

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

VCOM 50 is an intense, condensed introduction to the vocation of visual communication and the creative processes involved; the thought process and technical methods and tools used in developing concepts and final designs for print or web. Emphasis is placed on exploring the conceptual design process, learning the language of design, and basic level technical skills and techniques used across industry standard soft ware, cross-platform operating systems, and hardware. Prerequisite Visual Communications 48 (may be taken as a co-requisite): 2 hour lecture, 6+ hours studio. Note: this is a FAST TRACK class. We cover two units of material in one half a semester.

**Class meets: Thursday 5pm to 10pm  
January 20 to March 17**

**NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE  
TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One**

**PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY  
SKILLS**

Before entering this course, it is strongly recommended that the student be able to:

- Turn on and turn off computers in a design studio lab;
- Access and navigate the computer desktop and server, cross-platform, at the most basic level

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS**

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Identify the wide variety of vocational options in the visual communications field;
- Brainstorm ideas for design by building image and word maps, and creating hand sketches and mockups of concepts based on brainstorm ideas;
- Write and speak using design terminology at the most basic level;
- Create digital compositions that use the primary design principles of unity, variety, hierarchy (dominance), the supporting principles of scale, balance, rhythm, repetition, economy, and proximity; and the plastic elements of design as compositional content—i.e. shape, space, line, size, color, texture, and type—at the most basic level;
- Demonstrate beginning development of appropriate solution and basic level craftsmanship in presentation;
- Create Illustrator CS3 or Photoshop CS3 documents at the most basic level;
- Perform file management tasks with increased facility;

**COURSE CONTENT**

**Getting Started in Visual  
Communications**

- Vocational/academic opportunities

**The Creative Process in Digital Design**

- Comprehend the client brief (project/assignment)
- Conceptualize solution(s)
- Brainstorm ideas
- Create Image and text maps
- Sketch concepts by hand and on the computer
- Choose Format (dimension and orientation of document)
- Create Mockup
- Begin Design Work
- Launch appropriate application(s) in Adobe Creative Suite CS5 and make new electronic document(s)
- Save and back up work (ongoing)
- Translate hand-drawn sketch(es) and mockup to the computer
- Develop and Refine Concepts
- Obtain feedback
- Complete Phase One of design process
- Present Work orally and visually (repeatable)
- Print work or save for screen/web (repeatable)
- Prepare for oral and visual presentation (repeatable)
- Matte work if appropriate (repeatable)
- Experience peer and/or client feedback and/or critique (repeatable)
- Revise oral/visual presentation (repeatable)
- Listen to and understand feedback (repeatable)
- Refine Design Work corresponding to feedback (repeatable)

- Complete Phase Two of design process
- Complete and Back Up Final Version of work
- Hand in work to client or instructor (remount if appropriate)

## The Conceptualization Process for Design

- Oral and written language as it relates to conceptual process
- Image and word maps in relationship to the design process
- Hand-drawn sketches and mock-ups
- Transferring sketches to the computer

## Design as a Visual Language

- Developing a visual vocabulary is like learning a new language
- Study elements individually at first
- Gradually learn to combine elements in more complex ways
- Learning the design visual vocabulary
- Be observant
- Read design-related books and magazines
- Go online to design-related sites
- Study the work of contemporary designers and design through the 20th century
- Visual language is complex and fluid.
- Influenced by cultural, social, and technological change.
- Using it is an ongoing learning process.
- Principles and elements do not change.
- Gaining a working knowledge leads to possessing the means to powerful communication.

