

## INF 385T, Visual Design

28135

Fall 2024

Monday 6pm- 9pm, UTA 1.210A

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**Instructor:** Kristen Graham, M.F.A

**Pronouns:** she/her/hers

**Email:** kristen.graham@austin.utexas.edu

**Office hours:** by appointment

### Course Description

This mixed-format course consisting of lecture, discussion, and studio will allow students of all experience levels to develop fundamental visual and graphic design theory and skills to prepare for careers in Informatics and related fields. In this course, students will learn about graphic design's role using industry-standard tools, Figma and Adobe Illustrator. This course is meant to engage and push students to think creatively to design and create portfolio-worthy polished designs. Students will learn to craft visually engaging designs and user-friendly digital experiences. By learning and understanding graphic design principles, including typography, color theory, and layout design, students will develop proficiency in designing and prototyping for a variety of experiences. These skills will be displayed through design exercises and projects.

### Prerequisites for the Course

Graduate standing

### Learning Outcomes

1. Generate divergent ideas for ambiguous and complex problems
2. Design and present work at the appropriate level of detail for the audience
3. Critique design works of self and others with tact to improve output
4. Demonstrate foundational graphic design skills by creating works with high attention to detail

5. Develop cohesive visual systems across multiple mediums
6. Support design rationale using appropriate design vocabulary

## Statement of Learning Success

Your success in this class is important to me. We all learn differently, and everyone struggles sometimes. You are not, ever, the only one having difficulty! If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we will develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. I also encourage you to reach out to the student resources available through UT. I am happy to connect you with a person or center if you would like.

## Teaching Modality Information

Students can expect a mixed-format, in-person course consisting of lecture, discussion, critique days, and studio time to explore and practice course concepts and software. Students should expect in-person instruction unless otherwise directed by the university. Students can expect the following general course format for each course:

- First 10-15 min: Warm-up sketch time
- First half of class: lecture
- Last half of class: critique, studio time

## Office Hours

I'm always happy to chat during office hours by appointment. Great communication leads to successful designs and a rich learning environment. Reach out through email or Canvas with your availability and I will follow up with times to meet.

## Communication

The course Canvas site can be found at [utexas.instructure.com](https://utexas.instructure.com). Please email me through Canvas or [kristen.graham@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:kristen.graham@austin.utexas.edu). You are responsible for ensuring that the primary email address you have recorded with the university is the one you will check for course communications because that is the email address that Canvas uses.

## Course Texts

Articles and papers to be provided through Canvas

## Class Resources

I have put together a page full of resources ranging from color palette generators to portfolio tips. You can find the document title “Class Resources” on our Canvas page in the Files section.

## Required Materials

- Laptop
- Sketchbook/pencil
- Figma
- Adobe Illustrator (available on lab computers with login)
- Access to Canvas
- Optional:: bluetooth mouse (for those using laptops)

## Classroom Expectations

**Class Attendance/Participation:** Attendance and participation is critical to successful learning and classroom environments. Attending every class and completing reading and assignments is needed to participate in discussions and create successful design choices. Student attendance, willingness to collaborate and participate in discussion, and overall effort may be considered (positively or negatively) if a student earns a borderline grade. Students should expect to attend class every scheduled day, unless instructed otherwise.

**Behavior Expectations:** Students are expected to, at minimum, follow the guidelines and rules for appropriate behavior outlined in the university code of conduct. Furthermore, all students are expected to treat each other with compassion and understanding. I aim to create a respectful learning environment for every student. I expect all students to actively listen, not be disruptive while another person is sharing or presenting, and by keeping devices closed and/or put away during presentations.

**Professional Standards:** For many students, critiques and sharing designs can be difficult and feel personal. It is my goal to help students understand the value of having work critiqued, but also giving

a good critique. Unprofessional and/or rude behavior during critiques is not helpful and negatively impacts the class environment. Any unprofessional behavior by a student can negatively impact their grade.

## Grade Breakdown

The following table represents how you will demonstrate your learning and how we will assess the degree to which you have done so.

