

**Moravian College** ART: 142A, Visual Foundations  
Spring 2013 Monday/Wednesday 1:15 – 3:45  
Instructor: Aron Johnston  
Office Hours: M/W 4-5:30pm or by appointment  
Email: aronjohnston@moravian.edu

**Course Description:**

Visual Foundations is an introduction to the theory and application of two-dimensional design as it applies to the creation of pictorial space. Students will be guided through a series of daily, weekly and bi-weekly problems exploring visual expression, introducing them to the formal elements and vocabulary of design (line, shape, value, color, and space) and the principles of organization (harmony, variety, balance, proportion, scale, dominance, movement, and economy) in a variety of concepts, mediums, and techniques.

**Text:**

*Design Basics*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, David A Lauer/Stephen Pentak

**COURSE GOALS:**

- To develop an understanding of the interrelationship of the elements of art and the principles of design.
- To realize the conceptual through the pictorial.
- To promote visual thinking, seeing, and doing.
- To introduce a critical framework for thinking about, looking at & developing art.
- To introduce a critical framework for thinking about and looking at Art & Design
- To develop an understanding of Art & Design as a visual language and its potential linguistic and material concerns.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- Students are required to work on projects, sketchbooks and required reading a minimum of 6 hours per week outside of class.
- Students are required to actively use their sketchbooks to develop their skills.
- Students are required to be on time for all classes.
- Students are required to be fully engaged in class discussions and critiques.
- Students are required to ask questions of creative concepts, the medium, and their peers.
- Students are required to pursue a personal and self-disciplined practice.

**Grading:**

Due to the volume of material to be covered in a short period, it is essential that you be in class every day, that you complete sketchbook and homework assignments, and that you are prepared to be fully engaged in class discussion and to work in class. This is a secure space where every idea, comment or question will be addressed with respect.

You will be graded on participation, definable intentions, creativity, technique, and development over the course of the semester. Projects that are truly exceptional and move beyond expectations will be graded as an A. Work that is engaging yet only meets average criteria will receive a B. Work that exhibits thought but is incomplete, poorly crafted/presented, or shows little development will be graded as average to below average and awarded a C or less.

It is the responsibility of the professor to assist the student with the development of each and every segment of the class. The professor should give opinions in a helpful and collaborative manner. It is, however, the responsibility of the student to ask for help when he or she is confused, when a misunderstanding exists, or when there is simply a question that may hinder the student's development if not addressed. This is a safe environment where learning is the primary goal of both parties. Yet, if the student does not ask questions when help is needed, the professor has no choice but to assign a grade accordingly. Please feel free to meet with me at any moment throughout the course. I have posted office hours. I am also available by appointment or before class starts. I do require that you email me to schedule and confirm a meeting time

Individual meetings will be scheduled at midterm and one week before the final class day to assess your strengths and weaknesses. This will allow you ample time to address any issues before a final grade is submitted.

Grades are a simple way to evaluate submitted work. Your "grade" is not a reflection of your personal worth or promise as an artist. Grades should never be taken personally. Please feel free to schedule an appointment for an Individual critique during my office hours or up to 30 min prior to class if you need further clarification concerning your grade or my evaluation. I prefer not to discuss grades during class, since they are a private matter between you and I. Keep in mind that all graded assignments other than the final one may be resubmitted for re-evaluation up to one week from that project's critique date.

## **CRITERIA FOR GRADES ARE DETERMINED AS FOLLOWS:**

A= Superior: 94-100, A- 90-9

Scholarship: strong, exceeding requirements of instructor, full conceptual understanding of terms and usage, able to relate abstract concepts relevant to projects or creative development  
Initiative: contributions exceeding the assignment, showing independence and resourcefulness  
Attitude: positive, beneficial to class  
Individual Improvement: continually developing

B= Good - Above average: B+ 87-89, B 84-86, B- 80-83

Scholarship: accurate and complete, meeting all requirements of instructor, fully uses vocabulary and concepts relevant to projects or creative development  
Initiative: good, meeting requirements of assignments  
Attitude: proper, beneficial to class  
Individual Improvement: shows signs of progress, responds positively to criticism

C= Average: C+ 77-79, C 74-76, C- 70-73

Scholarship: barely meeting requirements of instructor, seldom uses vocabulary, little understanding of concepts relevant to projects or creative development  
Initiative: uncertain, apparent only at times  
Attitude: generally neutral, but not objectionable  
Individual Improvement: not showing signs of progress, not responding to criticism