## Fundamental Design Principles affect the whole composition

### Unity

An overriding principle  
Served by all other principles  
Controls variety

### Variety

Creates visual interest  
Balance of visual contrasts  
Combination of elements

### Hierarchy—an arranged order

Principle functions of hierarchy  
Dominance—influence of one element over another  
Emphasis—Stressing one element over another

### Proportion

Size relationship  
Outer dimensions have a relationship to internal divisions and alignments

### Support Principles—Effect the interaction among elements

### Scale

Size comparison of internal parts  
Comparison based on a known constant such as human scale  
Helps establish hierarchy

### Balance: The Visual distribution of elements

Symmetry  
Asymmetry  
Physical balance  
Radial symmetry

### Rhythm

Alternating occurrence of form and space  
Creates eye movement

## Repetition

- Regular pattern of elements
- Principle function of repetition—pattern (configuration of distributed elements)

## Proximity

- Relative position of elements
- Creates visual tension

## Plastic Elements of Design Used in Visual Communications

- Shape—Figure or mass; Form is shape with volume
  - Geometric
  - Organic
- Space—Area activated by visual elements
  - Figure/Ground
  - Form/Counterform
  - Positive/Negative
- Line—Moving path of a point
  - Line as type
  - Line as edge
  - Line implied
- Size (Format)—Physical dimensions
  - Serves scale and proportion
  - Size is contextual/relative
- Color—Hues found in light and pigment
  - Convey mood
  - Enhance pictorial space
  - Heighten emotion
  - Transmit cultural meaning
- Texture—Quality and characteristic of surface
  - Tactile texture
  - Visual texture
- Typography—Letter and word forms
  - Line
  - Texture
  - Shape

## A Guide to Presentation, Critique or Feedback in Design

- See page 5, this syllabus

## Using Studio Hardware, Software

- Using Illustrator and Photoshop at the basic level
- Introduction of technical methods needed to achieve success in projects (ongoing throughout semester)
- The Adobe interface: similarities across the Suite
- Introduction to Adobe Bridge
- How/Why to drop and drag items, place items

## Review from VCOM 48: File Management to industry standard

- Naming conventions
- Filing conventions
- Save and Back up documents

## Craftsmanship in Solution and Presentation

- Finalizing Work Product
- Mounting
- Printing
- On-Screen Images
- Verbal presentation skills

## EVALUATION

Methods/Practical studio assignments, oral discussion and critique, written assignments and final project, formal research, studio observation, instructor, peer and self review  
Frequency/Weekly and biweekly exercises; 1 large project and presentation, oral and visual

## METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Assigned exercises in visual design skills and applications and large applied projects  
Lecture, discussion and demonstration on project-related topics  
Examples of student and professional work  
Appropriate materials and relevant software exploration  
Computer lab time with direct instructor and cooperative peer support  
Student critique sessions  
Field trips to industry seminars, conventions and conferences if available

## BOOK, REQUIRED

Visual Literacy: A Conceptual Approach to Graphic Problem Solving by Judith Wilde, Richard Wilde, Watson-Guptill, New York ISBN 0-8230-5620-1, (Paperback - April 15, 2000)

## BOOKS, RECOMMENDED

Grasphic Design Solutions (4th edition) by Robin Landa, Wadsworth Cengage Learning (Cengage), ISBN: 0-495-57280-2

## ASSIGNMENTS

Based on the design and technical abilities of your classmates, I reserve the right to change some of listed assignments in part or in whole with advanced notice. I am providing examples so you can see the kind of work that we will be doing this semester. I will always discuss the assignment ONE WEEK PRIOR to its first due date. Some projects may have multiple parts. Please adhere to each benchmark and deadline as noted.

### Assignment: Weekly, in class

#### Design Journal

Each week bring one to three examples you believe reflect excellence in design—print or web. Come prepared to discuss why each got your attention—what about each drew your interest and attracted you? What makes each special? Why do you believe each is an example of excellent design work?

#### Assignment Objectives

- Gain experience doing research about design and the industry in general.
- Build a personal library of inspirational pieces.
- Develop an appreciation of multiple ways to create and use design. Gain experience distinguishing examples that represent excellence in design.
- Gain experience using vocabulary of design.
- Develop trust among peers to speak in a group.

#### Example LAB work (home work): Due January 27, 7:00 PM

- Create 6 Black and White compositions using black

squares, rectangles, circles, and/or ellipses evoking the 6 topic words on the worksheets in an abstract manner, using traditional materials, provided templates or Adobe Illustrator.