### **Rubrics will be used for the Midterm and Final and shared through Canvas**

Assignments	Points Possible	Percent of Total Grade
1. Participation/Attendance	15	5%
2. Weekly Homework	10	15%
3. Mid-Term Project	16 (rubric score)	30%
4. Mid-Term Critique	16 (rubric score)	10%
5. Final Project	16 (rubric score)	30%
6. Final Critique	16 (rubric score)	10%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

## Late and Missing Work

Assigned homework and projects are due before class at 6pm on their assigned due date, on Canvas. Any late assignments are accepted, but 10% will be deducted from the grade each day the late assignment is not turned in, including weekends. I understand sometimes life happens. Students should notify me of any planned absences, and prepare to turn in assignments early. In the case of needing an extension for emergency purposes, the request for an extension must be sent via email or Canvas message **BEFORE** the class which an assignment is due.

## Attendance

Students are allowed 2 excused absences each. Assignments are still expected to be turned in on time, unless a student has communicated with me in advance.

## Equitable Accommodation

Each student will have their lowest homework grade dropped.

## Grade Breakdown and +/- Policy

+/- grades will be used for the final class grade.

Grade	Cutoff
A	94%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	84%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	74%
C-	70%
D+	67%
D	64%
D-	60%
F	<60%

## Course Outline

All instructions, assignments, readings, rubrics and essential information will be on the Canvas website at [utexas.instructure.com](https://utexas.instructure.com). Check Canvas regularly. Changes to the schedule may be made at my discretion if circumstances require. I will announce any such changes in class and will also communicate them via a Canvas announcement. It is your responsibility to note these changes when announced, and I will do my best to ensure that you are notified of changes with as much advance notice as possible.

Week	Date	Class Topic	Out of Class Activities	Assignments Due
1	08/26	Introductions & Overview	Review Syllabus	
2	09/02	Labor Day (No Class)	<b>Watch for class:</b> - Figma grid tutorial - Figma 101 videos	
3	09/09	Music Poster class share		-Google poll ( <b>due by 6pm Sept 9th</b> ) -Music Poster ( <b>due in Figma by 6pm Sept 9th</b> )
4	09/16	Grids & the Gestalt Design Principles	<b>Read for class:</b> - The Unwritten Rules of a Great Design Critique - Grid (p.186-199) from Graphic Design: The New Basics - Gestalt Principles (p.98-115) from Graphic Design: The New Basics <b>Watch for class:</b>	-Re-work Music Posters from previous class ( <b>due in Figma by 6pm Sept 16th</b> )

Week	Date	Class Topic	Out of Class Activities	Assignments Due
			-How to Use the Golden Ratio in Graphic Design -5 Reasons Why Grids Are So Useful	
5	09/23	Typography & Text Layout	<b>Read for class:</b> -Thinking with Type by Ellen Lupton excerpts <b>Watch for class:</b> - Illustrator 101 videos -Illustrator typography video	-Gestalt Principles Poster ( <b>due in Figma by 6pm Sept 23rd</b> )
6	09/30	Color Theory & Accessibility	<b>Read for class:</b> -Color (p.80-97) from Graphic Design: The New Basics	-Typography Assignment ( <b>due in Figma by 6pm Sept 30th</b> )
7	10/07	Midterm Studio Day	<b>Watch for Class:</b> - Figma design system and libraries tutorial - Illustrator pen and pencil tutorial - Illustrator shape builder tutorial	-Group Moodboards ( <b>due by Oct 07th</b> )
8	10/14	Midterm Presentations		
9	10/21	Iconography	<b>Watch for class:</b> - Illustrator masking tutorial and how to save an icon	
10	10/28	Brand Identity & Logos	<b>Watch for class:</b> - Figma micro-animations tutorial - Figma components tutorial	- Iconography collection ( <b>due in Figma by Oct 28th by 6pm</b> )

