GRAPHIC DESIGN FUNDAMENTALS COURSE

Professional Visual Design Training

From Beginner to Professional Designer

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CHAPTER 1: DESIGN PRINCIPLES & THEORY

Fundamental Design Principles:

- Balance: Visual weight distribution

- Symmetrical balance (formal)

- Asymmetrical balance (informal)

- Radial balance (circular)

- Contrast: Creating visual interest

- Color contrast (light vs dark)

- Size contrast (large vs small)

- Texture contrast (smooth vs rough)

- Emphasis: Drawing attention

- Focal points and hierarchy

- Visual weight techniques

- Isolation and placement

- Movement: Guiding the eye

- Directional lines and shapes

- Repetition and rhythm

- Progression and sequence

- Pattern & Repetition: Creating unity

- Consistent elements

- Visual rhythm

- Brand consistency

- Unity & Harmony: Cohesive design

- Related elements

- Consistent style

- Visual flow

Design Elements:

- Line: Direction, movement, emotion
- Shape: Geometric vs organic forms
- Form: 3D appearance and depth
- Space: Positive and negative areas
- Texture: Surface quality and feel
- Value: Light and dark relationships

CHAPTER 2: COLOR THEORY & PSYCHOLOGY

Color Fundamentals:

Primary Colors: Red, Blue, Yellow

Secondary Colors: Orange, Green, Purple

Tertiary Colors: Red-orange, Blue-green, etc.

Color Properties:

- Hue: The color itself
- Saturation: Intensity/purity
- Value: Lightness/darkness
- Temperature: Warm vs cool

Color Harmony Schemes:

- Monochromatic: One color + tints/shades
- Analogous: Adjacent colors on wheel
- Complementary: Opposite colors
- Triadic: Three equally spaced colors
- Split-complementary: One + two adjacent to complement
- Tetradic: Four colors in two complementary pairs

Color Psychology:

Red: Energy, passion, urgency, danger

Blue: Trust, calm, professional, sadness

Green: Nature, growth, money, freshness

Yellow: Happiness, optimism, caution

Purple: Luxury, creativity, mystery

Orange: Enthusiasm, warmth, adventure

Black: Sophistication, elegance, power

White: Purity, simplicity, cleanliness

Cultural Color Meanings:

Western: White = purity, Black = mourning

Eastern: White = mourning, Red = luck

Middle Eastern: Green = sacred, prosperity

CHAPTER 3: TYPOGRAPHY & FONT SELECTION

Typography Basics:

- Typeface vs Font distinction
- Font anatomy (ascender, descender, x-height)
- Serif vs Sans-serif characteristics
- Script and decorative fonts
- Font weight and style variations

Typography Classifications:

- Serif Fonts:

- Old Style (Garamond, Times)

- Transitional (Baskerville, Georgia)

- Modern (Bodoni, Didot)

- Slab Serif (Rockwell, Courier)

- Sans-serif Fonts:

- Grotesque (Franklin Gothic)

- Neo-grotesque (Helvetica, Arial)

- Humanist (Gill Sans, Optima)

- Geometric (Futura, Avenir)

- Script Fonts:

- Formal scripts (Edwardian)

- Casual scripts (Brush Script)

- Calligraphic (Zapfino)

Typography Principles:

- Hierarchy: Size, weight, color differences
- Alignment: Left, right, center, justified
- Leading: Line spacing for readability
- Kerning: Letter spacing adjustments
- Tracking: Overall character spacing
- Contrast: Different fonts for emphasis

Font Pairing Rules:

- Combine serif with sans-serif
- Use different weights from same family
- Ensure sufficient contrast
- Limit to 2-3 fonts maximum
- Consider mood and purpose
- Test readability at various sizes

CHAPTER 4: LAYOUT & COMPOSITION

Layout Principles:

Grid Systems:

- Column grids for text-heavy designs
- Modular grids for complex layouts
- Hierarchical grids for varied content
- Baseline grids for text alignment

Golden Ratio & Rule of Thirds:

- 1:1.618 proportion for pleasing layouts
- Dividing space into thirds
- Placing focal points at intersections
- Creating balanced compositions

Visual Hierarchy:

- Size: Larger elements draw attention
- Color: Bright/contrasting colors stand out
- Position: Top-left gets noticed first
- Typography: Bold, italic, different fonts
- White space: Isolation creates emphasis

- Alignment: Breaking alignment draws attention

Composition Techniques:

- Symmetrical vs asymmetrical balance
- Creating visual flow and movement
- Grouping related elements (proximity)
- Using white space effectively
- Establishing clear focal points
- Creating depth with overlapping elements

Layout Types:

- Single column: Simple, clean
- Multi-column: Newspapers, magazines
- Grid-based: Flexible, organized
- Modular: Component-based design
- Free-form: Artistic, creative
- Asymmetrical: Dynamic, modern

CHAPTER 5: ADOBE CREATIVE SUITE MASTERY

Adobe Photoshop Essentials:

Interface and Tools:

- Workspace customization
- Tool panels and options
- Layers and layer styles
- Selection tools mastery
- Brush and painting tools
- Text and typography tools

Photo Editing Techniques:

- Color correction and adjustment
- Exposure and lighting fixes
- Retouching and healing tools
- Masking and compositing
- Filter effects and manipulation
- Export optimization for web/print

Adobe Illustrator Fundamentals:

Vector Graphics Basics:

