



## COM 202 | Visual Design | Fall 2023 | Aimée Knight, PhD | [aknight@sju.edu](mailto:aknight@sju.edu)

10:10- 11:00 Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays | Merion 174 | Office hours Tuesdays by appointment from 1:00 - 3:00

### Course Description

Hone in on your audience, purpose, and mission by understanding the role of visual communication in storytelling. This course highlights image and visual design and invites you to use Instagram as a creative sandbox for your cause-based initiative. Design Justice practices will guide you in developing a visual narrative and audience engagement. Not only will you create content and calls to action, but you will also learn to strategize for outreach and stewardship by forging relationships with supporters and collaborators.

### Objectives

#### Effective Communication

In this course students gain experience in visual design. Specifically, students gain skills in graphic design, photography, video, editing, writing captions, storytelling, content creation, and strategy.

#### Human Centered Design

Students give extensive attention to each stage of the design process as they critique and create sensory-based digital projects. Students will learn how to successfully ideate, create content, execute, and revise creative design solutions.

## Course Texts

- [Design Justice: Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need](#), Constanza-Chock (2020)
- [Design Justice Network Principles](#)
- *The Ethical Design Handbook* Falbe, Andersen, and Frederiksen (2020) PDF in Canvas

## Course Assignments & Evaluation




Assignments	Due Date	Evaluation
Design Activities and Discussion (Includes written and digital media assignments, worksheets, Canvas discussion board)	Weeks 1- 12	50%
Design Book	Weeks 11-15	40%
Final Reflection	Week 15-16	10%



**Design Activities and Discussion 50%** Weekly design activities, discussion groups, and worksheets comprise this assignment group. I will introduce assignments and activities each week. It is up to you to complete the worksheets, activities, and discussions and submit them to Canvas at the end of the week (Friday). Keep in mind that no credit is given if it has been completed but not submitted to Canvas. Late work is deducted 10% each day.



**Design Book 40%** This assignment has various stages during weeks 11-15, including a 1) plan/project proposal, 2) a draft, 3) a peer review, 4) and a revision based on feedback. Examples for this project include a manifesto, a zine, a digital book, magazine, or a how to guide.





**Visual Design Reflection 10%** In this reflection, you will discuss themes of visual design and how they relate to the various media you have produced throughout the semester.




## Weekly Schedule

		What we are up to	Mondays	Wednesdays	Fridays
<b>Week 1</b>		<p>This week you will lay the foundation for this semester with an introduction to design justice and how design can be a tool to amplify, support, and extend communities. You will figure out your "why" and your "ikigai" - a Japanese concept that means "a reason for being."</p>	8/28	8/30	9/1
Welcome to visual design			Activities; Ikigai, Design Justice, Why	Activity, video, worksheets	Activity and completed worksheets due
<b>Week 2</b>		<p>This week you will define and locate your intended audience for a cause-based visual project, conduct some intentional goal setting, and learn how to put the focus on your followers.</p>	9/4	9/6	9/8
Content, audience, and strategy			Labor Day no class	Reading: <u>Introduction</u> (Chock); <u>Chapter 1</u> (Chock)	Activity and completed worksheets due
				Dream follower; user personas	
				Activity, video, worksheets	
<b>Week 3</b>		<p>This week you'll begin developing a content strategy, learn what to post and why, and create a visual style for your project. You will also create or revise a profile that is a professional, visual representation for your cause.</p>	9/11	9/13	9/15
Developing a visual and verbal style			Reading: Ethical Design Handbook Intro and chapter 1 (see Canvas)	Activity, video, worksheets	Activity and completed worksheets due

	<b>What we are up to</b>	<b>Mondays</b>	<b>Wednesdays</b>	<b>Fridays</b>
<b>Week 4</b>  The art of visual storytelling: photography	 <p>This week you will stage and produce a photoshoot using a variety of options and techniques. You will choose between a dead-on, flat lay, still life, landscape, or portrait series to produce the best portfolio of shots you are able.</p>	9/18  Video lessons. Discussion + Practice.	9/20  Activity  Photo and styling shoot.	9/22  Activity and completed worksheets due
<b>Week 5</b>  Strategizing for growth and outreach	<p>This week you will be strategizing for growth and outreach in order to build relationships. Learn tools and techniques to build community by forging connections with potential followers, fans, collaborators, press, clients, customers, and donors.</p>	9/25  Reading: The Ethical Design Handbook Chapters 2 and 3; Design Justice Zines	9/27  Zines	9/29  Activity and completed worksheets due
<b>Week 6</b>  Storytelling and style	 <p>This week we will explore visual language examples from master storytellers from Pixar and you'll get to attempt communicating with this visual language in your own images.</p>	10/2  Video lessons	10/4  Story and style worksheets	10/6  Activity and completed worksheets due