Week	Date	Class Topic	Out of Class Activities	Assignments Due
11	11/04	Designing for Emotion	<p><b>Read for class:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pattern (p.200-213) from Graphic Design: The New Basics</li> <li>- Texture (p.68-79) from Graphic Design: The New Basics</li> </ul> <p><b>Watch for class:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Illustrator video on patterns</li> <li>- Illustrator video on texture</li> </ul>	-Sustainability design <b>(due in Figma by Nov 4th by 6pm)</b>
12	11/11	Final Presentation Studio Day		- Sustainability pattern scenario ( <b>due in Figma by Nov 11th by 6pm</b> ) - Final Project Moodboards ( <b>due at the end of class</b> )
13	11/18	Final Presentation Studio Day		
14	11/25	Fall Break/Thanksgiving Holiday (No Class)		
15	12/02	Final Presentation Studio Day		
16	12/09	Final Presentations		

## Disability & Access

The university is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment consistent with university policy and federal and state law. Please let me know if you experience any barriers to learning so I can work with you to ensure you have equal opportunity to participate fully in this course. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Disability & Access (D&A). Please refer to the D&A website for more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with D&A, please deliver your



Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and needs in this course.

## Honor Code

The University of Texas at Austin strives to create a dynamic and engaging community of teaching and learning where students feel intellectually challenged; build knowledge and skills; and develop critical thinking, creativity, and intellectual curiosity. As a part of this community, it is important to engage in assignments, exams, and other work for your classes with openness, integrity, and a willingness to make mistakes and learn from them. The UT Austin honor code champions these principles:

I pledge, as a member of the University of Texas community, to do my work honestly, respectfully, and through the intentional pursuit of learning and scholarship.

The honor code affirmation includes three additional principles that elaborate on the core theme:

- I pledge to be honest about what I create and to acknowledge what I use that belongs to others.
- I pledge to value the process of learning in addition to the outcome, while celebrating and learning from mistakes.
- This code encompasses all of the academic and scholarly endeavors of the university community.

The honor code is more than a set of rules, it reflects the values that are foundational to your academic community. By affirming and embracing the honor code, you are both upholding the integrity of your work and contributing to a campus culture of trust and respect.

## Academic Integrity Expectations

Students who violate University rules on academic misconduct are subject to the student conduct process. A student found responsible for academic misconduct may be assigned both a status sanction and a grade impact for the course. The grade impact could range from a zero on the assignment in question up to a failing grade in the course. A status sanction can range from a written warning, probation, deferred suspension and/or dismissal from the University. To learn more about academic integrity standards, tips for avoiding a potential academic misconduct violation, and the

overall conduct process, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at:  
<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

## Confidentiality of Class Recordings

Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

## Getting Help with Technology

Students needing help with technology in this course should contact the [ITS Service Desk](#).

## Content Warning

Our classroom provides an open space for the critical and orderly exchange of ideas through discussion. Some readings and other content in this course will include topics and comments that some students may find offensive and/or traumatizing. I'll aim to forewarn students about potentially disturbing content and I ask all students to help to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity.

## Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited

No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class without explicit, my written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials may facilitate cheating. The University is aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to [Student Conduct and Academic Integrity](#) in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in initiation of the student conduct process and include charge(s) for academic misconduct, potentially resulting in sanctions, including a grade impact.

## Artificial Intelligence

The creation of artificial intelligence tools for widespread use is an exciting innovation. These tools have both appropriate and inappropriate uses in classwork. The use of artificial intelligence tools in this class shall be permitted on a limited basis. AI has a place in design to be used as a tool, but I also expect students to learn foundational skills in design without the use of AI. Even though AI as a tool can help generate ideas, it still needs to be used with caution and judgment for each project. Failing to properly cite AI even where permitted, shall constitute a violation of UT Austin's Institutional Rules on academic integrity.

