

University of Texas at El Paso
BASIC DESIGN I
SYLLABUS-Fall 2025

COURSE INFORMATION Course Rubric Number: ARTF 1301 Basic Design I, CRN 12459 Meeting Days & Time: MW 12:30pm-3:20pm Meeting Location: FFA-A256	INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION Instructor: ALIX GAYTAN Office Hours: By appointment or Zoom Office Location: FAA A348 Email: argavtan2@utep.edu
---	--

INSTRUCTORS INTRODUCTION

Alix Gaytan is a native of El Paso/Juarez area. She received her BFA in Painting with a minor in Printmaking from the University of Texas at El Paso and her MFA in Painting from Pennsylvania State University.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Basic Design I is an introductory course to expose students to the fundamental principles of art, design, and visual communication. An introduction to two-dimensional design's fundamental terminology, concepts, theory, and application. Emphasizes experimentation and practices in basic design projects using visual communication techniques and creative problem-solving. This introductory course provides a foundation in the fundamental elements and principles of 2D design. Projects emphasize developing fluency in handling media and increasing awareness of craftsmanship. Lectures and critiques cultivate verbal communication skills to foster a facility with the language of art and design.

COURSE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Development and understanding of the basic terminology of art and design.
- Development and understanding of good composition principles.
- Development and understanding of technical skills such as simple drawing, painting, and cutting skills needed to render well-composed 2-dimensional designs.
- Development of good craftsmanship and working habits needed to achieve these goals and objectives.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Students who complete the course will be able to:

- Create properly composed, well-balanced 2-dimensional designs using various materials. Effectively use the visual elements in a composition and apply the principles of design for stronger, more creative, and effective 2-D artwork.
- Identify and recognize a well-crafted design.
- Be aware of various art movements and concepts through exposure to various artists and artworks
- Acquire a basic knowledge of art terminology to express ideas verbally.

GRADING CRITERIA

Your grade in this course will be determined by your performance on the following:

Participation/Attendance	20%
Midterm Portfolio Review/Critique	35%
Final Portfolio Review/Critique	45%
TOTAL	100%

Letter Grade Format will be used for all assignments and examinations.

100-90 (A, Excellent)

89-80 (B, Good)

79-70 (C, Keep Experimenting)

69-60 (D, Unsatisfactory)

59> (F, Fail)

UNIVERSITY POLICY STATEMENTS

Incompletes, Withdrawals, Pass/Fail

Incompletes, Withdrawals, Pass/Fail: Incompletes or “I” grades will be considered for students completing satisfactory or better work and having serious, legitimate situations beyond their control requiring additional time to complete the course requirements. All “I” grades are at the instructor's discretion and the Department chair's approval. Students are responsible for withdrawing from this course if that procedure is elected. Withdrawals must be completed on or before the final date to drop a course with a W. Students missing this deadline will be issued a grade for their performance on the course.

Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty

Cheating/Plagiarism: Cheating is unethical and unacceptable. Plagiarism is using information or original wording in a paper without crediting the source of that information or wording: it is also unacceptable. Do not submit work, images, writing, or prints that are not your creative output, including the use of AI. If an image appears on Google or in another image source and you copy that image, it is plagiarism. You may not submit work for this class that you did for another class. If you are found to be cheating or plagiarizing, you will be subject to disciplinary action, per UTEP catalog policy. Refer to <http://www.utep.edu/dos/acadintg.htm> for further information.

Accommodation Policy

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services, and activities with documented disabilities to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodation will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship for the University. Students requesting accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915- 747- 5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal (<https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>).

Student Pregnancy and Parenting Nondiscrimination Policy

Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, you are entitled to reasonable accommodation for as long as your doctor deems medically necessary. It will be important to review each student's situation individually, as reasonable accommodation will be highly dependent on the requirements of individual courses. Examples of possible reasonable accommodations (when deemed medically necessary) are:

- Excused absences due to pregnancy or related condition
- Reviewing lectures online if available
- Opportunity to make up field/lab work
- Rescheduling of tests or exams
- A larger desk or other adaptive furniture
- Breaks during class, as needed
- Submitting work after a deadline missed due to pregnancy or childbirth
- Providing alternatives to make up missed work
- Assignment of an Incomplete grade (if eligible)
- Allowing "Withdrawal" with a refund (if eligible)
-

If you have questions related to student pregnancy or pregnancy-related accommodation, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at cass@utep.edu or at 915-747- 5148.