		<b>What we are up to</b>	<b>Mondays</b>	<b>Wednesdays</b>	<b>Fridays</b>
<b>Week 7</b>		<p>Finally we are diving into some of the bells and whistles on Instagram, like stories and highlights—what they are, why you need them, and how to use visuals strategically to create conversations.</p> <p>You will also learn how to stay mindful, and have healthy boundaries toward the Instagram app.</p>	<p>10/9</p> <p>Reading due. Discussion.</p>	<p>10/11</p> <p>Activity</p>	<p>10/13</p> <p>Activity and completed worksheets due</p>
<b>Week 8</b>			<p>10/16</p> <p>Fall Break, no class today</p>	<p>10/18</p> <p>At least 12 posts on account</p>	<p>10/20</p> <p>Links to account due</p>
<b>Week 9</b>		<p>This week you will shoot, edit, and post a video to your feed. We will discuss video strategy for online filmmaking, including Stories, Live, and IGTV. You will practice recording and sharing a video and choosing the right editing apps and strategies to optimize your video content, including subtitles and closed-captions.</p>	<p>10/23</p> <p>Reading due. Discussion.</p>	<p>10/25</p> <p>Activity</p>	<p>10/27</p> <p>Activity and completed worksheets due</p>

		<b>What we are up to</b>	<b>Mondays</b>	<b>Wednesdays</b>	<b>Fridays</b>
<b>Week 10</b>		Now we will be putting everything we have learned thus far into practice by collaborating with at least one other person, but it can be as many as you like. This can be ANYTHING. It can be a co-hosted giveaway. An event. A virtual collaboration. An interview. A photoshoot. A shared effort to benefit a charity or a cause you believe in. Producing a video. A city tour you co-host with someone.	10/30  Reading: The <i>Ethical Design Handbook</i> Chapter 5 (see Canvas).	11/1  Collaboration Activity	11/3  Activity and completed worksheets due
<b>Week 11</b>		This week we be reviewing concepts from weeks 1-10 and assessing our accounts.	11/6  Group review activity, discussion	11/8  Quiz available on Visual Design Concepts	11/10  Quiz due at midnight with 20+ completed account posts
<b>Week 12</b>		This week we will begin our digital book projects and complete a proposal/plan for our books. Examples for this project include a manifesto, a zine, a digital book, magazine, or a how to guide.	11/13  Book introduction, discuss options, examples	11/15  Design book proposal creation	11/17  Project proposal/plan due
<b>Week 13</b>		This week your draft of 5 pages is due on Monday 11/27.	11/20  Design book discussion	11/22  Thanksgiving Break, no class	11/24  Thanksgiving Break, no class

		<b>What we are up to</b>	<b>Mondays</b>	<b>Wednesdays</b>	<b>Fridays</b>
<b>Week 14</b>		In class we will be conducting a peer review to help you revise your book.	11/27 Design book draft due (at least 5 pages) Begin peer review - use worksheet provided in Canvas	11/29 Peer review of drafts	12/1 Turn in peer review
<b>Week 15</b>		In this reflection you will discuss themes of visual design and how they relate to the various media you have produced throughout the semester.	12/4 We will discuss the final exam and evaluations.	12/6 Studio time for design book revision	12/8 Studio time for design book revision
<b>Week 16</b>		This week you will finish revising your books and turn them in on the final day of class. Final visual design reflection will be due at our final exam time.	12/11 Last day of class. Design Books due	Reflections due at Final Exam time	

## Weekly Agenda

- By Mondays: Have readings prepared before class; everything is in Canvas/Modules for the week.
- On Wednesdays; Weekly activity overview and time to work on activity.
- On Fridays: Complete worksheets and activities; submit media activity with Instagram link; upload completed worksheets to Canvas.

## Course Policies

### Community Agreements

- Stay flexible and patient around any technology needs, changes, cancellations or schedule shifts as we navigate the semester.
- Ask questions before assuming. The best way to understand the choices, actions, or intentions of one another is by asking.
- Mute your mic while not speaking on Zoom.
- Turn video on during Zoom sessions and breakout rooms to show engagement and participation.
- Use a digital background in video sessions to keep your location private.
- Avoid ableist and other harmful language
- Learn about identity-first language
- This is an anonymous feedback link that goes to the professor and cannot be traced back to you.

**Expectations** Come to class fully prepared to engage in the exchange of ideas. It is your responsibility to be ready to discuss the materials each week. You will also need to access (and use) Canvas and email. Save and backup all work at all times.

**Late Work** Late work is deducted 20% for each late day. If an assignment or project is posted after a deadline, it will be deducted 20%. If you are ill, please let me know.

