

S Y L L A B U S
THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ROME
Department of Communication and English

The learning goals for students pursuing a degree in Communication are meant to develop and enhance their writing skills, whether expository, reflective or analytical; or journalistic; or creative. The program also aims to develop students' conceptual analysis skills and critical thinking; and train them in the use of the appropriate/required tools and technology related to the field of Communication, in selected courses. The Communication degree program also (offers students the opportunity to benefit from the Rome location, and prepares them to work and operate successfully in a global environment characterized by diversity and intercultural understanding and respect.

Course Title: The Computer as a Media Tool
Course Number: COM215
Period: Fall 2011
Credits: Three hours.
Professor: Kristen Palana
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URL: <http://kpalana.com>
Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00-10:25

Office hours:

By appointment. My office is located on the first floor of the Carini Building near the Multimedia Lab.

Class Website: <http://kpalana.com/com215>

Course Description:

This is a hands-on, practical course that teaches students the aesthetic concepts of visual communication along with technical skills such as working with Macintosh-based software utilized to create various forms of visual media. The areas of computer art/image making, graphic design, typography, sound design, and video motion graphics will be explored. Practical foundations will be applied to design projects as developed through an increasing command of analyzing concepts of design, composition, color theory, and graphic communication.

Prerequisite: COM100

Course Learning Objectives:

In this course students will:

1. Learn the basics of image and media production using a Mac and learn how to use software such as Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, Final Cut Pro, and sound software.

2. Master using scanners and printers. Students will learn the basics of burning their projects to CDs and DVDs as well as making their projects web-ready for online display.
3. Develop an understanding of composition, use of color, placement, and typography, as well as how to make good imagery and design which will affect all aspects of media production.
4. Acquire skills and sensitivity to make motion graphics pieces that use moving type, imagery, and sound.

Course Learning Activities:

Project #1: Photo Morphs using Adobe Photoshop. Students will be given several different royalty-free images to choose from. After picking one they will combine elements from this photo with other images (royalty-free photos, their own photos, or drawings) to create a completely new image reality. This project introduces the students to 2D computer imaging, the fundamentals of composition, color, rules of good design, element placement, and final presentation. CLO: 1, 2, & 3.

Project #2: Bumper Sticker. Students will create an illustration using Adobe Illustrator to draw original imagery or trace over a photograph. They will then combine type with the image to create a memorable bumper sticker design. Concept is key! Bumper stickers must be original, memorable, and aesthetically pleasing.

Final Project Proposal: Students will plan their final Stop Motion Animation assignment conceptually and visually using rough storyboards and descriptions. Planning for the element of time and motion will be addressed as students begin working with moving imagery and text in video. CLO: 1, 3, & 4.

Final Project: Stop Motion Animation. Movable imagery with type and sound. *No video footage is allowed. This constraint will make it possible for students to try animation, stop motion, and still image manipulation techniques. Software used will be Final Cut Pro and sound editing software. Supplement programs include Photoshop and Illustrator. The final project will be submitted on DVD-ROM. Students will draw upon all visual concepts and techniques learned so far to produce a finished piece. CLO: 1, 2, 3 & 4.

*Homework Assignments. -These will be determined weekly as the course progresses. Usually they are demonstrations of new concepts learned or as applied to the above projects-in-progress. CLO: 1-4

* Critiques -Students are expected to be able to articulate what elements are successful and/or what improvements could be made in their projects as well as their classmates' projects during class critiques. CLO: 1, 2, & 3

Assessment Tools

Students will be assessed by the following:

All projects will be rubric graded.

Items evaluated in the rubrics will be creativity, exploration of concepts and ideas, technical proficiency, professional presentation of projects, and effective participation in class critiques.

Two or more quizzes will be given to measure students' conceptual, technical, and aesthetic progress. Homework will be assessed on a pass/fail basis.

