

Graphic design is all around you.

In the course of a day, you encounter graphic design everywhere. Let's take what might be your usual day at AU. From the moment your alarm rings in the morning, you will interact with design several times before even leaving your room. The packaging and branding of the soap, toothpaste, and other toiletries you use, are all examples of graphic design. The logo on your shoes, jeans, hat, etc are also design. The nutrition information label on the side of the cereal box —also design — clearly breaks down the daily values of several dietary components; the cereal box itself, its graphics, the recognizable treatment for the name, also design. The box your iPod came in, the visual interface on your computer, the look of the web sites you visit, the graphics showing up on your television programs or the beginning of the movies you watch, the menus on your DVDs, the Comedy Central logo, the emblem of your local team, the look and structure of your textbooks... all of it is graphic design.

On your way to class you pick up a copy of The Eagle, the student newspaper, which has been laid out the night before following compositional and typographic guidelines studied in graphic design. Walking the hallways of your dorm, you notice a poster for a play or a concert, right next to the cover of a new album by that band you hate (or love): poster and CD cover are also the result of designers at work. If you use the Metro, the signage and the posters from area museums on the platform, the notices inside the car, and the jackets and covers of the books and magazines other travelers are reading are also in part examples of graphic design at work.

But design is not just about commercial communications; its about effective communication. Design also shapes (and often creates) social and political messages. Political activism posters and fliers, the communication materials for non-profit and non-governmental (and governmental) organizations, the political campaigns for mainstream parties, the materials that educate people on AIDS prevention, world hunger, global warming, the t-shirts sold to raise funds for hurricane victims, the homeless, etc... all of them are designed and, because of it, are more effective.

Graphic Design is part of the Art Department in the college of Arts and Sciences. However, keep this in mind: there might be starving artists, but you will have a hard time finding a starving designer. Your career options after graduation are numerous and well paid: advertising, retail packaging, branding, web and interactive design, communication graphics, etc., for all sorts of clients, profit or non-profit.

So, if you want to shape the way we communicate, or visual culture, how you use it and how people understand it, graphic design is your thing.

If you want to find out more, major or minor in design, contact the graphic design program director Chemi Montes by email at [cmontes@american.edu](mailto:cmontes@american.edu), stop by his

office in room 221 of the Katzen Arts Center or call him at 202 885 1697. You can also visit the graphic design website: [www.design.american.edu](http://www.design.american.edu)

There are no prerequisites to register for any of the following design courses:

GDES200 Introduction to Graphic Design

GDES210 Introduction to Typography

GDES220 Computer Literacy for Design

Sign up for a class with the GDES prefix and start shaping the world around you.