#### Example LAB work (home work): Due February 3, 7:00 PM

- Choose ANY topic that you are unfamiliar with so you can learn about it.
- Research your topic thoroughly BEFORE coming to class. Have your research results with you (books, URLs, articles, etc.)
- Write as many words as possible on a word map sheet that describe or go with your topic.
- Draw connecting lines from word to word that will help you to organize your topic
- Write ONE topic sentence using excellent vocabulary that best describes your topic.  
NOTE: It is OK to write a brief paragraph (no more than 4 sentences), but one sentence is preferable

#### Example Project: Unity and Variety

#### Project Objectives

- Develop an appreciation for using abstract solutions with real-world implications
- Gain knowledge through reading, research, and classroom discussion
- Gain experience using elements of design to embody visual context/meaning.
- Gain technical skills used to design and mount work.
- Gain experience doing a short presentation
- Gain experience giving and getting critique

#### Project Criteria and Instructions

##### Part One: Written Assignment

- Refer to handout for images and explanation.
- Conduct research to find another set of merchandise that is unified in overall look and feel, but that uses variety to make each item unique as is true in the example.
- Write a minimum one paragraph description of how the designer of your items created a sense of overall unity in design. How is the logo created and used?

How does the design vary from one item to another?  
Which principles of design are utilized to achieve effects? How are the visual contrasts balanced?

### Part Two: Hands-On Project

- Create a set of no less than 5 digital compositions that together embody the design principle of “unity and variety”.
- Choose as many elements of design and use as many design principles as needed to accomplish the task.
- Print and mount all compositions per handout instructions
- Prepare for presentation/critique: write a short paragraph that describes your conceptual process for achieving unity and variety. How does this assignment translate to the real world? For what sorts of client needs could you use this conceptual approach?

### FINAL PROJECT

- Create a poster consisting only of words that relate to one over-arching concept. This design may or may not create an abstract design or pictorial design. It must be interesting.
- Directions regarding size, complexity, use of typography, color, and all other design elements will be worked on directly between teacher and students during design studio lab hours and in critique.

### Example Homework Topics

- Describe the visual message a specific graphic for print or web conveys.
- Use terminology in the Vocabulary of Design section in this Syllabus, pp 3-4  
Describe which parts of the Design Vocabulary are represented by specific compositions you bring to class? that you design? the group discussed?
- Identify a specific design element that is “driving” a composition and describe how this is achieved. Use this element in a symmetrical composition. An asymmetrical composition. How does the experience differ for the viewer? for you?
- Identify 2 web sites that inspire you. Create a composition that reflects your inspiration

## The Visual Communication Design Process

Graphic design solutions must be relevant to stated objectives and clear in communication of message. The visual message must fit in to the client’s larger marketing, promotion or communication plan to achieve the goal. Excellent visual communication requires work in collaboration with the client.

Three basic types of visual communication are information design, editorial design and promotional design.

- **Information design:**  
informs and identifies (logos, identity systems, symbols, web sites, pictograms, charts, diagrams, maps, signage, retail guides, informational booklets, catalogs
- **Promotional design**  
promote sales or persuade (advertisements, banners, packaging, web sites, point of purchase displays, brochures, sales promotions, posters, book jackets, covers.
- **Editorial design**  
Publications such as magazines, newspapers, books, newsletters, annual reports, etc.

### Strategy

These three types of visual communication often overlap and reinforce each other to create an image/a bond between the consumer and the client.

1. Define the audience, the competition and the marketplace.
2. Do research: what messages need to be conveyed?
3. What personality should be conveyed?
4. What response is desired from the audience?
5. What elements of design can be used to convey the message?

## Concept

The design concept is the creative solution to the design problem; the underlying thinking, logic or reasoning for how you design a piece. It is expressed through the combination and arrangement of visual and verbal (typographical) materials. It is conceived as a series of sketches.

- **Brainstorm**  
Make a list of anything related to your subject (often done in a group)
- **Play**  
Do something completely different/crop; change color, change texture, combine images, use of different than traditional materials
- **Relax**  
Do something else/get away but no too far
- **Observe**  
Refer to magazines, annuals, fine art, galleries, museums, books, etc.
- **Be Wrong**  
Think of the “wrong” answer/it can help to find the “correct” one
- **Change Direction**  
Drop one idea and start something else.  
Don't allow yourself to get stuck.

