

ART 3307

Special Topics in Art Visual Storytelling

CRN: 22431 | SPRING 2023



Instructor: Alireza Vaziri Rahimi - avaziri@utep.edu
Office hours: Monday & Wednesday, 12:30 - 1:30pm
Office room: FOXA 461
Course meeting location: FOXA 4349B
Course meeting times: Monday & Wednesday, 1:30pm - 4:20pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The role of the artist/designer in shaping the visual narrative will be discussed in this course. We will investigate visual culture and how and why images are constructed to convey particular meanings. Students will examine the benefits and limitations of using images to communicate by exploring how images tell stories, communicate ideas, evoke emotions and create impact. The course addresses image use in many contexts including art and design, advertising, photography and motion pictures. The lectures, class work, and assignments will help students to expand their own techniques, and help them to develop clear and dynamic stories in their projects. This is a course for designers, artists, and anyone who wants to tell a story in a visual way!

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will develop the necessary skills to analyze case studies, communicate and discuss design principles and guidelines related to visual storytelling. Furthermore, this course will enhance their ability to discover how to create a narrative, find inspiration, and discover new materials and media. Through a series of lectures, discussions, in-class design practice, and assignments, students will explore the role of a visual designer/artist. They will learn to direct the balance of visual elements, including typography, illustration, photos, copywriting, motion and immersive technologies like AR/VR to facilitate the communication of a message through visual narrative. As part of the class, they will spend time designing, presenting, criticizing, and sharing their works. During the semester, they'll complete three projects that they can include in their portfolio.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

On the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Critically discuss common methods in the narrative design process.
2. Tell a story and learn how to communicate more effectively with visual storytelling.
3. Use design thinking and communication techniques to develop visual concepts.
4. Improve credibility and help audience memorize the message.
5. Develop critiquing and presentation skills to analyze a narrative project.
6. Use basic immersive technologies (AR/VR) tools.
7. Develop three narrative projects in design, photography, advertising.

EVALUATION

Your final grades will be posted on Blackboard and will be determined by the following:

15% Attendance & Participation
85% Weekly Assignments

You will be evaluated on:

The level at which you meet or exceed class expectations.

The level of care and research you demonstrate regarding your design process—this could include sketches, exploration of different approaches, your response to and use of constructive criticism, etc.

Your ability to communicate your ideas and projects in a clear, professional manner.

Your demonstrated understanding of user interface and user experience design principles.

How prepared you are for class (including meeting deadlines).

The quality of your participation in class discussions, presentations and critiques.

GRADING SCALE

Grade Distribution:

%100-90 = A %89.9-80 = B %79.9-70 = C %69.9-60 = D %59.9 and Below = F

- A** Outstanding work and is reflective of works and performance of exceptional ability and absolute quality.
- B** Above average performance, going beyond expectations.
- C** Average and adequate work that fulfills requirements and expectations.
- D** Less than average performance and is considered underachieved.
- F** Unsatisfactory performance. The student will receive no credit. (Fail)

Graphic Design 8: Interactive is a grade-based course and is not available for audit, pass/fail or satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) options.

COURSE TOPICS BY WEEK

**Weekly topics subject to change based on course progression.

Week 1: Visual storytelling?!

Week 2: Understanding visual narrative (principles)

Week 3: Narrative in design (building a narrative project)

Week 4: Studying the masters' works

Week 5: Typography & layout

Week 6: Critique + Project 1 Presentation

Week 7: Narrative in photography (building a narrative project)

Week 8: Motion & Color

Week 9: Transmedia storytelling

Week 10: Immersive technologies (AR/VR)

Week 11: Critique + Project 2 Presentation

Week 12: Narrative in Advertising (building a narrative project)

Week 13: Studio

Week 14: Critique + Potential Guest Speaker

Week 15: Final Presentations

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments

We have assignments every week. Please post all homework assignments to their section on Blackboard. Each student is expected to engage in class discussions when projects are assigned. This counts towards your class participation grade. The reading comments should reflect points you found particularly interesting and useful--for instance because you found them provocative, you disagree with them, you think they relate to your own project in a good way, etc.

Late Work Policy

There'll be a penalty for each day the work is late.

Incomplete Grade Policy

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed within deadlines.

Attendance

Think of this class as part of your professional path and keep in mind that you would not fail to report to work without giving appropriate notice. You are responsible for finding out what you missed in a class by referring to the syllabus. Group activities and class participation grades both rely on attendance. We will do individual and group activities in class each week. Missing a significant number of classes, or class disruptions will result in a deduction from the course grade.

Students must be on time for class, each student is permitted 4 absences during the semester without penalty. On your fifth absence, your final course grade will be lowered by **one full letter grade**, meaning if you had an A, the highest grade you can receive is a B. **Your sixth absence will result in a failing course.** There are no exceptions to this policy. The only excused absences—illness, death in the immediate family, or participation in UTEP-organized mandatory activities—must be accompanied by a note from the UTEP Student Health Center, another health care provider, or UTEP faculty/coach.

