DEPARTMENT OF GRAPHIC DESIGN

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arts.vcu.edu/graphicdesign (http://arts.vcu.edu/graphicdesign)

Graphic design is a creative and analytical process that integrates art and technology to communicate ideas and information. The goal of the Department of Graphic Design at VCU is to educate students to become innovators and leaders in three related areas of professional practice: print design, sequential design and interaction design.

Mission statement
The Department of Graphic Design encourages the exploration of diverse problem-solving methodologies, innovative investigations and creative research in all forms of communication. It is dedicated to excellence in teaching, scholarship, academic and creative research and professional practice. The Department of Graphic Design provides both an undergraduate and graduate education stressing creative and intellectual thinking; awareness of individual, social, cultural and communicative issues; the integration of new technology; and a concern for ethical implications and the natural environment. The program actively contributes to the university, local, state, national and international communities through its scholarly and creative activities, educational programs and service efforts.

- Graphic Design, Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/arts/graphic-design/graphic-design-bfa)

GDES 202. Design Technology. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: successful completion of the Art Foundation Program. A design foundation workshop that emphasizes skills development and application of design technology: time and project management, visual thinking, image capturing and editing.

GDES 205. Design Methods and Processes. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. An in-depth investigation of the theoretical aspects of the design process within the context of designing effective visual communications.

GDES 211. Typography I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. An introduction to communication problem-solving through the visual medium of language. The fundamentals of typography and typographic design are explored in experimental and practical projects.

GDES 212. Design Form and Communication. 3,6 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours or 4 lecture and 6 studio hours. 3 credits for Richmond; 6 credits for VCU. The relationship of form and communication in graphic design is explored through theoretical and applied projects. The impact of typography and imagery and their syntactic relations upon audience and content is stressed.

GDES 213. Typography II. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: GDES 211. An intermediate exploration of typography as an expressive and functional communication vehicle. Emphasis is placed on defining effective design criteria to meet the reader’s needs, the communicator’s intent and the designer’s formal sensibilities.

GDES 214. Imaging I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: successful completion of the Art Foundation Program. Cannot be taken for credit with COAR 331. A studio course focusing on the use of digital imaging techniques for communication purposes. The processes and techniques for making and working with digital images are explored.

GDES 216. Imaging II. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: GDES 214. A studio course focusing on the creation of visual images for communication purposes. The processes and media for making visual images and the limits of visual literacy are explored.

GDES 252. History of Visual Communication. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An investigation of contemporary visual communication concepts, media and images, and their role in contemporary society.

GDES 253. Theory and Philosophy of Visual Communication. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An overview of theoretical and philosophical issues influencing the practice of visual communication design.

GDES 300. Creative Strategies. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. A course in which alternative creative communication problem-solving strategies are investigated.

GDES 301. Beginning Letterpress. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. An introductory/intermediate printmaking studio course designed for students interested in developing their visual vocabulary in letterpress and relief printing. Students will undertake critical analysis of the letterpress medium and utilize techniques to develop and produce finished editions of each assigned task.

GDES 302. Book Arts. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. An introduction to the tools, materials and craft of contemporary bookmaking. Investigation of bookbinding, handcraft and related techniques.

GDES 308. Web Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: permission of instructor. A course developing the design of websites. Emphasis is placed on the visual design, navigation, development, communication and authoring of websites.

GDES 330. The Business of Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. This course introduces basic global economics and general design business concepts such as the free enterprise system, legal forms of business and financial considerations. It also surveys business and management practices such as planning, decision-making, communication, global ethics, marketing, human resources, finance and entrepreneurial skills needed to open a design business. Crosslisted as: IDES 330/FASH 330.

GDES 343. Systems in Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: successful completion of the sophomore GDES courses. The study of systematic and methodological approaches to communication design through the solving of complex problems in visual communication. Emphasis is placed on objective process and research in approaches to various professional situations.
GDES 345. Print I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: 
UNIV 200 or HONR 200 and successful completion of the sophomore 
GDES courses. An introduction to the design process and applied 
realizations of print-based materials and outcomes. Addresses the form 
and communication of the printed page from the tradition of print to the 
organizational principles outside that tradition. Objectives accomplished 
through lectures, demonstrations and problem-solving.

GDES 346. Visual Narrative I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: 
successful completion of the sophomore GDES courses. Studio course 
that introduces the conceptual and technical issues involved in the 
design and production of sequential documents and time-based 
compositions. Addresses the possibilities and limitations of the 
integration of word, image, video and sound as they relate to problem-
solving in visual communication.

GDES 347. Interaction I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: 
successful completion of the sophomore GDES courses. An introduction 
to the conceptual and technical issues involved in the design and 
production of interactive documents and environments. Addresses the 
possibilities and limitations of computer-generated images, sound and 
digital video as they relate to problem-solving in visual communication.

GDES 356. Studio Management. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of business and 
management factors that relate to creative design. Topics include 
marketing, structure and organization; financial factors; ethical and 
legal aspects; and management of design, illustration and photography 
studios.

