

ARTH-110: HISTORY OF GRAPHIC DESIGN

Effective Term

Fall 2026

CC Approval

11/07/2025

AS Approval

11/13/2025

BOT Approval

11/20/2025

COCI Approval

12/10/2025

SECTION A - Course Data Elements

CB04 Credit Status

Credit - Degree Applicable

Discipline

Minimum Qualifications	And/Or
Art History (Master's Degree)	

Subject Code

ARTH - Art History

Course Number

110

Department

Art History

Division

Arts and Humanities (ARAH)

Full Course Title

History of Graphic Design

Short Title

History of Graphic Design

CB03 TOP Code

1002.00 - Art

CB08 Basic Skills Status

NBS - Not Basic Skills

CB09 SAM Code

E - Non-Occupational

Rationale

Updating elements of COR to align more closely with changes in pedagogy, particularly as related to equity-informed practices.

SECTION B - Course Description

Catalog Course Description

From the print revolution to the digital world, this course covers the ways in which societies have communicated using text and image.

SECTION C - Conditions on Enrollment**Open Entry/Open Exit**

No

Repeatability

Not Repeatable

Grading Options

Letter Grade or Pass/No Pass

Allow Audit

Yes

Requisites**Advisory Prerequisite(s)**

Completion of ENGL-C1000 or ENGL-120B with a minimum grade of C or appropriate placement.

SECTION D - Course Standards**Is this course variable unit?**

No

Units

3.00

Lecture Hours

54.00

Outside of Class Hours

108

Total Contact Hours

54

Total Student Hours

162

Distance Education Approval**Is this course offered through Distance Education?**

Yes

Online Delivery Methods

DE Modalities	Permanent or Emergency Only?
Hybrid	Permanent
Entirely Online	Permanent
Online with Proctored Exams	Permanent

SECTION E - Course Content**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:	
1.	Recognize the formal and aesthetic characteristics of information systems from early image-making to contemporary examples.
2.	Situate works of graphic design within diverse historical, political, religious, and philosophical contexts.

Course Objectives

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:	
1.	Identify and assess the development of graphic design as both a mode of communication and an aesthetic practice.
2.	Recognize and articulate correlations between major artistic schools of thought and their impact on the development of graphic communication.
3.	Analyze, compare and contrast, both in oral and written form, examples of graphic design according to the following criteria: a. Form: Evaluation and assessment of graphic design through examination of materials, typography, color, line, scale, and other visual elements. b. Content: Evaluation and appraisal of graphic design through the analysis of apparent and intended meaning and function. c. Context: Assessment and evaluation of graphic design through analysis of the eras in which it was made, identifying and comparing the cultural, political and technological forces that shape and influence content.
4.	Demonstrate, in oral and/or written form, an understanding of the varied modes of production, the institutions, and technology that inform graphic design.
5.	Trace the ways in which capitalism, academia, and professional practices upheld a canon of designers/artists.

Course Content

1. Defining graphic design in today's culture, both its forms and its modes of communication
2. Emergence of technologies that shaped graphic design, including (but not limited to):
 - a. Printing press
 - b. invention of paper
 - c. woodblock printing and engraving
 - d. lithography/chromolithography
 - e. photography/photogravure
 - f. digital technology and the dissemination of information
3. Historical development, production, and theoretical underpinnings of:
 - a. Mark-making and first written languages (include, but not limited to)
 - i. Cuneiform, Hieroglyphics, Maya Glyphs
 - b. Alphabets and writing in the Classical and Medieval Eras
 - c. Origins of print technology and its emergence in Europe
 - d. Industrial era and the mass production of texts/image
 - i. broadsides and posters
 - ii. Art Nouveau, Secession Movement, Glasgow School
 - e. The Modern Movement and graphic design
 - i. Cubism, Futurism, Dada, Constructivism
 - ii. Bauhaus, New Typography
 - f. Print and Propaganda during War
 - i. New Deal/WPA posters
 - ii. Wartime propaganda
 - g. Postwar corporate identity and the International Style
 - h. Graphic Design, youth culture and protest in the 1960s/1970s
 - i. Postmodern Graphic design of the 1970s/1980s
 - j. Digital revolution and design
 - k. Graphic design and globalization
4. Vocabulary and terminology specific to the production and form of graphic design
5. Graphic design as embedded with social/cultural messaging related to class, race, gender

Methods of Instruction

Methods of Instruction

Types	Examples of learning activities
Field Trips	Students will explore examples of graphic design in a professional setting such as a gallery or museum as well as a commercial venue.
Lecture	Image-based lecture/discussion which promote all-class and small group discussion of content.

Group Work

Small groups explore and assess in-depth a topic covered in lecture. Groups present their findings to peers for further analysis and critique.