## Design

Putting everything together – how you arrange the elements – is the design.

It must be consistent with principles of visual organization and graphic space.

Create as many of these as time permits, then hone in on one, complete.

- **Sketch**  
Thumbnails are best/be sure to indicate where type is to be placed. Sketches are “sketchy”
- **Rough**  
A clearer picture of the design in actual size or scale to finished piece. specify/render type, color, clear imagery. Although this may look finished, it is NOT.
- **Comp**  
Looks as close to the finished piece a possible.
- **Final**  
Take suggestions of client. Refine comp. Get final approval. Prepare for prepress or live web status



## CLASSROOM POLICIES

- CONTACT ME by email if you know you will be late or absent (limited absences MAY be excused if you notify me prior to a class session).
- BACK UP YOUR WORK! Computer failure or file corruption is not accepted as an excuse.
- Food or drink is NEVER allowed near computers; eat/drink at front table ONLY
- PLAN your workday, childcare, etc. to remain at task during the whole class session.
- Cell phones must be silent during class.
- You are expected to OBEY copyright laws. You may not copy software or use stock or other design work without express permission of the author or payment of rights due under any circumstances.
- Regarding ASSIGNMENT, HANDOUTS and DUE DATES: Assignments will be discussed and distributed at least 1 week prior to the project due date. They will also be available on the studio server and the VCOM web site listed below. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE to get the assignment and turn it in on time.
- Be prepared to participate in the design journal presentation/discussion weekly.
- IF I am late for class, appoint a leader and start working on critique or journal.

## CAMPUS POLICIES

- Academic dishonesty is not tolerated: refer to <http://www.laspositascollege.edu/facultystaff/honesty.php> for full details.
- Smoke only in assigned areas.
- Visitors must register with receptionist in Building 100. Visits to the classrooms are by permit only. Non-students, including children, must have a permit issued from the Office of the Vice President of Student Services, located in Building 700. Prior permission from the instructor is required.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

<b>MONDAY</b>			
12:00:00 PM - 1:00 PM	lab		ROOM 300
<b>TUESDAY</b>			
1:30 PM - 3:30 PM	lab		ROOM 300
<b>THURSDAY</b>			
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM	lab		ROOM 300
<b>OFFICE HOUR - THURSDAY</b>			
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM			Design Shop Office

## FINALS SCHEDULE

<b>THURSDAY March 17, 6 PM to 8 PM</b>			
4:00 AM - 6:00 PM	lecture		ROOM 300

## EXTRA HELP

I am available during Class, Studio and Office hours.  
 I am not available if I am scheduled in another class.  
 You can seek assistance in room 300 from any VCOM instructor(s) or VCOM Instructional Assistant(s) who are scheduled for studio time but are not engaged with other students.

<b>LAS POSITAS COLLEGE CALENDAR Fall 2010: VCOM50</b>	
January 18	Instruction Begins
January 20	VCOM 50 Begins
January 22	Instruction Begins - Saturday Classes
February 4	Last Day to ADD/DROP with No-Grade-of-Record (NGR) in person (A&R)
February 6	Last Day to ADD/DROP with NGR online via Class-Web
February 7	CENSUS DAY
February 17	Last day to Apply for Pass/No Pass
February 18, 19, & 21*	Presidents' Weekend (no instruction)
March 17	FINAL CLASS VCOM 50
March 24	VCOM 51 Begins
April 8	Last Day to Withdraw with a "W" in person and online via CLASS-web
April 15	Last Day to Apply for Degree/Certificate
April 16	Saturday Classes Meet
April 18-23	Spring Break (no instruction, no Saturday Classes)
May 14	Last Day of Saturday Classes
May 19	FINAL CLASS VCOM 51
May 21-27	Final Examination Period

The deadlines listed above refer to regular, full-term classes only. Alternate Schedule courses will have varying deadlines posted in the lobby of the Admissions & Records office, Building 700. Alternate deadlines are also available on "Class-Web" or by simply asking your instructor.