GDES 365. Print II. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: 
GDES 345. An advanced studio course devoted to the study of systematic 
and methodological approaches to the design process and applied 
realization of print-based materials and outcomes. Emphasizes rigorous 
objective and experimental research methods in approaches to various 
professional situations. Objectives accomplished through lectures, 
demonstrations and team-based approaches to problem-solving.

GDES 366. Visual Narrative II. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: 
GDES 346. A studio course devoted to the design and production of 
advanced projects in sequential design, with focus on research, problem 
definition and team-based approaches to problem-solving.

GDES 367. Interaction II. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: 
GDES 347. A studio course devoted to the design and production of 
advanced projects in interaction design and experience design with focus 
on research, problem definition and team-based approaches to problem-
solving.

GDES 370. Design History: 20th and 21st Centuries. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: ARTF 105-106. 
Study of the major theories and styles on communication arts, fashion 
and interior environments of the 20th and 21st centuries. Contemporary 
analysis of cultural conditions and the manner in which designers 
respond to those conditions. Crosslisted as: FASH 370/IDES 370.

GDES 391. Lecture Topics in Design. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. 1-3 credits per semester. May be 
repeated for a maximum of 9 credits. Topical lectures in design issues 
and visual communications.

GDES 392. Research/Individual Study. 2-4 Hours.
Semester course; 1-2 lecture and 3-6 studio hours. 2-4 credits. May 
be repeated for a total of 6 credits. Enrollment requires permission 
of instructor, approval of faculty adviser and chair. The structuring, 
research, execution and presentation of an independent project in visual 
communications under the direction of a faculty adviser. The student will 
be encouraged to become a self-generating problem seeker and solver 
with the ability to carry out self-stated goals.

GDES 401. Advanced Letterpress. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. May be repeated 
for a maximum of 6 credits. Prerequisite: GDES 301. An advanced 
print studio course designed for students interested in exploring their 
visual vocabulary in digital and letterpress relief printing. Students 
will undertake critical analysis of the combined media of digital and 
letterpress and utilize techniques inherent within each technology to 
develop and produce finished editions.

GDES 403. Design Activism. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. An overview 
of the ethical issues faced by practitioners in the field of design and 
proactive roles available outside of the traditional client/designer 
relationship. The course presents critiques of the various roles 
that designers play in the areas of marketing, advertising, product 
development, and as entrepreneurs and content generators. The course 
includes a component in which problem identification, team work and 
real-world engagement are required.

GDES 404. Typeface Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Glyph 
construction is explored through historical and methodological analysis 
as well as the creation of typographic systems. Formal mechanics of 
typefaces are emphasized in discussion of their function as vehicles for 
communication. Both the functional and expressive nature of typefaces 
are examined through hands-on exercises.

GDES 408. Advanced Web Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: 
GDES 308. Investigation into the design and development of dynamic 
websites. Introduces database integration, webhost management and 
advanced coding techniques. Emphasis is placed on the semantic design 
and development of content-rich websites and blogs.

GDES 412. Typography III. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: 
GDES 307. An advanced studio course focusing on the development of 
letterpress and utilize techniques inherent within each technology to 
develop and produce finished editions.

GDES 413. Package Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: 
GDES 213 and 366. Study of the presentation of information in large-
dimensional structural principals as they relate to the area of packaging, 
and environmental design.

GDES 414. Exhibition and Environmental Graphic Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: 
GDES 213 and 366. Study of the presentation of information in large-
scale, three-dimensional formats. Exploration of exhibition and 
environmental design, including developing imagery and typography, 
understanding the use of "wayfinding" (identification, interpretation and 
orientation) and human factors, communicating of programmed content.
GDES 417. Interdisciplinary Team Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: GDES 213 and 366. Advanced projects in visual communication in which student design teams solve complex problems requiring collaboration.

GDES 418. Design Center. 3-9 Hours.
Semester course; 2-6 lecture and 3-9 studio hours. 3-9 credits. May be repeated for a total of 12 credits. Enrollment requires portfolio review by faculty. A professional studio to give students practicum experience working with faculty on self-initiated and client-initiated, real-world design projects.

GDES 445. Problem Seeking. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A seminar exploring the nature, scope and implications of defining design objectives in terms of limitations, requirements and potentials of a product's implementation, performance and life cycle.

GDES 470. Senior Seminar. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An examination of selected theoretical, historical, aesthetic and social areas of concern to the graphic designer. Scholarly research, critical analysis and discussion are expected.

GDES 472. Senior Studio. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. A capstone course oriented toward the creation of a professional portfolio, self-promotional materials and business system. The course culminates in the annual Senior Show.

GDES 491. Studio Topics in Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. May be repeated for a total of 12 credits. Topical studio focusing on research and experimentation in specialized visual communication media.

GDES 492. Design Internship. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; 1-3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 3 credits. Prerequisites: senior standing, 3.0 GPA or permission of the chair. Supervised pragmatic work experiences. Training is provided under the direction and supervision of qualified professional practitioners.