Grade Tabulation:

Homework:	10%
Quizzes	20%
Project 1:	15%
Project 2:	15%
Final Project Proposal with Storyboard:	10%
Final Project:	30%

AUR grade values

94 – 100 points	=	A	“Excellent”
90 – 93.99 pts	=	A-	
87 – 89.99	=	B+	
83 – 86.99	=	B	“Good”
80 – 82.99	=	B-	
77 – 79.99	=	C+	
73 – 76.99	=	C	“Satisfactory”
70 – 72.99	=	C-	“Less than Satisfactory”
60 – 69.99	=	D	“Poor”
59.99 – 0	=	F	“Failing”

Grade Dispute Policy:

Please note that grades are given according to AUR Grade Values. This means average projects will receive a C, good projects a B, excellent projects an A, etc. The reasons for each grade will be spelled out clearly in project rubrics and on corrected quizzes. If students do feel that they were given an incorrect grade, please address the issue with me personally after class in a respectful way. More often than not students are given the highest grade possible for the quality of work submitted and grade disputes are not encouraged unless a glaring discrepancy was made. **Please also note that the final grade for the semester also includes scores for overall participation, attendance, and punctuality.**

Course Textbooks:

Design Elements –A Graphic Style Manual by Timothy Samara. 2007

Handouts on aesthetic concepts of art, design, and composition will also be given out in class. The suggested texts below are for reference purposes.

Suggested Texts:

Visual Quickstart Guide- Photoshop CS5 -by Elaine Weinmann and Peter Lourekas. 2010.

Visual Quickstart Guide- Illustrator CS5- by Elaine Weinmann and Peter Lourekas. 2010.

Visual Quickpro Guide- Final Cut Pro- by Lisa Brenneis. 2010.

Additional Costs: The lab fee for this course (75 Euros per student) is used for the maintenance of the Multimedia Lab and production equipment.

Courtesy Policy:

Make sure your cell phone is turned off. If you have an emergency situation that requires your phone to be on, please speak with me first. Ringing cell phones, late

arrival, leaving early, and walking in and out of class while class is in session is disrespectful to your Professor and to your fellow classmates and will result in the lowering of your Class Participation Grade and Overall Grade.

AUR Attendance Policy:

In keeping with AUR's mission to prepare students to live and work across cultures, the University places a high value on classroom experience. As a result attendance is expected in all classes and attendance records are maintained. The University's attendance policy is as follows:

Minimum Attendance Requirement

Students must attend a minimum of 70% of a course in order to be eligible to be considered for a passing grade.

Absences

- **Students will not be penalized for three absences from class.**

If further absences are recorded, grade penalties will be applied according to the instructor's specific attendance policy, as stated in the syllabus. If the instructor does not specify an attendance policy, there will be no grade penalty other than that attached to the minimum attendance requirement.

Cases of prolonged absences caused by an emergency or a medical condition may require students to withdraw from some or all of their courses. Under such circumstances students should first consult their academic advisors.

Kristen Palana's Specific Attendance Policy:

Any student with more than three absences will get two points off their final grade for every absence beyond three. **Please note that each two lates count as one absence.**

No make-up exams or quizzes will be given without a documented medical excuse. Incomplete grades are not given.

Attendance is taken at the start of each class. Late arrival will be marked as such. If a student is more than a half hour late to class they will be marked as absent.

If You Miss Class:

Please use the class contact sheet (given out after the add/drop period) to email or phone a classmate who can lend you their notes and help you get back on track. In this course it is important to stay on top of material since so much is covered. *Please do not email your professor for a briefing on what you missed, as it's not possible to sum up an entire a short email. After you have made an effort to contact a classmate and catch up, your professor will be happy to give you individual help by appointment.

AUR Academic Integrity Code & Policy against Plagiarism

"Integrity is fundamental to the academic enterprise. It is violated by such acts as borrowing or purchasing assignments, including but not limited to term papers, essays, and reports; lending to or producing assignments for others (either for or

without payment); using concealed notes or crib sheets during examinations, copying the work of others and submitting it as one's own; and otherwise misappropriating the knowledge of others. Such acts are both dishonest and deceptive: the work submitted to instructors is not the work of the person whose name it bears. In consequence, the sources from which one derives one's ideas, statements, terms, and facts, including internet sources, must be fully and specifically acknowledged in the appropriate form. Failure to do so, intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes plagiarism." -- AUR Student Handbook, 2006/2007, p. 15.