- Pen tool mastery for paths
- Shape tools and pathfinder
- Typography and text on path
- Color and gradient application
- Pattern and texture creation
- Symbol libraries and reuse

Logo and Icon Design:

- Conceptual development process
- Sketching and refinement
- Vector execution techniques
- Scalability considerations
- Brand guideline creation
- File format preparation

Adobe InDesign Layout:

Document Setup:

- Page layout and margins
- Master pages and templates
- Paragraph and character styles
- Grid and guide systems
- Multi-page document flow

- Print and digital publishing

Professional Publications:

- Magazine and book layout
- Brochure and flyer design
- Annual report creation
- Interactive PDF features
- Export for various outputs
- Preflight and package files

CHAPTER 6: BRANDING & IDENTITY DESIGN

Brand Strategy Foundation:

Brand Discovery Process:

- Target audience research
- Competitor analysis
- Brand personality definition
- Unique value proposition
- Mission and vision alignment
- Brand positioning strategy

Brand Identity Elements:

Logo Design Process:

- Research and inspiration gathering
- Concept sketching and brainstorming
- Digital refinement and testing
- Color and typography selection
- Scalability and versatility testing
- Final file preparation and guidelines

Supporting Brand Elements:

- Color palette development
- Typography system creation
- Icon and graphic style
- Photography guidelines
- Voice and tone definition
- Application examples

Brand Guidelines Creation:

Brand Bible Contents:

- Logo usage and restrictions
- Color specifications (RGB, CMYK, Pantone)
- Typography hierarchy and usage
- Image style and treatment
- Layout principles and grids
- Do's and don'ts examples

Application Examples:

- Business card design
- Letterhead and stationery
- Website header and navigation
- Social media profile templates
- Vehicle and signage mockups
- Merchandise and promotional items

CHAPTER 7: DIGITAL & PRINT DESIGN

Print Design Fundamentals:

Technical Specifications:

- Resolution: 300 DPI for print

- Color mode: CMYK for printing
- Bleed and trim specifications
- Paper stock considerations
- Binding and finishing options
- Proofing and color management

Print Project Types:

- Business cards and stationery
- Brochures and marketing materials
- Posters and large format prints
- Book and magazine layouts
- Packaging design principles
- Trade show and exhibition graphics

Digital Design Essentials:

Web and Screen Design:

- Resolution: 72-150 DPI for screens
- Color mode: RGB for digital
- Responsive design considerations
- User interface (UI) principles
- User experience (UX) basics
- Accessibility guidelines

Digital Project Types:

- Website headers and banners
- Social media graphics and templates
- Email newsletter design
- Mobile app interface mockups
- Digital advertising materials
- Presentation slide templates

Cross-Platform Considerations:

- File format optimization

- Color consistency across media
- Typography rendering differences
- Image compression techniques
- Version control and asset management
- Client presentation and approval process

CHAPTER 8: PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT

Portfolio Strategy:

Portfolio Planning:

- Target audience identification
- Project selection criteria
- Skill demonstration balance
- Quality over quantity principle
- Cohesive presentation style
- Personal brand integration

Project Documentation:

- Design process presentation
- Before and after comparisons
- Client testimonials inclusion
- Problem-solving explanation
- Technical specifications listing
- Results and impact measurement

Portfolio Formats:

Digital Portfolio Options:

- Personal website creation
- PDF presentation portfolio
- Online portfolio platforms

- Social media showcase
- Behance and Dribbble profiles
- Interactive presentation tools

Physical Portfolio:

- Print quality considerations
- Binding and presentation options
- Size and format decisions
- Material and texture choices
- Organization and flow
- Leave-behind materials

Portfolio Presentation:

- Client meeting preparation
- Storytelling and case studies
- Technical skill demonstration
- Creative process explanation
- Problem-solving examples
- Professional communication

Career Development:

- Freelance vs agency considerations
- Networking and industry connections
- Continuous learning and skill updates
- Industry trend awareness
- Professional development opportunities
- Building client relationships

COURSE COMPLETION & NEXT STEPS

Skills Mastered:

- ✓ Design principles and theory application

- ✓ Color theory and psychology understanding

- ✓ Typography selection and pairing

- ✓ Layout and composition techniques

- ✓ Adobe Creative Suite proficiency

- ✓ Brand identity development process

- ✓ Print and digital design execution

- ✓ Professional portfolio creation

Career Pathways:

- Graphic Designer (agency/in-house)
- Brand Identity Designer
- Web/UI Designer
- Packaging Designer
- Publication Designer
- Freelance Design Consultant
- Art Director
- Creative Director

Advanced Learning:

- Motion graphics and animation
- Web development and coding
- Photography and image creation
- 3D design and modeling
- Marketing and advertising strategy
- Client management and business skills

Industry Resources:

- Design inspiration: Behance, Dribbble, Pinterest
- Typography: Google Fonts, Adobe Fonts, MyFonts
- Stock imagery: Unsplash, Adobe Stock, Shutterstock
- Design tools: Figma, Sketch, Canva Pro
- Learning: Skillshare, Lynda, YouTube tutorials
- Communities: AIGA, local design groups

Professional Certificate

This certifies successful completion of the

Graphic Design Fundamentals Course

Training Duration: 40+ Hours of Comprehensive Content

Skill Level: Beginner to Professional

Industry-Standard Tools and Techniques

Portfolio-Ready Projects Included

Equivalent to: Professional Design Foundation

Career-Ready Skills Certification