USCAnnenberg

PR 488: Visual Communication of Information
2 Units

Fall 2018 – Tuesdays – 12-1:40 p.m.
Section: 21333R
Location: ANN 307

Instructor: Jenn de la Fuente
Office: ASC G36 (East Wing, basement level)
Office Hours: By appointment only.
Contact Info: jdelafue@usc.edu, cell (916) 538-2133
(Please do not call or text my cell phone on weekends or late
at night.)

I. Course Description

It's increasingly important that public relations professionals not only be good at writing for an array of audiences, but also have an understanding of basic design principles and a fluency in digital design tools, such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, and Adobe InDesign. While many organizations may employ outside designers, or have an art department of their own, sometimes the task of creating smaller design collateral, such as postcards, Infographics or posters, falls to the PR practitioner. For many smaller firms, an art department or contract design help may not be available, so it is even more imperative to have a basic understanding of how to design collateral and execute these designs in the above programs. These are also important skills to have when communicating with an art department or outside designer, so you can clearly and effectively work with these parties and understand their needs. This course will also serve as an introduction in designing for the web, and highlight the major differences between designing print collateral and digital collateral and websites.

II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

There are two main learning objectives in this class: Learning the foundation for good design practice, and developing a basic proficiency in Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign. This class will allow you to exercise a lot of creativity as well in the assignments. You will have to come up with your own design concepts and execute them. Each of the assignments will measure:

- Your ability to present a concept for a project. Public relations is all about devising ideas on how to promote a brand, a product, an issue or idea, and your ability to not only develop a concept but also to explain how and why it is appropriate for your target audience(s) is key in the industry.
- Your ability to execute a design idea. Is your design appropriate for the audience? Is it aesthetically sound? Can you explain why you made the design choices you did?
- Your ability to use the design programs that are industry standards: Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign. You should be able to create basic collateral using any of these programs by the end of this class.
- Your ability to present your final idea to your peers. This will prepare you for client presentations, fielding questions asking why certain design or collateral decisions were made, and being able to explain your concept from beginning to how it was executed.

III. Description of Assignments

All the assignments in this class will follow a semester-long theme: your own company. This can be a non-profit centered around a specific cause, or a company offering a service or tangible product(s). Students will think of a concept -- including a name -- for their own company, and create collateral throughout the semester for this company.

Assignments are as follows:

- **Company pitch:** Students must devise a name for their own company and decide what the purpose of this company will be. For example, is this a non-profit, a service-based company, or a company selling product(s)? What is the purpose of this company? Who does this company serve? What is the target audience and demographic? What kind of look and feel does the student envision for this company?
- **Basic branding and business card:** Students will create a basic logo (can be type-based) for the record company. What color schemes and fonts will be used for collateral and why? Students will also design a business card (two-sided) for the company.
- **Brochure and digital ads:** It's time to promote something your company is creating, an event, or a product your company is putting out. How can you promote this across different mediums via printed material and digital material? How would you take the info you created for a short folded brochure and convey the same idea for a digital ad or social media post?
- **Microsite:** Say your company is putting on a special event or wants to promote a new product or service. Create a mini-site (a.k.a. a landing page) that you can link to on social media or print collateral and send potential customers to for information.
- **Final project – Promotional package:** Students will create a final promotional package to give away to inform people about their company. Students must write and design all elements for the package, and it should include a booklet or other type of promotional information. Students will also design an accompanying front page of a website for the company.

IV. Grading
a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	% of Grade
Company Pitch	15%
Graphic Assignments (3 total)	35%
Final Project	40%
Participation	10%
TOTAL	**100%**

b. Grading Scale
The following scale will be used for this course:

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

c. Grading Standards

A" projects have writing near professional quality; one or no mistakes; clearly proofread and edited material. All required elements included. Excellent organization and flow; original thinking. Showed creativity in concept and great design sense and needs little revision. High end of scale: publishable today as is. Physical product shows a high degree of craftsmanship: straight-cut edges, no smudges or unnecessary creases, high print quality and construction. Could be mass-produced as is.

"B" projects have two to five spelling, grammar or AP Style mistakes.   One or more required elements missing or poorly displayed (i.e., boring headline; confusing design, misplaced elements, etc.). Shows potential. Some creativity shown. Publishable with medium editing. Physical product may have minor flaws, such as uneven cutting on the edges, one or two crooked elements, small printing imperfections/smudges/blotches, and uneven color.