D= Below average, yet passing: D+ 67-69, D 64-66, D- 60-63

Scholarship: not meeting requirements of instructor, does not understand or use terms and vocabulary relevant to projects or creative development  
Initiative: not meeting requirements of assignments, not completing assignments  
Attitude: indifferent, possibly objectionable  
Individual improvement: not noticeable

F= Completely unsatisfactory: 60 and below

## **Assignments/ Grading**

25% Studio: fully realized completed projects & class work

This work is often a selection of your best work though out the semester submitted digitally. All of your work must be available for evaluation at the end of the semester. Every project must be ready for critique on due dates. I strongly advise you to keep everything you do in class until the end of your stay at Moravian.

25% Participation: Attendance, material preparation, class preparation, lab Maintenance, critiques, reading discussions, homework, field trip papers, and quizzes

25% Sketchbook (SKBK): Assigned SKBK work, (SKBK) homework, collected art references, experimentation and material usage, expression of visual interest, visual notes and general questions related to 2D, personal and professional interest related to 2d. your SKBK grade is an evaluative grade taken 3-4 times throughout the semester and on the last day of class.

25% Final Project and Final critique

Skill development, material usage, craft and presentation are major considerations in the assessment and grading of each completed assignment. Showing up is a big part of making an average grade. To earn a better than average grade you must be a fully engaged participant in the class and learning process. Furthermore, your grade is based on how you improve in class not how you improve relative to your peers.

## **Critiques:**

Critiques are held at the beginning of class to look at your homework and class work from the previous week(s). In addition to reading assignments and outside studio work, you are expected to be regularly involved in critiques, and to document your work in digital format due at the final critique. Critique may or may not last the duration of the class. Missing a critique is equivalent to missing a test or project, and it will negatively affect your grade. If you are late for class and miss a critique, you will receive a "0" for the critique.

A short and extended group critiques are held weekly and bi-weekly. Individual critiques are given at the Mid-term & final (*see Syllabus for crit. Schedule.*) Critiques are a useful way for students to give thoughtful opinions about developing ideas on fully realized work from the previous week. It is the time when peers can give useful conceptual or technical information that might improve the work. The nature of a critique is to add useful developmental input to a student's work. In an academic setting, critiques play a secondary role. They are not unlike a quiz or test. It is the one time that I as your instructor get to see that you have a full understanding of the concepts & terms.

- Each critique is graded “1-10”
- Example: Miss a critique you are awarded a “0”
- Show up but have no work to discuss & say nothing during crit “3”
- Show up but say nothing or have no art work to discuss “5”
- Saying very little other than regurgitating terms and vocab or unrealized work “6”
- Talkative using terms applicable to the work in question “7”
- Adding alternative input using relevant terms and vocabulary “8”
- Adding viable alternative technical solutions or conceptual suggestions in a positive “9”
- Having achieved all of the above and in addition a student is able to reference outside sources such as artists, artworks, terms or concepts not yet discussed in class in a manner that is useful & relevant vis-a-vis student’s work and peer development “10”

It is the responsibility of me the instructor and your peers to challenge your skills and understanding through constructive input and creative suggestions. But, it is the responsibility of you the student to be a willing participant to your own success. The more you bring to a critique the more you will get from it. Finally, it is my personal goal to guide you and prepare you for the Art world beyond academia; I cannot help you if you do not have anything to say or add.

**Homework-** There will be several outside assignments generally due on the following critique date. Due to the sequential nature of the course, all assignments MUST be completed on time with no exceptions. This will absolutely affect your grade. You are expected to work a minimum of 6 hours per week outside of the scheduled meeting time.

**Sketchbook:** Due to the nature of the course material, you will be given weekly sketchbook assignments to experiment, plan, and record your thoughts and varied creative intent. Use it each day and be sure to date each entry. Sometimes you may find that a sketch takes you several hours, sometimes just minutes. The point is to take what you learn in class, personalize it, and experiment with it in your sketchbook. Take it with you everywhere you go. Find a book that suits your personality; something you want to have on you at all times. Be fetishistic about it. It should become your best friend: a place to develop ideas, record thoughts . . . it should become a visual diary, something that you will be able to return to again and again for inspiration or previously thought, but never carried out, projects. Your sketchbook will be graded only three times during the semester. You must have it with you in class everyday. If it is missing, it will be marked against you.

