, revisions, critique notes, and final development as appropriate to each project.

Specific process book requirements will be provided with each project.

For each of the four major projects, the process book must be submitted both digitally as a PDF through Blackboard and as a printed process book.

GRADING SYSTEM

Projects and assignments will be evaluated according to the requirements established for each project.

Work will be evaluated in areas including concept, visual communication, design principles, development, craft, technical execution, presentation, process, participation, and timeliness.

A — Excellent: Student's work demonstrates strong conceptual development, thoughtful design decisions, careful refinement, and a high level of execution.

B — Good: Student demonstrates a solid understanding of the assignment and develops effective concepts and design solutions with good execution.

C — Satisfactory: Student completes the required work and demonstrates an acceptable understanding of the concepts and processes presented in the course.

D — Poor: Student completes less than the required work or demonstrates insufficient development, understanding, or execution.

F — Failure: Student fails to complete the required work or does not demonstrate the minimum expectations necessary to successfully complete the course.

Letter grades are based on the following percentage scale:

A 90–100

B 80–89

C 70–79

D 60–69

F 0–59

Projects will be evaluated in concept, content, design, craft, process, presentation, and timeliness. Following the assignment requirements is important, but successful work should also demonstrate thoughtful decision-making, experimentation, refinement, and effective visual communication.

Typos, spelling errors, poor craftsmanship, poor file preparation, and failure to follow project specifications may negatively affect a project grade.

Class Participation & Professional Conduct: Participation in group critiques and all class activities, including workdays, is required. Students are expected to pay attention during class, avoid using their phones for non-class-related activities, arrive on time, come

prepared, and fulfill the responsibilities outlined above. These aspects of participation, engagement, and classroom behavior will receive a specific grade.

CLASSROOM RULES

Students are expected to maintain a respectful and productive learning environment.

Headphones are permitted during designated work periods. Students should leave one earbud out so that they can hear demonstrations, announcements, and other important information.

Food and drinks should be handled responsibly and should not interfere with computers, equipment, artwork, or the classroom environment.

Students are expected to keep their work area clean and organized and to respect classroom equipment, materials, and the work of other students.

All activities at Sul Ross State University, including this course, are governed by university policies. Students whose behavior disrupts the learning environment may be subject to appropriate university procedures.

COMMUNICATION

Students are responsible for checking their SRSU email and Blackboard regularly.

Important course announcements, project information, deadline changes, and other information may be communicated through Blackboard or SRSU email.

When communicating with the instructor, students should use professional and respectful communication and clearly identify the project or assignment they are asking about.

ACADEMIC HONESTY / PLAGIARISM

All work submitted for this course must represent the student's own work and effort.

Students may not submit another person's work as their own or submit work created for another course without permission. Copying, tracing, reproducing, or substantially imitating another designer's work without appropriate acknowledgment is not acceptable.

Students are responsible for understanding and following Sul Ross State University's academic integrity policies.

The intentional destruction or alteration of another student's artwork or design work is also unacceptable.

GENERATIVE AI

This course encourages the use of AI as a creative tool to support research, experimentation, problem-solving, and design development. However, AI should not replace your own creative process. Your final artwork must reflect your originality, ideas, and creative decisions. You are responsible for the originality and quality of all work submitted.

DISABILITY

Please notify me if you have a disability that requires accommodation. If you would like to request such accommodation because of a physical, mental, or learning disability, please contact the ADA Coordinator for Program Accessibility in Student Life/the Student Center.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

Students should have a sketchbook or drawing pad, pencils, eraser, black pens or markers, ruler, and other basic drawing and presentation materials needed for project development.

Students will also need access to Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, and Blackboard.

Additional materials may be required for individual projects, including printing and mounting materials. Specific materials and production requirements will be provided with each project.

Students should also have a reliable method for backing up and transporting digital work, such as cloud storage or a USB flash drive.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1:

8/25 — Introduce syllabus & Project 1

8/27 — Mood board review and sketching

WEEK 2:

9/1 — Work Day

9/3 — Sketch review, work day

WEEK 3:

9/8 — Adobe Illustrator demonstration

9/10 — Work day and symbol refinement

WEEK 4:

9/15 — Critique and revisions

9/17 — Final presentation of Project 1 & Introduction to Project 2

WEEK 5:

9/22 — Research

9/24 — Work day

WEEK 6:

9/29 — Work day

10/1 — Adobe Illustrator demonstration

WEEK 7:

10/6 — Work day

10/8 — Work day

WEEK 8:

10/13 — Work day and final refinement

10/15 — Final presentation of Project 2 & Introduction to Project 3

WEEK 9:

10/20 — Mood boards and concept development

10/22 — Work day

WEEK 10:

10/27 — Work day

10/29 — Digital development and work day

WEEK 11:

11/3 — Work day and final refinement

11/5 — Final presentation of Project 3 & Introduction to Project 4

WEEK 12:

11/10 — Research

11/12 — Work day

WEEK 13:

11/17 — Typography exploration and concept refinement

11/19 — Digital development and work day

WEEK 14:

11/24 — Work day

11/26 — Thanksgiving — No Class

WEEK 15:

12/1 — Final presentation of Project 4