## Religious Holy Days

By [UT Austin policy](#), you must notify me of your pending absence for a religious holy day as far in advance as possible of the date of observance. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

## Names and Pronouns

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name, unless they have added a chosen name with the registrar's office. If you have not yet done so, I will gladly honor your request to address you with the name and pronouns that you prefer for me to use for you. It is helpful to advise me of any changes or needs regarding your name and pronouns early in the semester so that I may make appropriate updates to my records and be informed about how to support you in this class.

- For instructions on how to add your pronouns to Canvas, visit [this site](#).
- If you would like to update your chosen name with the registrar's office, you can do so [here](#), and reference [this guide](#).
- For additional guidelines prepared by the Gender and Sexuality Center for changing your name on various campus systems, see the Resources page under UT Resources [here](#).

## Land Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on the Indigenous lands of Turtle Island, the ancestral name for what now is called North America. Moreover, I would like to acknowledge the Alabama-Coushatta, Caddo, Carrizo/Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Comanche, Kickapoo, Lipan Apache, Tonkawa and Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas.

## Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC)

Students who are struggling for any reason and who believe that it might impact their performance in the course are urged to reach out to Bryce Moffett if they feel comfortable. This will allow her to provide any resources or accommodations that she can. If immediate mental health assistance is needed, call the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) at 512-471-3515 or you may also contact Bryce Moffett, LCSW (iSchool CARE counselor) at 512-232-4449. Bryce's office is located in

FAC18S and she holds drop in Office Hours on Wednesday from 2-3pm. For urgent mental health concerns, please contact the CMHC 24/7 Crisis Line at 512-471-2255.

## \*Important Safety Information\*

### Carrying of Handguns on Campus

Students in this class should be aware of the following university policies related to Texas' Open Carry Law:

- Students in this class who hold a license to carry are asked to [review the university policy regarding campus carry](#).
- Individuals who hold a license to carry are eligible to carry a concealed handgun on campus, including in most outdoor areas, buildings and spaces that are accessible to the public, and in classrooms.
- It is the responsibility of concealed-carry license holders to carry their handguns on or about their person at all times while on campus. Open carry is NOT permitted, meaning that a license holder may not carry a partially or wholly visible handgun on campus premises or on any university driveway, street, sidewalk or walkway, parking lot, parking garage, or other parking area.
- Per my right, I prohibit carrying of handguns in my personal office. Note that this information will also be conveyed to all students verbally during the first week of class. This written notice is intended to reinforce the verbal notification, and is not a “legally effective” means of notification in its own right.

### Title IX Disclosure

Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Education Code, Section 51.252 (formerly known as Senate Bill 212) requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, to report to the [Title IX Office](#) any information regarding incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive information about incidents of this type (including, but not limited to, written forms, applications, one-on-one conversations, class assignments, class discussions, or third-party reports) must report it to the Title

IX Coordinator. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX-related incident, please remember that I will be required to report this information.

Although graduate teaching and research assistants are not subject to Texas Education Code, Section 51.252, they are [mandatory reporters](#) under federal Title IX regulations and are required to report [a wide range of behaviors we refer to as sexual misconduct](#), including the types of misconduct covered under Texas Education Code, Section 51.252. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex – including pregnancy and parental status – in educational programs and activities. The Title IX Office has developed supportive ways and compiled campus resources to support all impacted by a Title IX matter.

If you would like to speak with a case manager, who can provide support, resources, or academic accommodations, in the Title IX Office, please email: [supportandresources@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:supportandresources@austin.utexas.edu). Case managers can also provide support, resources, and accommodations for pregnant, nursing, and parenting students.

For more information about reporting options and resources, please visit: <https://titleix.utexas.edu>, contact the Title IX Office via email at: [titleix@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:titleix@austin.utexas.edu), or call 512-471-0419.

## Campus Safety

The following are recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the [Office of Emergency Management](#), 512-232-2114:

- Students should sign up for Campus Emergency Text Alerts at the page linked above.
- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus must evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

- For more information, please visit the [Office of Emergency Management](#).

## University Resources

For a list of university resources that may be helpful to you as you engage with and navigate your courses and the university, see the [University Resources Students Canvas page](#).