"C" projects have more than five errors (spelling, grammar, AP style). Poorly edited and/or proofread.   Hackneyed elements such as trite headline or clichés. Passive rather than active verbs become the norm. Little or no creativity shown. Mediocre concept or no real design concept at all. Publishable with major editing. Physical product is of mediocre quality and may be printed on low-quality stock. Physical product has major flaws, such as discoloration, fading, poorly cut edges, obviously crooked elements, obvious printing imperfections and smudges and appears hastily constructed without any attention to craftsmanship.

"D" projects have more than 10 errors (spelling, grammar). Needs to be completely rewritten. Poorly organized with little or no understanding of journalistic style and design standards. Needs to work with writing coach. No coherent or discernible design concept, no thought given to what design elements were used, such as color or typeface. Unable to explain design choices. Physical product needs to be completely reprinted and reconstructed.

"F" projects are not rewritable, printed in an unacceptable fashion, late or not turned in.

V. Assignment Submission Policy
A.   All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be dropped one grade. Assignments that are two weeks late will be dropped two grades. No late assignments will be accepted after two weeks.
B.   Assignments must be submitted via email or Dropbox. For the business card, brochure, and final project, you will turn in BOTH a digital version of your project, and a physical copy of your project. Exact printing specifications will be provided for each project. Your instructor will provide instructions on how to submit your files via Dropbox for projects that are too large to send via email. Digital versions are due before the class date specified; you must bring your printed version to class and turn it in during class. **BOTH THE PHYSICAL VERSION AND DIGITAL VERSION MUST BE TURNED IN BEFORE THE SPECIFIED DUE DATE TO BE CONSIDERED ON TIME.** If either portion is turned in late, the entire assignment is considered late.

VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials
You can find tutorials for the Adobe programs here. Feel free to practice all you want!
Photoshop: https://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop/tutorials.html
Illustrator: https://helpx.adobe.com/illustrator/tutorials.html
InDesign: https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/tutorials.html

Your instructor will also post links to articles throughout the semester.

Please note that this class does require printing and some paper/container construction, particularly for the final project. Some costs may be associated with getting projects printed. The instructor can accommodate some printing requests and will have some cutting equipment available for students, but do be aware that you must pay the cost of printing and putting together your assignments for this class out of your own pocket.

VII. Laptop Policy
All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the **Annenberg Virtual Commons** for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's **Information Technology Services** website.

You will also need to have access to the Adobe Creative Suite, which is available to all Annenberg students. If you are not already an Annenberg student, you will need to obtain a license key through Annenberg Technical Operations for this class.

If you have problems with downloading programs from the Adobe suite, or have license issues, refer to this site: http://www.annenbergdl.org/adobe/. You can also visit the Digital Lounge, ANN 301, and ask for help at their Help Desk.

VIII. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/20/18 – 11/30/18)
Friday, September 7: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001
Friday, September 7: Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001
Tuesday, September 11: Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund for Session 001
Friday, October 5: Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript for Session 001. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]
Friday, October 5: Last day to change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 001. [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]
Friday, November 9: Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001

IX. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 **Date: 8/21**	Introductions, explanation of syllabus and class requirements. Basic design concepts: What makes good design? Also, the importance of audience and knowing what purpose your design serves and what problems you are solving through visual means.	Design slides / handouts. Start thinking of your company name and concept.	Make sure you have Adobe Creative Suite installed and have working versions of Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign. If you are not an Annenberg student, contact TechOps and at least have the 30-day trial installed. Please have this done by the end of Week 2 at the latest.
Week 2 **Date: 8/28**	Give a brief oral presentation about your company and what it's all about. Photoshop refresher: creating documents, importing assets into layers. Selection tools and adjustment layers.	Browse some Photoshop tutorials: https://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop/tutorials.html	Company pitch due before class. Turn in a Word doc/Google doc before 11 a.m. on 8/30.
Week 3 **Date: 9/4**	Photoshop continued (if needed). Vector vs. raster: Why does resolution matter? Illustrator refresher: The pen tool, tracing, and live painting. Style / branding guides: What are they and why are they important?	Photoshop cheat sheet handout. Become familiar with what the Photoshop tools do and some handy keyboard shortcuts. Start sketching some ideas for your logo and think about colors and typefaces. Style guide sample handout. Specs for Assignment 2 handout.	