Technology requirements

Course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser. If we are obligated to lock down again due to COVID, the course content will be delivered for the most part via the Internet through email, Zoom and Blackboard.

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course. You also need to have access to Image creation software such as Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop / Illustrator) and digital layout/prototyping software such as Figma.

IMPORTANT: If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP Help Desk as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than I am to assist you!
Email: helpdesk@utep.edu

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

You are encouraged to wear a face covering at all times while on campus, especially indoors and during class. Masks should fit securely over the mouth and nose. You are also encouraged to wash your hands frequently, or use a hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer stations are available throughout Fox Fine Arts, and sanitizer is always available in the Graphic Design Lab lobby. When using the computer lab, wipe down the keyboard before and after use. Cleaning materials will be available in the lab. Do not come to class if you are sick. Seek medical attention and stay home. This policy applies to any contagious illness including COVID and seasonal flu. Be aware that Information missed during an absence is the sole responsibility of the student. It is the student's responsibility to stay current with missed work and assignments, and to stay in contact with the instructor regarding health status, recovery, and anticipated return to class. Use your UTEP email account to stay in contact. THE UTEP PROVOST OFFICE HAS ALSO PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING COVID-19 PRECAUTION STATEMENT: Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR - SPRING 2023

Oct 24th Spring Registration Begins

Jan 5th Last Day to Clear Students on Suspension/Probation as well as those with Insufficient Prerequisites

Jan 6th Drops for Students with Unsatisfactory Academic Standing, Insufficient Prerequisites, and Prior Grades of C in the Course

Jan 9th Financial Aid is Disbursed

Jan 17th Spring classes begin

Jan 17th-20th Late Registration (Fees are incurred)

Feb 1st Spring Census Day - Note: This is the last day to register for classes.

Feb 17th Graduation application deadline for degree conferral

Mar 13th-17th Spring Break

Mar 30th Spring Drop/Withdrawal Deadline

Apr 14th Deadline to submit candidates' names for commencement program

May 4th Spring – Last day of classes

May 5th Dead day

May 8-12th Spring Final Exams

May 13-14th Fall Commencement

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

ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order 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 accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an 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, or email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>

ACADEMIC CONDUCT

While there is a very small place in the industry for the use of stock photography, imagery and code, as a designer you are hired on your ability to create visual content, not use content created by others. There aren't any legitimate design jobs for designers who use the work of others either claiming it as their own or using it because you don't want to create your own. If all designers had to do was buy or steal the work from others, why would anybody need a designer? In this class, this means that all imagery used during the semester must be your own or supplied by me. If I suspect that you have copied the work of others, I will ask to see your original sketches and digital files. If you find work that is listed as creative commons, technically you are free to use it if you cite the original author, but again, you are designers and you are the content generators. There are tons of repositories and tutorials out there available to you. However, you should never simply cut and paste the code, image, slogan, illustration and etc and say it's your design. Plagiarism and cheating of any kind in the course of academic work will not be tolerated. Academic honesty includes accurate use of quotations, as well as appropriate and explicit citation of sources (including all images). These standards of academic honesty and citation of sources apply to all forms of academic work (written, visual, and presentation). Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, academic warning, disciplinary probation, suspension, or dismissal from the university.

Students must receive prior permission from instructors to submit the same or substantially overlapping material for two different assignments (including from different courses). Submission of the same work for two assignments without the prior permission of instructors is plagiarism.

View the full code of academic conduct at <http://www.utep.edu/dos/acadintg.htm>

INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTION

Alireza Vaziri is a designer, creative director, and educator. He is a member of the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) and has been an assistant professor at the University of Texas at El Paso since 2021. He earned his MFA in Design from the University of California, Davis and his BFA in Design from the Tehran University of Art. He has received some prestigious design awards and his work has been featured in numerous exhibitions, books and museums around the world such as the Center for Contemporary Art, London International Creative Competition, Goethe-Institute, Graphis Magazine and etc.

www.vaziri.studio

Storytelling occurs in great art, music, film and photography. It's fundamental to successful design. Visual Storytelling passes on the essence of who we are and utilizes both language and art. They can be used to explain, to sell, to inform, to communicate, and to inspire. Stories are also what make us human. No other animals on earth (as far as we're aware) are capable of telling them. How? They allow us to imagine and bring meaning to the new concepts and ideas that revolutionise the way we live. Take money as one example. Rationally, we all know that the paper note sitting in our wallet is not worth the same amount as the number printed on it. It's just a piece of paper. But we assign it greater worth because we tell ourselves a story about it being an accepted way of storing and exchanging value with other humans. If you think of anything in life that you value, you'll notice that value is almost always connected to a story.