Suggestions:

Back-up all work in progress. I recommend saving your projects under different names literally every time you make a change. It just takes one quick click...and could save you hours (if not days) of frustration. Always back-up everything!

Expect the unexpected. If you have an assignment due on Thursday, try to get it done a few days before. That way, if and when you are having technical problems, you will have some extra time to fix mistakes and troubleshoot. Remember: It is always better to show what you are working on than to show nothing at all. We can try to solve the problem in class if necessary.

COURSE OUTLINE

*This outline is subject to change. Tentative: Guest speaker or field trip. TBD.
*Reading and/or homework assignments will be determined weekly as the course progresses.

Schedule

Week 1.

Day 1: Introduction to the course. Introduction to Photoshop. Setting Up. Tools and Windows. Drawing in Photoshop. Saving.

Day 2: The difference between art and design. Space and form. Composition. Placement. More practice with Photoshop's tools.

**Read this week: Design Elements pp. 30-43 and pp. 62-79*

Week 2.

Day 1: Scanning imagery and manipulating photography. Royalty free imagery. Copyright Issues.

Day 2: Continuing with Photoshop. Levels and adjustments. Removing red eyes. Removing "flaws." Introduction and Set up for Project 1.

**Read this week: Design Elements pp. 166-188*

Week 3.

Day 1: Contrasts. Color. Creating Mood. In progress help with Project 1. *Day 2:* Printing. Work in class time.

**Read this week: Design Elements pp. 82-113*

Week 4.

Day 1: In progress feedback and work in class time.

Day 2: Project 1 Due. Critique. Introduction to Illustrator.

**Read this week: Review past readings and cheat-sheets.*

Week 5

Day 1: Quiz #1. Drawing in Illustrator.

Day 2: Introduction to typography techniques. Typography exercises. Working with fonts. Introduction to Project 2.

**Read this week: Design Elements pp. 10-29 and pp. 116-131*

Week 6.

Day 1: Setting up Project #2. Ideas and offline sketching techniques for Project 2. Working with both imagery and text in Photoshop and Illustrator.

Day 2: Tracing images. Work in class time for Project #2.

**Read this week: Design Elements pp. 146-163*

Week 7.

Day 1: Review of previous topics. Q&A. Work in class on Project #2.

Day 2: Quiz #2. Work in class time.

**Read this week: Design Elements pp. 188-195 and pp. 226-235*

Week 8.

Day 1: Project #2 Due. Critique.

Day 2: Introduction to Motion Graphics and the Final Project. Past student examples of the Final Project. Preview of what students will be able to do in Final Cut within the next few weeks. Begin developing ideas for Final Project. Brainstorming and storyboarding techniques.

**Read this week: Handouts.*

Week 9.

Day 1: Introduction to Final Cut Pro. Setting up. Working with still imagery. Using the timeline. Simple jump cuts.

Day 2: Finding royalty-free sound. Adding sound to Final Cut Pro. In class help.

**Read this week: Handouts.*

Week 10.

Day 1: Final Project Proposals Due. Image, text, and sound gathering.

Day 2: Transitions, scaling, rotations, opacity changes, and other effects. In class help with Final Project.

**Read this week: Handouts.*

Week 11.

Day 1. Working with text in Final Cut.

Day 2. Advanced sound options. Work in class time.

**Read this week: Handouts.*

Week 12.

Day 1: In progress critique. Burning projects to CD and DVD.

Day 2: Quiz #3. Work in class time.

Week 13.

Days 1 and 2: Individual help/feedback. Preliminary critiques.

Week 14. Final Exam Week:

Final Projects Due. Screening and critique. Par-tay!

*The Final Exam is **Tuesday, December 13, from 10-12PM** in the Multimedia Lab.