Week 4 **Date: 9/11**	Illustrator refresher continued (if needed). Where to find assets: fonts, stock images and footage and icons, drawing aids. Basic licensing: What you can and cannot use. What is Creative Commons?	Illustrator cheat sheet handout. Illustrator logo tutorial. https://helpx.adobe.com/illustrator/how-to/logo-design.html?playlist=/ccx/v1/collection/product/illustrator/segment/designer/explevel/beginner/applaunch/orientation/collection.ccx.js Illustrator pen tutorial/handout. Not due in class, but do it for practice.	Branding/business card due on 9/18. Turn in digital elements via Dropbox by 11 a.m. on 9/18. Bring mounted logo, basic style guide, and business card to class for presentation.
Week 5 **Date: 9/18**	Oral presentations. You will show your branding work and business card in class. Be prepared to explain your color choices, font choices and why you decided to create the logo and business card you created. Brochures and ads: What works and what doesn't? You have limited space to present information, so how do you make the most of it? What makes for powerful visuals and effective copy?		
Week 6 **Date: 9/25**	A basic discussion of printing. What are the standard sizes used for brochures? InDesign refresher: How do you set up a brochure and grids?	Handout explaining printing and sizing guidelines for brochure and digital ad assignment.	

	Digital ads and social media graphics: What are the standard sizes and requirements for those?		
Week 7 **Date: 10/2**	InDesign refresher continued: Tabs and more complex formatting. Answering any other questions about Photoshop, Illustrator, or InDesign that students may have.		Brochure and digital ads due before class on 10/9. Turn in digital version on Dropbox by 11 a.m. on 10/9. Bring printed brochure to class. (No need to print the digital ads.)
Week 8 **Date: 10/9**	Photoshop review: Selections, healing and cloning		
Week 9 **Date: 10/16**	Oral presentation about your brochure and ads and why you designed them the way you did. (if time permits) How microsites are similar to print brochures in purpose, but designing them is a whole different ballgame.	Handout explaining Assignment 4, the microsite assignment.	
Week 10 **Date: 10/23**	The major differences between designing for print and digital elements. Why you can't just take a print ad or print material and slap it on a website and call it a day. Basic terms for web design (like what you call certain elements). What makes a good landing page? What different site types and layouts are out there		Microsite assignment due 10/30. Please turn in all assets by 11 a.m. via Dropbox on 10/30. No printouts needed for class, turn in your digital files only.

	and what works best for what purpose?		
Week 11 Date: 10/30	Oral presentations about your microsite and why you chose to present the information you did.		
Week 12 Date: 11/6	A deeper dive into the differences between designing for web and print: fonts, color, grids. Best practices for web design. Resources for web design and where to find assets, like fonts and icons, and inspiration!	Handout explaining how you will need to package your digital assets for final project and printing guidelines.	Brief description of your final project due before class on 11/13. You can send this in an email, it's not a formal assignment. Tell your instructor what kind of packaging you intend to create, what format your liner notes will be (book or giant folded accordion), and what you intend to include in your package.
Week 13 Date: 11/13	Working with a professional printer/printing company for complex projects / packaging. Printing and packaging resources for other materials (like stickers, t-shirts, and other promotional items). Being a good web designer. How designers can make developers' lives easier, and understanding why designers get asked to do certain things when designing for the web.		
Week 14 Date: 11/20	Workshop time! All questions regarding your final projects and troubleshooting.		Digital version of final project due by 11 a.m. on 11/27. Project must be properly packaged (fonts, assets, etc.) as a zip file and uploaded to Dropbox. Final constructed project must be brought to class for presentation.
Week 15 Date: 11/27	Final project presentations!		

X. Policies and Procedures
Additional Policies
If you must miss a class, please give ample notice to your instructor via email. You will be responsible for catching up on any missed material and make any arrangements you need to catch up in class.

No late assignments will be accepted unless you have a medical emergency or other excused absence. Documentation for any excused absence must be provided.

Please make sure to check your USC email regularly. It will be the primary means of communication between you and your instructor. If you have any questions, please feel free to email your instructor or come speak to your instructor before or after class, or make an appointment.

Internships
The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to 1 percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned into the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must by unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism class.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems
a. Academic Conduct
Plagiarism
Presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words - is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* (https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct (http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/).

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity
The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

"Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an 'F' on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators."

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

b. Support Systems
Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs
Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC
Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information
Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

XI. About Your Instructor
Jenn de la Fuente is a web developer with a graphic design background. She has run her own business, Rosebud Designs, since 2009 and developed a variety of print and web collateral for a range of clients, from nonprofits to small businesses. Her specialty is creating custom WordPress websites, and she has teamed up with other design firms and design businesses to create solutions for clients such as Rancho La Puerta, Heal the Bay, 826 Los Angeles, and 826 National. Before starting her business, Jenn worked in sports journalism as a reporter, copy editor, page designer, and web producer for a variety of newspapers: the Orange County Register, The News Journal (Wilmington, Delaware), and The Sacramento Bee. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Print Journalism from USC Annenberg, graduating in 2000, and has taught at Annenberg since 2014. She is an avid sports fan, longtime Trojan football season ticket-holder, a huge L.A. Kings fan, as well as a hockey player and curler.