Tompkins Cortland Community College

Master Course Syllabus

Course Discipline and Number: ART 117 **Year: 2025-2026**

Course Title: Design Foundations I **Credit Hours: 3**

I. Course Description:

This course introduces the principles and elements of two-dimensional design and the foundations of visual communication through digital design and media. Conceptual and aesthetic problem-solving are explored through creative and practical applications of digital media. Vector software is the main application utilized in the creation of projects but raster graphics are also introduced. Typography and typographic layouts are explored in the course. ART 117 fulfills the SUNY General Education The Arts Knowledge and Skills Area, but does not satisfy a liberal arts requirement. Prerequisites: Prior completion of, or concurrent enrollment in, ENGL 100 or ESL120, ESL 121, and ESL 122. 3 Cr. (2 Lec. 2 Lab.) Fall and spring semesters.

II. Additional Course Information:

1. Design Foundations I is a required course for the New Media A.S, Photography A.S., and Graphic Design A.S. degree programs and is intended for those majoring in art programs.
2. This course consists of at least 100 minutes of lecture and 100 minutes of lab work each week for the fifteen-week semester.
3. This course has a course materials fee of $70 which is included in the student's tuition bill. (This fee does not cover the course textbook.)
4. Students are required to work on projects outside of class using the specified professional vector and raster graphics software required in the course.
5. Students are required to utilize professional online tutorials to improve their understanding of the software applications outside of class.
6. The software will be taught through task-based lectures focusing on learning outcomes. Step-by-step teaching methods should be utilized for exercises only. Projects and lectures should focus on teaching the main concepts required to use the programs and terminology effectively and instill in the student the ability to work independently and understand how to apply concepts.
7. Projects should be connected to contemporary professional examples of typographic design within the field of graphic design.

III. Student Learning Outcomes

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

1. Execute digital media projects that utilize the fundamentals of design and psychological theories used in visual communication
2. Develop the skills necessary to utilize typography in digital designs.
3. Critique and assess digital media works effectively using design fundamentals and digital media terminology.
4. Show proficiency in digital file management and preparing files for output to print, digital, and web-based media.

5. Implement and document the design thinking process to develop creative responses and solutions.

IV. Tompkins Cortland Institutional Learning Outcomes; Program Learning Outcomes; SUNY General Education Competencies and Knowledge and Skills Areas

Tompkins Cortland ILOs – N/A

Complete this section for "service" courses only (e.g., courses that are required of all students; courses that are not program specific but satisfy liberal arts requirements; or commonly used in multiple academic programs to meet non-program-specific requirements). Check only Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) that are meaningfully developed and assessed in this course. For each ILO chosen, include the SLO to which it aligns.

Students will:

☐ Communicate effectively, in oral and written forms, taking into consideration audience and purpose.

☐Apply principles and methods of scientific inquiry and quantitative reasoning appropriate to their discipline.

☐Use information, critical thinking, and the creative process to solve problems and reach conclusions.

☐Use technology appropriate to their discipline.

☐Describe the ways in which social, economic, or environmental sustainability depends on their own and the collective contributions of a diversity of ideas and people.

Program Learning Outcomes

Complete this section for program-specific courses (e.g., those that share the same discipline code as the academic program or satisfy requirements in related programs). List the academic program(s) here and note which Student Learning Outcomes align to specific Programmatic Learning Outcomes. Please see the MCS Instructions for more details.

Specify the Academic Program: **Graphic Design A.S.**

PLO 4: Identify and apply the principles and elements of visual communication.

SLO 1: Execute digital media projects that utilize the fundamentals of design and psychological theories used in visual communication.

SUNY General Education Competencies

If this course assesses a SUNY GEN ED Competency, check all that apply and indicate which course outcome(s) address each checked item:

☒ CRITICAL THINKING & REASONING- Students will:

a. clearly articulate an issue or problem;
b. identify, analyze, and evaluate ideas, data, and arguments as they occur in their own or others' work; acknowledge limitations such as perspective and bias; and
c. develop well-reasoned (logical) arguments to form judgments and/or draw conclusions.

Course SLO 5. Implement and document the design thinking process to develop creative responses and solutions.

