



# Graphic Design Studio Intermediate

## Course Details

**Course Designator & Number: FLOR 3503**

**Number of Credits: 3**

**Language of Instruction: English**

**Contact Hours: 60+15**

**Instructor: Pilar Roca**

## Course Description

Students will deepen their knowledge of the fundamentals of graphic design techniques and skills to develop a visual communication language to present concepts and ideas. The course will include formal graphic design principles including colour, balance, composition, font use, etc. After every topic explanation, students will complete short exercises to demonstrate understanding. With practical projects and exercises, students will delve into image and composition creation, digital layout design, and graphic illustration and enhancement.

The course will also examine the role of graphic design in creating social media content, how design principles are exploited and to what effect. Through formal analysis students will develop skills to assess the effectiveness of design content and understand what performs well and what fails to be successful. The course will discuss how graphic design, in its possible applications, is used by individuals, companies, and organizations to promote products and ideas.

Students will produce their own graphic design content, using the skills they acquire during the course.

Running through the course students will work on individual and group projects and will present a portfolio of selected content at the end of the course. In one of their projects, they will be assigned an Italian client and a brief, they will collaborate to complete social media and other content for the client and will peer review their work.

## Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Perfect graphic design basics and apply them to different exercises at the Intermediate level
- Use professional tools, such as a project brief, to increase the project quality
- Work as a group in considering the context in which their work will be viewed
- Identify social media content that uses graphic design effectively
- Understand the ways in which graphic design is used by individuals and organizations
- Create compelling graphic design products by using the knowledge and skills acquired during the course

## Methodology

Most class meetings will consist of an initial theoretical explanation of the topic, discussion and slides presentation, followed by a short practical exercise. Some of the exercises will be done in small groups. Once completed, the exercises will be presented and critiqued in class.

## Experiential Learning & Field Visits

During the semester, the class will visit at least one graphic design studio in Florence working in areas such as visual identity, digital platforms and social media. The visit will allow students to learn from a professional in graphic and social media design. Other visits may include exhibitions and graphic design festivals and local events related to graphic design.

## Course Prerequisites

The students will have an intermediate level of skills in graphic design and software as Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe InDesign. Students may be required to submit a portfolio for review, depending on their previous courses taken.

## Required Reading / Materials

- Ellen Lupton, Jennifer Cole Phillips, *Graphic Design, the new basics* (2015)
- Ellen Lupton, *Design Is Storytelling* (2017)

## Further readings

- Ellen Lupton, *Thinking with Type* (2010)
- Jens Müller & Julius Wiedemann, *Logo Modernism (Design)* (2015)
- Tom & David Kelley, *Creative Confidence* (2013)
- Marty Neumeier, *The Brand Gap* (2005)
- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (2008)
- Austin Kleon, *Steal Like an Artist* (2012)
- Josef Müller-Brockmann, *Grid Systems in Graphic Design* (1999)
- Alina Wheeler, *Designing Brand Identity* (2012)
- Sean Adams, *The Designer's Dictionary of Color* (2017)
- Jens Müller, *Logo Beginnings* (2022)
- Ellen Lupton, Farah Kafei, Jennifer Tobias, et al., *Extra Bold. A Feminist, Inclusive, Anti-racist, Nonbinary Field Guide for Graphic Designers* (2021)

## Class Time

3x3-hour classes each week

# Grading

## Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

## Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
In-class assignments (x6@ 5% each)	30%
Group project on brand identity	30%
Class participation & preparation	10%
Final portfolio	30%
<b>Overall grade</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Assessment Details

Assessment is based on these questions:

- Does the work have visual appeal?
- Is the design consistent?
- Is the student applying properly the skills learned during the course?
- Is the chosen color scheme appropriate?
- Is the composition successful?
- Is there a clear hierarchy?
- Is there a clear user flow?
- Does it meet brand guidelines?
- Does the design fulfill the project's goal?
- Has the exercise been presented on time?
- Does the student have a respectful, participative and positive attitude in the classroom?

# Course Content

The lessons will be complemented by readings, videos and other media materials in the class. Students will develop practical exercises about every topic, individually and in small groups.

## Unit 1

### Class 1

- Introduction to the course. What is graphic design? The evolution of Graphic Design in the Digital Age. Analysis of examples of design in different applications and support.

### Class 2

- Review of the different software that will be used during the course, starting with Adobe Illustrator.
- Exercise 1: Creation of first content by choosing a real Italian company.