**Attendance Policy:**

Attendance is mandatory. Each class meeting is considered a session. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each session. Students arriving 5-20 minutes late for any class session are considered tardy. Three tardies equal one un-excused absence. -Arriving more than 20 minutes late or missing an entire class session is considered an absence. -Students who do not return to class after break or who leave early will be considered absent. -Showing up without your supplies is also considered an absence. -Two unexcused absence may result in your grade being decreased one whole letter. -Four un-excused absences is an automatic failure. -An absence may be excused if there is a medical reason, family emergency or extenuating circumstances beyond the student’s control. The determination of whether an absence will be excused is left to the discretion of the instructor. -It is the responsibility of the student to ask his or her colleagues what information was missed during an absence and to make-up the missed work. -Students, not the professor, are responsible for assignments given on a day when they are not in class. All missed work must be made up within one week of the due date, unless another date is arranged and agreed upon with the instructor.

**Disability-** Any student with documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

**Academics Honesty (issues of plagiarism)**

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses that erode the academic environment. Moravian College and the Department of Visual Arts will condone NO form of plagiarism- Defined as the use of another's words, ideas, visual or verbal material as one's own without proper permission or citation. Each student has the responsibility to make sure they have a clear understanding of this important issue and how it applies to a studio class and their imagery. Any and all image appropriation needs to be discussed with the professor prior to usage. This includes material found on the Internet. Students who violate the standards of academic honesty face serious disciplinary consequences, including referral before the honor council and/or immediate course failure.

**Cell Phones-** must be turned to the silent position.

**Cleanliness-** It is the job of every student to leave the studio better than the way they found it. Disrespecting your environment and those around you implies poor participation and may affect your grade.

Wear appropriate clothing- you will get some kind of art material on everything you bring into the studio... it just happens.

**Class Discussion=CD:** Class discussion, slide/video presentations, group critique, demos or any event/ activity requiring class participation this is evaluated as participation. It is graded as part of a student's participation score and missed CD's will be graded as "0" (make up CD = "7" showing up= "7" actively taking part = "8" positive input= "9" Adding to the class discourse through scholarly or personal research= "10")

**Class Assignment=CA:** Work done in class often done in multiples: sketchbook is required to collect information and develop ideas or sketches for each assignment. You might execute several assignments during a class period, at least one example from ea. assignment must be submitted digitally for grade. Finished class assignments ARE NOT to be finalized in a sketchbook.

**Sketchbook=SK:** Sketchbook assignments are used to develop skills and introduce you to concepts and ideas we will be discussing in the coming weeks. The LEAST (#) are suggested as average minimum requirements (see grade criteria.) Your sketchbook is an evaluated grade not an average. Each sketchbook grade is based on development and usage. *(All Sketchbook work should be dated & labeled)*

**Homework=HW:** Non SK assignments used to generate discourse and develop a broad knowledge base & practical application related to the class. This work is done separate from your sketchbook. *(This is **not** a sketchbook assignment and is graded separately. All Homework must be labeled with assignment # for credit)* Note: Homework does include any and all research projects and contemporary propositions done outside of class. This work will be a will be up for critique and must be ready for critique throughout the semester.

**Read:** Along with the work done in and out of class, reading will be the foundation for discussions and work throughout the semester. I will adjust the reading list if required according to skill advancement & group development. Each student is responsible to keep up with the required reading, which must be completed before the start of every class. Pop quizzes are NOT given; rather we use Critiquing as a method to evaluate & determine understanding of terms and usage. So, in turn, be prepared to refer to your reading material & appropriate vocabulary during class and critiques. Each critique is given a grade that in part reflects your understanding of what you read.

