



Instructor: Dr. John C. McGarvey

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Course Overview

A yearlong creative studio built around photography, digital imaging, illustration, multimedia production, layout, and design thinking.

This course develops creative problem-solving, technical software skills, visual literacy, and professional studio habits. Students create original work while learning how designers plan, revise, critique, and present visual communication projects.

Grading Policy and Breakdown

Success in this course is determined by technical proficiency, a grasp of design theory, and the professional execution of creative projects.

Category	Percentage
Classwork & Demos	40%
Photographs / Theory	20%
Projects & Assessments	40%

Due Date Policy

- All work is due on Friday the week it is assigned.
- No work is acceptable after one week, meaning the following Friday.
- Students who use lab time effectively will be able to complete all work in class. Students are encouraged to practice taking photographs outside of class.
- Studio deadlines reflect professional creative production expectations.

Weekly Instructional Routine

To prepare students for professional studio environments, the course follows a

consistent weekly rhythm that balances software mastery with hands-on field practice.

Day	Focus
Monday & Tuesday	Teacher Classroom Demonstrations / Student On Their Own Assignments
Wednesday	Photography Skills / Graphic Design Theory
Thursday & Friday	Independent Lab Time

Fall Course: Photography and Image Editing

The fall semester focuses on building strong visual foundations with camera work, image organization, and professional editing habits.

Major Areas of Study

- Lightroom workflow and image management
- Photoshop tools, selections, layers, and composites
- Photography composition, lighting, and critique

Fall Semester Skills

- Organizing digital images using a professional workflow
- Importing, sorting, rating, and exporting photographs
- Applying non-destructive photo adjustments
- Understanding exposure, composition, lighting, and visual storytelling
- Using Photoshop selections, masks, layers, and adjustment tools
- Creating image composites and edited photographic artwork
- Participating in critique using design and photography vocabulary

Spring Course: Graphic Design and Multimedia

The spring semester expands into visual communication, illustration, dimensional design, multimedia projects, and basic publication layout.

Major Areas of Study

- Illustrator drawing, typography, and vector design
- 3D, multimedia, and basic layout in InDesign

- Graphic design theory, critique, and portfolio development

Spring Semester Skills

- Creating vector artwork using Illustrator tools
- Applying typography, hierarchy, alignment, contrast, and layout principles
- Developing original visual communication pieces
- Exploring dimensional design, multimedia production, and presentation formats
- Building basic publication layouts in InDesign
- Refining creative work through revision and critique
- Preparing finished pieces for a digital portfolio

Yearlong Project: Student Portfolio in Canva

Students build one digital portfolio across the full course: a first-semester photography portfolio and a second-semester design portfolio.

Portfolio Components

- Fall photography portfolio
- Edited image collection
- Photoshop practice and composite work
- Spring graphic design portfolio
- Illustrator and typography projects
- Multimedia, 3D, or layout-based design work
- Artist statements, reflections, and critique notes
- Final curated portfolio presentation

Class Expectations

Classroom & Equipment Expectations	Photography & Original Work Expectations
Use class time responsibly. Stay focused on your projects and do not play computer games during lab time.	Outdoor photography is a privilege. Thursday and Friday photography time may be used outside the classroom as long as students act responsibly. Do not disrupt other classes or enter private areas, including bathrooms, with

	cameras.
Respect the equipment. Treat cameras, tripods, computers, and other equipment with care. If you are unsure how to use something, ask. Never force equipment.	Get permission before photographing others. Always ask before taking or using a photograph of another person.
Learn proper camera procedures. Use the correct camera settings and follow classroom procedures.	Submit only your own work. If another student took the photograph, it is their work, even if you are the subject. The exception is a selfie you personally took.
Recharge batteries. If you are in the last Graphic Design class of the day, remove camera batteries and place them on the charger as directed.	Respect shared files and storage. USB drives, SD cards, and computer stations may be shared with another class period. Never submit, alter, or take credit for another student's work.
Stay organized. Maintain organized digital files, project folders, and portfolio materials.	Produce original work. Follow ethical image-use practices and revise your work based on feedback, design goals, and technical requirements.

AI and Phone Policy

AI: Students must submit original work and be able to show that it was not created by AI. Keep layered Photoshop, Illustrator, and other working files as evidence of your creative process.

Phones: Phones must be placed in the caddy at the start of class. Phones used during class or taken into restrooms may be confiscated by proctors. No headphones during instruction. Headphones may be used during independent lab time with permission

Course Emphasis

This course emphasizes both creative exploration and professional execution. Strong design work requires planning, experimentation, technical control, revision, and presentation. Each semester builds toward a polished digital portfolio that shows growth in photography, image editing, graphic design, multimedia, and visual communication.