You may also contact the Title IX Program at titleix@utep.edu or at 915-747-8358 if you believe you have been discriminated against due to being pregnant or a pregnancy-related condition. For more information visit <https://www.utep.edu/titleix/pregnancy-and-parenting.html>

COVID Guidelines

The COVIDaction@utep.edu is still active and is an available resource for those who don't know what to do in COVID-19-related incidents. In addition, even though self-reporting is not required, we recommend that individuals report and receive guidance based on the CDC guidelines. I have attached a link with the most up-to-date UTEP policy regarding COVID. If you have any other questions, please let us know.

Thank you. <https://www.utep.edu/ehs/covid/>

INSTRUCTOR'S POLICIES

Attendance/Participation

Attendance, punctuality, participation and appropriate class conduct are crucial. Failure to perform to required standards will result in strong grade penalties and can cause failure of this course.

- Each student is permitted 2 absences during the semester without penalty (This statement does not include critique days.) Students with more than 2 absences should consider dropping this course and retaking it at a time when the student can commit the proper attention to the course.
- Each unexcused absence after 2 will result in the final course grade being lowered by 1 full letter grade. Absences after the first 2 can be excused only if the first 2 absences are excused.
- Excused absences are defined as documented illness or serious illness or death in the immediate family.
- Coming to class late or leaving early is unacceptable. All students are required to attend class on time and to remain in the class the entire time. Entering class late and leaving early is disruptive, disrespectful and sets an intolerable standard for everyone.
- 3 X ½ hour or less late = 1 absence
- More than ½ hour late = 1 absence
- Coming to class unprepared or attending class and not working is regarded as absent.
- Information missed during an absence is the sole responsibility of the student.
- Final Attendance Grade will be calculated at the end of the semester.

Students must log onto Blackboard daily and attend face-to-face meetings according to the schedule provided at the beginning of the course. If an emergency occurs and you must be absent, you must show proof/or documentation of the event for your absence to be excused. Absences may be excused with proper notification for documented serious illness, documented COVID issues, documented child-care emergencies, documented death in the immediate family, or documented university-sanctioned events. Scheduled appointments, transportation problems, and job demands are not excused absences.

Unexcused absences and late arrivals to class will be counted against your overall grade.

Course Communication

Please check the top of the syllabus for days and times. I will only answer emails Monday through Friday from 8-5 am. I will not be available during weekends. I suggest maintaining all communication through Blackboard, so please try to make this your first option for communicating with me. Announcements will be made weekly via Blackboard for reminders of possible events occurring during the upcoming week. Check Blackboard daily.

Community Atmosphere

Studio courses involve constructive dialogue between classmates and the instructor. We can learn much from one another through open communication and collaboration during class. Communication is important in this class. If you ever need anything in class, do not hesitate to communicate. Listening to your peers, asking questions, joining discussions, and actively engaging in class activities benefit everyone's learning experience and will positively affect your grade. Lastly, each student will clean their working area at the end of each class.

Constant focus on your projects during class is expected. This is part of your participation grade. Any student creating distractions for other students or constantly moving in or outside the studio for no reason will be marked as late or absent.

Breaks: For in-person classes, we will have a ten-minute break about halfway through class for lunch, checking emails, chatting, etc.

Electronics Policy

Electronics will be used at the instructor's discretion. However, there will be ZERO tolerance for constant texting, or any electronic distractions not related to the course content. If you need to take a call, you can simply step outside of the classroom. Any student not complying with this policy will be marked late or absent.

Recommendation Letters/References

I will be more than happy to give a recommendation letter or reference only when the following criteria are met:

- The student has taken and finished one or more courses with me as the instructor
- The student passed the course(s) with an A letter grade (100>99)

Coursework and Assessment

- Projects are the main core of this course. Constant practice is key to continuing to improve your drawing skills. There are expectations to work outside class time to finish the projects, so keep this in mind.
- Critiques and portfolio reviews are essential to this course so that they will have no make-up option. These are equivalent to exams. Guidelines will be explained later in the semester.
- A digital portfolio will be submitted via Blackboard.

Make-up Work/Late Assignments/Unfinished Submissions

- Make-up work or late assignments will be accepted at the instructor's discretion.
- Unfinished submissions (if accepted by instructor) will receive a grade not higher than 79-70 (C, Keep Experimenting).
- Any student arriving late to a group critique will receive a grade not higher than 79-70 (C, Keep Experimenting) to their portfolio/critique grade.
- **ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED and DISPLAYED DURING CRITIQUE DAY TO QUALIFY FOR FULL CREDIT.**
- **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE GIVEN FOR ANY GROUP CRITIQUE.**

REQUIRED MATERIALS

There is no textbook required for this course. Reading materials will be supplied on Blackboard. However, there are drawing materials each student will have to purchase for this course. The size and quantity of these materials are required. Please use the recommended brands in the materials list. If you already have drawing materials that are like these, cannot find something, or if you have any questions at all, please let me know. Also, I recommend buying locally since shipping could take some time. Note: You will likely need to restock some materials as the semester progresses