## **Syllabus\***

- 01/14: *Introduction: review syllabus, supply check and distribution*  
Homework (HW): Read: Ch 1 pp.4-25  
Email instructor (**due: 01/22**)  
Sketchbook (SKBK): Find and define two visual examples that relate to the assigned reading (be prepared to discuss your examples on Wednesday)
- 01/16: *Defining the picture plane, understanding craft*  
Lecture: Review and discuss reading and examples  
Project: Define the Pictorial space and developing CRAFT  
Project: Still-life with simple shapes (**due: 01/23**)  
HW: Read: Ch.7 p.130, pp.143-147, Ch.8 p.152, p.156 & pp160-173.  
SKBK: SHAPE AND SPACE POS/NEG SPACE: find three objects; list all the shapes that make up each object. What is Positive/negative space? How does shape aid in pictorial development?
- 01/21: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 01/23: *Defining the elements of visualization (seeing) with composition studies*  
Lecture: Discuss and review reading  
Project: POS/NEG composition study; Subject and Emphasis (**due: end of class**)  
HW: Read Ch. 2 p.29-35 & Ch 3 p.56-69  
SKBK: Headline Picture. Find three visual references from the day's headlines that you can cut and paste in your skbk. Define and explain the visual focus of each picture. How and why do you know it is the focus?
- 01/28: *Thinking, Seeing & Doing*  
Lecture and handout: Composition studies  
Project: POS/NEG composition study; Figure Ground (**due: 1/30**)  
HW: Balance and Symmetry, Ch. 4 p.72-81, Ch.5 p.90-111  
SKBK: Find examples from advertising that use balance and symmetry; be able explain their effect and use.
- 01/30: *Group critique* (still-life, POS/NEG Subject/Emphasis studies Lecture (review p.23 & 24)
- 02/04: *Balance and Symmetry*  
Lecture: Balance and Symmetry  
Project: POS/NEG and Subject/Symmetry composition studies (**due: 2/11**)  
HW: value, rhythm, pattern & repetition (read Ch.2 p. 47-51, Ch.6 p.113-123 & Ch.9 p.176-183)  
SKBK: Find or express a variety of visual examples that explore value, repetition and pattern
- 02/11: *Balance and symmetry composition studies* (work in class)
- 02/13: *Group critique (balance and symmetry)*  
SKBK: texture examples (15-20 examples), expressive line (15-20 examples)
- 02/18: *Chaos & Control: Value, Rhythm, Pattern & Repetition*  
Discuss SKBK examples.  
Lecture: Paint (mixing, handling & application)  
Project: pattern, value, and scale composition studies (**due: \_\_\_\_\_**)  
HW: Read: Ch.2 p.40 & 41, p. 52 & 53, Ch.4 pp.82-87, Ch.7 pp.128, 129, 132  
SKBK: Find several (20) pictures/images of that define how others see or know you. Find objects & items (20) that express your character. Show and explain your examples in your SKBK.
- 02/20: *Work in class / individual critique*, SKBK (value and scale with line & texture 100 examples)  
(Individual Midterm REVIEW)  
Midterm Vocabulary TEST: Terms & Usage
- 02/25: *Work In class / individual critique*  
HW: Read: ch.10 p.195-201  
SKBK: expressive line; emotion with line, texture and value (30 example how can line express emotion)
- 02/27: *Group critique*  
*Lecture: Graph and grid*  
Review and discuss SKBK examples  
Project: Texture space collage understanding the graph and grid  
HW: Read: Ch.11 p. 232 & 233, p.220 & 221  
SKBK: collage and sketch your examples, define and be prepared to discuss your composition for Grid Collage.
- 03/02-03/10 Spring break

- 03/11: Start graph and grid, project proposal presented to class. Work in class.
- 03/13 Return from Spring break  
*Work in class*  
 HW: read Color Ch.13 p.153-187  
 SKBK: examples of primary and secondary color in advertising and design.
- 03/18: *Work in class & Individual critique*  
 SKBK: Color (collect several examples from and express time and movement, scale & space)
- 03/20: *GG Collage: Work in class (finalize project for critique)*
- 03/25: *Critique: group critique* (select groups for final project)
- 03/27: *Color*: Slide presentation, introduction of color value studies  
 Lecture and Introduction final project: Comic Color Strip  
 Lecture demonstration: Color mixing  
 Project: Color/value Scales (Group), Final project handout & proposals  
 SKBK: Examples of concepts and ideas (3-5)
- 03/28-4/1 Easter Break
- 04/03: Group Critique, Color Harmony and Color Scales.  
 Final project proposals presented to class.
- 04/05: New York Trip**
- 04/08: Project: Color/value Scales: Work in class
- 04/15: Easter Monday – no day classes – art office closed - evening classes meet
- 04/17: Color/value Scales Individual Critiques  
 HW: SKBK: Examples of concepts, ideas & source materials (3-5)
- 04/22: final project. Work in class
- 04/24: Final Group critique (last day of class) *no projects will be accepted after this date*  
*(no late final projects accepted)*
- 04/30: Individual Critiques

**\* Note: this is a working syllabus subject to change.**

Supplies- An art kit will be distributed in class; the cost will be billed to your student account.