☒ INFORMATION LITERACY - Students will:

a. locate information effectively using tools appropriate to their need and discipline; evaluate information with an awareness of authority, validity, and bias; and demonstrate an understanding of the ethical dimensions of information use, creation, and dissemination.

Course SLO 3. Critique and assess digital media works effectively using design fundamentals and digital media terminology.

☒ SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AREA(s): The Arts
For courses that are approved to meet one (or more) of the ten SUNY General Education Knowledge and Skills Areas, indicate which area the course fulfills, and which outcome(s) are aligned with the SUNY outcomes for that area:

SUNY SLO: Students will demonstrate an understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein.

Course SLO 1: Execute digital media projects that utilize the fundamentals of design and psychological theories used in visual communication

☐This course does not address any of the above Tompkins Cortland ILOs, PLOs, or SUNY General Education Competencies or Knowledge and Skills Areas.

V. Essential Topics/Themes

1. The principles and elements of design and CRAP principles
2. Use of professional vector graphics software focusing on building imagery utilizing shapes, manipulating points and paths, and both freehand and precise plotted points vector drawing
3. Use of professional raster graphics software utilizing non-destructive editing
4. Typography and typographic layouts
5. Digital file management
6. Concept Development and the Design Thinking Process
7. Visual Hierarchy and Unity
8. Analyzing visual work
9. Color theory and systems
10. Understanding the variety of ways digital media and design are used in an array of digital and web-based applications
11. Understanding how traditional studio media and practice translate to digital design and media

VI. Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
1. Course Assignments	40-60% ~~50-60%~~
2. Reflections & documentation of using the design thinking process	20-40%
3. Quizzes and Exams	10-20%

VII. Texts – ☒ Required ☐ Recommended ☐ Used for more than one course (list courses)

	OER
Relevant textbook/s of choice about the principles and elements of design (The book/s must be relevant to digital design and should examine design on-screen and in print. It should also address color and basic typography).	☐

Editions listed are current as of date of syllabus. More recent editions may be used.

VIII. Bibliography of Supplemental Materials

1. Williams, Robin. *The Non-designer's Design Book: Design and Typographic Principles for the Visual Novice*. Peachpit Press, 2015.
2. Navetta, Christopher J., et al. *Design Fundamentals: Notes on Visual Elements and Principles of Composition*. Peachpit Press, 2015.
3. Krause, Jim. *Color For Designers*. Simon & Schuster, 2014.
4. Krause, Jim. *Visual Design*. Simon & Schuster, 2014.
5. Krause, Jim. *Lessons in Typography: Must-Know Typographic Principles Presented Through Lessons, Exercises, and Examples*. Peachpit, 2015.

Editions listed are current as of date of syllabus. More recent editions may be used.

IX. Other Learning Resources

Audiovisual: Online professional training tutorials
Electronic: Online professional training tutorials
Other: None specified

Attendance Policy: *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

Services for Students with Disabilities: *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for academic adjustments. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.*

Academic Integrity: *Every student at Tompkins Cortland Community College is expected to act in an academically honest fashion in all aspects of their academic work: in writing papers and reports, in taking examinations, in performing laboratory experiments and reporting the results, in clinical and cooperative learning experiences, and in attending to paperwork such as registration forms.*
Any written work submitted by a student must be their own. If the student uses the words or ideas of someone else, they must cite the source by such means as a footnote. Our guiding principle is that any honest evaluation of a student's performance must be based on that student's work. Any action taken by a student that would result in misrepresentation of someone else's work or actions as the student's own — such as cheating on a test, submitting for

credit a paper written by another person, or forging an advisor's signature — is intellectually dishonest and deserving of censure.

Several degree programs offer student learning opportunities (such as internships, field work, and clinical experiences) outside the standard classroom setting. As part of the learning process, students must understand and engage in conduct that adheres to principles guiding employment within the professional workplace. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, academic integrity, accountability, reliability, respect, use of appropriate language and dress, civility, professional ethics, honesty, and trustworthiness. Disciplinary action may be initiated for inappropriate conduct occurring while participating in any course-related project or event.