- ***17" x 11" Mixed Media or Bristol Paper Pads. The school will provide it for you.
- 11" x 14" Tracing Paper Pad. Any brand will do.
- ***Black, white, and grey cardstock. The school will provide it for you.
- Cutting Mat, at least 12" x 18".
- ***Acrylic paint. The school will provide it for you.
- Small plastic or metal palette - for mixing paint
- ***High-quality, smooth watercolor/acrylic brush set. Choose small tip brushes, and flat or round.
- Graphite drawing pencils: 2B. Any brand will do.
- Black permanent markers (variety of tips from ultra-fine to medium). Sharpies will do; buy a few of each.
- White vinyl artist's eraser
- X-acto knife. +Additional X-acto replacement blades.
- Scissors or boxcutter.
- Water containers. Preferably empty PLASTIC containers.
- White artist's tape (1 in. wide). This is not masking tape. White artist's tape only.
- ***Rubber Cement. The school will provide it for you.
- Colored Pencils. Set of 24
 - Recommended Brands: PRISMACOLOR, Faber-Castell, Staedtler
- Pencil sharpener.
- Ruler 12" or 18"
- Artbin or toolbox. The size is up to you.
- Portfolio, bigger than 18"x24". (Preferable Hard-Case but fabric or cardboard will suffice)
- Sketch Book (OPTIONAL)

THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS ARE REQUIRED. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HAVE THEM READY. PLEASE, BE RESPONSIBLE, OR POINTS WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM YOUR PARTICIPATION GRADE. The school will provide some materials. They are highlighted in yellow and marked with an * in the materials list.

Retailers:

- Art Center (local, Expensive, Only for drawing paper and emergencies)
- Michaels (local)
- Hobby Lobby (local)
- Dick Blick (Best option for inventory and prices)
- Jerry's Artarama (Sometimes they have limited inventory on specific brands, but their prices tend to be as good as Dick Blick's.)

CALENDAR

*Syllabus and dates are subject to change. You will be informed if any changes occur.

WEEK	PROJECTS, CRITIQUES, ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1 Aug 25-Aug 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M: Syllabus, Portfolio Expectations and Rubric ● W: P# 1 Out of Space Landscape
Week 2 Sept 1-Sept 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M: NO CLASSES ● W: workday
Week 3 Sept 8- Sept 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M: P#2 NOTAN ● W: workday
Week 4 Sept 15-Sept 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M: workday ● W: workday
Week 5 Sept 22-Sept 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M: P#3 Basic Values ● W: workday
Week 6 Sept 29-Oct 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M: workday ● W: workday
Week 7 Oct 6-Oct 10	CRITIQUE WEEK
Week 8 Oct 13-Oct17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M: P#4 Color Studies ● W: workday
Week 9 Oct 20-Oct 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M: workday ● W: P#5 Close Encounters
Week 10 Oct 27-Oct 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M: NO CLASSES ● W: workday
Week 11 Nov 3-Nov 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M: workday ● W: P#6 Surrealist Dream
Week 12 Nov 10-Nov 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mon: workday ● Wed: workday
Week 13 Nov 17-Nov 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mon: P# 7 Pop Art Portraits ● Wed: workday
Week 14 Nov 24- Nov 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mon: workday ● Wed: workday
Week 15 Dec 1-Dec 5	CRITIQUE WEEK
FINALS WEEK Dec 8-Dec 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TBA-One-on-one meetings, pick-up portfolio

IMPORTANT DATES

Aug 25th- Fall classes begin

Aug 25th-29th- Late registration period (fees are incurred)

Sept 1st- Labor Day holiday - University Closed

Sept 10th- Fall Census Day

Note: This is the last day to register for classes. Payments are due by 5:00 pm.

Sept 22nd- 20th Class Day

Note: Students who were given a payment deadline extension will be dropped at 5:00 pm if payment arrangements have not been made.

Oct 3rd- Graduation application deadline for degree conferral

Oct 22nd- Freshman Midterm grades are due

Oct 31st- Fall Drop/Withdrawal deadline

Note: Student-initiated drops are permitted after this date, but the student is not guaranteed a grade of W. The faculty member of record will issue a grade of either W or F.

Nov 14th- Deadline to submit candidates' names for commencement program

Nov 27-28th- Thanksgiving Holiday - University Closed

Dec 4th- Fall last day of classes

Dec 5th- Dead Day

Dec 8-12th- Fall Final Exams

Dec 13-14th- Fall Commencement

Dec 17th- Grades are due

Dec 18th- Grades are posted to student records; students are notified of grades and academic standing