Program Overview

Visual Communication is the major for students who enjoy creating, have a keen, inquisitive nature and like working with words, tools, and concepts that enhance communication. Visual Communication is a fast-evolving component of the information revolution.

At MTSU, Visual Communication involves all the elements of visual communication, from traditional typography to digital design for newspapers, magazines and the Web. The sequence’s main emphasis is publication design, including print and interactive media that deliver information, opinion and entertainment via newspapers, magazines, books, newsletters, brochures and the Internet.

Students learn creative skills using current technology in creating their visual presentations. The project-centered approach of the program requires students to use state-of-the-art computers extensively, with emphasis on developing creative solutions to practical design problems. Students use the latest Macintosh computer systems to arrange type and illustrations into successful design packages. The computer labs allow Internet access for research and design resources. Each computer has the full Adobe Suite installed, which includes Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Flash, Acrobat Professional and Dreamweaver.

The school hosts a student chapter of the Society for News Design, a professional organization that offers seminars, conferences, training and the opportunity to gain contacts in the professional world of news media designers and artists.

Scholarships

Visual Communication Scholarship
$100/year awarded to an outstanding media design major. Requirements: Sophomore or junior standing.

Courses

GRAF 2010 Media Design and Visual Language
Three credits. Introduction and overview of concepts, theories, and practices of visual communication and media design; role of typography, art, illustration, photography, and information graphics in news media, newspapers, magazines, advertising, and public relations in multiple formats.

GRAF 2950 Media Design Applications
Three credits. Introduction to industry-standard software applications used for print, Web and electronic publication; overview of publication procedures, hardware and components; discussion of typography and design concepts as they relate to visual communication.

GRAF 3810 History of Media Design
Three credits. Historical survey of visual communication; creative and critical debates between principles and practices in design movements; the role of art, science, and technology in relation to journalism and visual media from the printed to the digital. Areas covered include art, illustration, typography, printing, and photography—in print, electronic and digital media—with a focus on how historical and contemporary media modalities influence journalism and visual design.

GRAF 3910 Basic Media Design
Three credits. Prerequisites: admission to candidacy; JOUR 2710, GRAF 2010 and GRAF 2950. Design process and production methods for print, Web and electronic publication; in-depth analysis of typography, photography, information graphics and illustration; journalism ethics and copywrite issues relating to visual communication.

GRAF 4010 Publication Design
Three credits. Prerequisites: admission to candidacy; GRAF 3910. Principles and practices of publication design and production with emphasis on newsletters, magazines, newspapers and contemporary formats; use of traditional and electronic information services as a resource; selection and use of photographs and illustration for publication; preparation of design for print and electronic publication.
Program Requirements

After being admitted to candidacy in the Media Design sequence, a student must meet the following requirements:

FOUNDATIONS (6 credits)

JOUR 1020 American Media and Social Institutions
JOUR 3650 Free Expression, Mass Media and the American Public

WRITING/DESIGN (15 credits)

Design

GRAF 2950 Media Design Applications
GRAF 3910 Basic Media Design

Writing

JOUR 2710 Media Writing
JOUR 3450 Editing
Choose one:
JOUR 3090 Reporting
JOUR 3530 Feature Writing
JOUR 4440 Advanced Reporting
EMC 3020 Writing for Electronic Media
EMC 3060 Writing for Digital Media

CONCEPTUAL TOPICS (9 credits)

GRAF 2010 Media Design and Visual Language
GRAF 3810 History of Media Design
Choose one:
JOUR 3510 Media History and American Culture
JOUR 4200 Mass Media Law
JOUR 4210 Mass Communication and Society
JOUR 4660 Mass Media Research
JOUR 4780 Media and Markets
JOUR 4790 Global News and World Media Cultures
JOUR 4850 Ethics and Mass Communication
JOUR 4800 Seminar in Media Issues

PROFESSIONAL TOPIC (3 credits)

GRAF 4010 Publication Design

SENIOR TOPIC (3 credits)

GRAF 4180 Advanced Media Design

INTERNSHIP (1-3 credits)

JOUR 3580 Practicum
JOUR 4000 Internship
Approved JOUR, EMC upper-division elective

Total hours in the College: 37-39