**Office Hours and After Hours** I hope you will take advantage of my office hours. I am available to offer extended feedback on your projects (beyond the written feedback you formally receive). You don't need to have a problem to schedule a visit, but if you do find yourself having some difficulty or questions, then I certainly want to see you sooner rather than later. If you cannot make scheduled office hours, arrange to see me at another time.

**Attendance** You are expected to attend class each week and be well prepared. We will often have discussions, work on projects, watch videos, conduct group work, and other activities during class time. There is no substitute for your presence during class. Please note, if you are absent, it is your responsibility to make up the work in a timely manner. Attendance and participation are essential for learning. Therefore, attendance is required for all synchronous online sessions. Unexcused absences are likely to result in course penalty; more than 5 unexcused absences will result in a grade of FA (Failure due to Absence) for the course.



If you are unable to attend class due to a non-COVID-19 related illness, communicate directly with me through email. If you have COVID-19 symptoms, you must complete the COVID-19 Self-Disclosure Form which will result in my notification. If you don't notify me through email and I do not receive a COVID-19 notification from the University, you will be marked absent. If your absence is due to isolation or quarantine, it is your responsibility to contact me within 48 hours outlining both the date of your expected return to class and a plan to stay on pace with readings and assignments during your mandated physical absence.

**Equipment to check out** The COM Studies department has most of the equipment what you will need to complete course assignments. Everyone in the department, including faculty, use the gear for their work, so it's important that we all treat it kindly and return it on time. More [details here](#).

**Writing Center** The Saint Joseph's University Writing Center is free to all members of the SJU community. The undergraduate and graduate student writers who make up the staff can assist you in any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to organizing and developing your ideas, to citing sources to proofreading. They work with students from across the university on a variety of assignments and projects: lab reports, business policy papers, poems, essays, research papers, dissertations, resumes, and personal statements for graduate school applications, among many others. You name it; they've helped writers write it. Both appointments and drop-in sessions are available. The main Writing Center is located in 162 Merion Hall. The Center also has a satellite location in the Post Learning Commons (room 128). For more information, including hours of operation and instructions on how to make an appointment, please visit the SJU Writing Center website at [sju.edu/writingcenter](http://sju.edu/writingcenter).

**Academic honesty** If you use ideas or information that are not common knowledge, you must cite a source. This rule applies to all the course activities and projects including reading responses, multimedia projects, and essays. How to cite a source will be discussed in class. St. Joseph's University's academic honesty policy can be found [here](#).

The penalty for plagiarism is an automatic Fail for this class and a letter of notification to the Committee on Discipline. If you are suspected of plagiarism or an act of dishonesty, action will be taken. In all courses, each student has the responsibility to submit work that is uniquely his or her own. All of this work must be done in accordance with established principles of academic integrity. Specific violations of this responsibility include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Cheating, copying, or the offering or receiving of unauthorized assistance or information in examinations, tests, quizzes, reports, assigned papers, or special assignments, as in computer programming, studio work, and the like.
- The fabrication or falsification of data, results, or sources for papers or reports
- Any action which destroys or alters the work of another student; The multiple submission of the same paper or report for assignments more than one course without the prior written permission of each instructor;
- Plagiarism, the appropriation of information, ideas, or the language of other persons or writers and the submission of them as one's own to satisfy the requirements of a course.

**Plagiarism** thus constitutes both theft and deceit. Compositions, term papers, or computer programs acquired, either in part or in whole, from commercial sources or from other students and submitted as one's own original work shall be considered plagiarism. All students are directed to the standard manuals of style or reference guides for discussions of plagiarism and the means by which

sources are legitimately acknowledged, cited, quoted, paraphrased, and footnoted—whether presented in an oral report or in writing.

**Rules regarding the use of information in this course** 1) If you use the language of your source, you must quote it exactly, enclose it in quotation marks, and cite the source. If you use the language of your source, quote the wording exactly. This is called a direct quotation. A direct quotation is either enclosed in quotation marks or indented on the page. If you omit part of the wording, use an ellipsis (three periods, four if necessary for punctuation to indicate the omission).

2) A paraphrase employs source material by restating an idea in an entirely new form that is original in both sentence structure and word choice. Taking the basic structure from a source and substituting a few words is an unacceptable paraphrase and may be construed as plagiarism. Creating a new sentence by merging the wording of two or more sources is also plagiarism.

**Services for students with disabilities** Reasonable academic accommodations may be provided to students who submit appropriate documentation of their disability. Students are encouraged to contact Dr. Christine Mecke in the Office of Student Disability Services, Bellarmine, B-10, at [cmecke@sju.edu](mailto:cmecke@sju.edu); or at 610.660.1774 for assistance with this issue. The university also provides an appeal/grievance procedure regarding requested or offered reasonable accommodations through Dr. Mecke's office. More information can be found at: [www.sju.edu/sds](http://www.sju.edu/sds).