## Unit 2

### Class 1

- Brand Identity and Brand Recognition. Analysis of different brand identities and assessment of their effectiveness. How to understand a client brief. Brief example (template)
- In-class exercise (Exercise 1 continuation): social media post for the previously selected Italian company.

### Class 2

- Analysis of class exercise.
- Design resources.
- Composition: the basics to create a graphic layout work. What do we see in a design?

## Unit 3

### Class 1

- Typography. Analysis of examples of typography in brand identity.
- Exercise 2: Creation of a logotype for a new co-working space focusing on the type use. Creation of a social media post for the company.

### Class 2

- Students will receive the group project brief, they will discuss their impression of the client, and will consider which media would be most appropriate for the client's visibility and success.
- Continuation of Exercise 2.

## Unit 4

### Class 1

- Second exercise presentations in class. Analysis, discussions and critique.
- Color in graphic design: color palette use, how we perceive color, etc. Color theory explored through examples in different media.
- Exercise 3: Class exercise on using color. Students will present examples of color used in graphic design products to the class and explain the way color is used and how it is successful in contributing to the concept/message.

### Class 2

- Continuing to work on the use of color, students will create a small second color exercise in groups.

## Unit 5

### Class 1

- Animation: animation in social media using Adobe Photoshop. Students will present an example of animation used in social media to the class and explain how it is used and how it is successful in contributing the concept/message in the post.
- Explanation: how to animate in Photoshop for social media posts.
- Exercise 4: Creation of an animation in Photoshop.

### Class 2

- Continuing to work on the animation for the group project.

## Unit 6

### Class 1

- Animation: students will continue working in the animation process.
- Exercise 5: Creation of a second animation post, slow motion, in Adobe Photoshop. Works in groups.

### Class 2

- Visit to exhibit or studio working in animation.

## Unit 7

### Class 1

- AI in graphic design. Students will consider how they might exploit AI in their work, what problems are presented by AI and how AI interacts with the creative process. How to use AI for graphic design.

### Class 2

- Exercise 6: Create a group project using AI.



## Unit 8

Spring Break

## Unit 9

### Class 1

- AI exercise presentations in class. Analysis, discussions and critics.
- Group project on brand identity starts. Client brief and group discussion on the effectiveness of the graphic design strategies. Analysis of competitors. Selection of an appealing graphic design approach for the brand.

### Class 2

- Continuation of the brand identity creation group project.

## Unit 10

### Class 1

- Work on group project continues. Where do graphics fail? A look at campaigns where the graphic design does not effectively convey the content.

Students will identify areas for improvement and share ideas for enhanced content.

### Class 2

- Wrap up of group project

## Unit 11

### Class 1

- Presentation and critique of group projects

### Class 2

- Company/design studio visit

## Unit 12

### Class 1

- Starting of final portfolio development.
  - How to create a professional portfolio: introduction.
  - Professional portfolios: analysis of different examples.
  - Students start selecting their most effective materials for their individual portfolio.

### Class 2

- Portfolio development workshop: review of different visual strategies. Under the instructor's supervision, students choose their own visual identity for this project.

## Unit 13

### Class 1

- Portfolio development continues, under the instructor's supervision.

### Class 2

- Portfolio development continues, under the instructor's supervision.

## Unit 14

### Class 1

- Portfolio development continues, under the instructor's supervision.

### Class 2

- Portfolio development continues, under the instructor's supervision.

## Unit 15

### Class 1

- Presentation of final portfolios.

# Policies

## Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

## Penalty for Extra Absences

Regular attendance and punctuality are mandatory in order to earn full marks. The final grade will take into consideration preparation required for class (i.e. readings) and participation in class discussions. **If you miss more than one class meeting for courses meeting once a week or two class meetings for courses meeting more than once a week without evidence of medical need, your final grade for the class will be dropped by a third of a letter grade for each extra absence** (check the Academic Handbook for the attendance policy in place at the Florence Program). When missing class, it is the student's responsibility to find out what information was given in class, including any announcements made.

Missed assignments: a valid doctor's certificate dated on the day of the absence is required to make up for any missed assignment (paper due, presentation due, project due, test, quiz, midterm, final, and all other graded activities). Failure to provide such evidence will automatically result in an "F"/"0" grade for the assignment. No exceptions allowed.

See the Academic Handbook for guidelines on providing a valid medical certificate.

## Use of Electronic Devices in Class

All electronic devices, including cell phones and laptops, must be turned off during class time. Failure to comply with this policy will be factored into the participation grade for the course and may lead to disciplinary measures.

## University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

### Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement;

acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

### **Student Conduct**

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).