Online Adaptation

Types	Examples of learning activities
Lecture	Slide-based lectures with instructor's voice over focus on the context of a graphic design movement or the output of a single designer.
Discussion	Students post in a Course Discussion, answering a prompt related to an article or linked video. Students must also respond to a classmate. Sample: Connect this 19c broadside as public information item to a contemporary example on a social media platform. How is the communication visually similar and different?
Journal	Students are invited to record weekly examples of graphic design that they find effective or NOT effective.
Individualized Instruction	Via zoom or in-person office hours, instructor reviews and clarifies concepts/movements covered in class.

Instructor-Initiated Online Contact Types

Announcements/Bulletin Boards
Chat Rooms
Discussion Boards
E-mail Communication
Telephone Conversations
Video or Teleconferencing

Student-Initiated Online Contact Types

Chat Rooms
Discussions
Group Work

Course design is accessible

Yes

Methods of Evaluation**Methods of Evaluation**

Types	Examples of classroom assessments
Quizzes	Objective-format quizzes every few weeks to ensure students keeping up with the material. Quiz questions--multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, ask students to compare visual characteristics and content of cuneiform and hieroglyphics.
Projects	Students have the opportunity to submit a creative final project. This could be reproducing the work of a designer we covered, or applying an existing style to a contemporary issue. For example, a student creates a Bauhaus-inspired poster protesting current policy regarding immigration.
Homework	Homework reviews--low stakes and weekly--to confirm students are doing the required work outside of class. For example, two changes in society as the result of the printing press are _____.
Essays/Papers	Students are assigned in-class responses to prompts related to course material. For example: compare the form and audience of Ancient Roman inscriptions and Islamic calligraphy.

Assignments**Reading Assignments**

Selected readings from the websites such as Smarthistory, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, or excerpts from standard texts.

1. Read the Smarthistory article on *Art Nouveau* and be prepared to discuss the stylistic uniformity across architecture, textiles and graphic design.
2. Read introduction to Drucker & McVarish *Graphic Design History: A Critical Guide* and be able to explain graphic design as technology, as technical practice, as style, and as reflection of cultural conditions and attitudes.

Writing Assignments

1. Written visual analyses based on close observation of graphic design examples and the connection to cultural context.

For example: In 250-words, "walk" me through this 19th century broadside: explain how the variety of letter forms and their placement create a hierarchy of information. In what specific ways does this broadside reflect the industrial era?

2. Topical essays expanding on course material.

For example: Write a two-page, typewritten essay comparing two examples of propaganda, one from the 1940s, another from the 1970s. Concentrate on the similarities and differences in terms of content, form, and audience.

Outside-of-Class Assignments

Research paper or project that develops a related topic in-depth.

For example: Students are to select a movement or artist/designer related to material covered in class for which they either write an in-depth research paper or create an original work of graphic design. The 7-page paper is to go beyond the information in the textbook; students are to cite at least five sources (only one of which can be from a scholarly website). Papers will be in the MLA format using parenthetical citations.

Or students can opt to create an original example of graphic design, employing methods described in class, such as a linoblock print. Accompanying this project must be a paper of 2-3 pages describing the process, the pictorial or textual strategies, and the intended audience of the original work.

SECTION F - Textbooks and Instructional Materials**Material Type**

Textbook

Author

Jens Müller and Julius Wiedemann

Title

History of Graphic Design

Edition/Version

45th

Publisher

Taschen

Year

2025

ISBN #

3836588064

Material Type

Textbook

Author

Meggs, Philip and Alston Purvis

Title

Meggs' History of Graphic Design

Edition/Version

7th

Publisher

John Wiley & Sons Incorporated

Year

2025

Material Type

Open Educational Resource (OER)

Title

Smarthistory (vetted collection of articles and videos by professional art historians and curators)

Material Type

Open Educational Resource (OER)

Author

MetMuseum.org

Title

Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

SECTION G - Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity

How does your course and/or course outline of record reflect strategies for accommodating and engaging diverse student populations, advancing equitable outcomes, and fostering inclusion for all students?

Content-graphic design is presented as both the product and reflection of institutions, countries, corporations, but also as a means of communication available to all people, specifically as a form of protest or speaking truth to power (graffiti, posters, broadsides).

Designers of color and women practitioners are highlighted along with the big "names" of the field since the late 19th century. Discussed as well, are the systemic ways in which white men have maintained a dominant role in the profession.

Pedagogy-multiple opportunities to ask students to bring in examples of graphic design from their lives. Also examples that they see in their daily life that reflect themes of the class- public service messages, infographics, etc.

Small-stakes weekly assignments allow students, either as individuals or in groups, to demonstrate their understanding of the content.

Course Codes (Admin Only)

CB00 State ID

CCC000511776

CB10 Cooperative Work Experience Status

N - Is Not Part of a Cooperative Work Experience Education Program

CB11 Course Classification Status

Y - Credit Course

CB13 Special Class Status

N - The Course is Not an Approved Special Class

CB23 Funding Agency Category

Y - Not Applicable (Funding Not Used)

CB24 Program Course Status

Program Applicable

Allow Pass/No Pass

Yes

Only Pass/No Pass

No