

## Graphics for Strategic Media

JRSM 3905-M90

Fall 2025

Online / UofM Global

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## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Catalog description

Provides students with hands-on experience developing strategic content for social media and digital platforms with web-based tools using text, images, audio and video.

### Prerequisites

None

### Textbooks, software and required materials

- Golombisky, K. & Hagen, R. (2017). *White Space is Not Your Enemy (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. Waltham, MA: Focal Press. ISBN 978-1138804647.
- Other readings and supplemental material will be assigned and posted to Canvas
- Access to:
  - Canva
  - Adobe Express
  - Adobe Photoshop CC

*Note: You can purchase the Adobe Creative Cloud on a month-to-month basis from Adobe.com. You can also access software in on-campus computer labs and at [citrix.memphis.edu](http://citrix.memphis.edu).*

### Classroom format

This course is delivered online in an asynchronous format. In other words, we have no scheduled meeting time. This can be convenient for you, but it also means that it is essential for you to be an organized, motivated student.

This course will teach you the foundational skills for creativity in strategic media. You will explore web-based tools for developing basic graphics for print and social media.

You will upload all required assignments to Canvas and feedback will be provided to encourage your improvement. All quizzes and assignments on Canvas are due on Sunday nights at 11:59 p.m. Central Time unless otherwise noted. To allow time for response and clarification, please reach out with any assignment-related questions at least 48 hours *before* the assignment is due.

### Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis learning management system home page:  
<https://memphis.instructure.com>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. On your course dashboard, click on the course card for JRSM 3905-M90.

## GRADING & ASSIGNMENTS

- Each assignment will come with unique formatting guidelines. Be sure to follow these guidelines exactly. Work that does not comply with these guidelines, as well as the production specifications for the assignment, will receive a grade of 0.
- Design projects may not use templates or model any existing design. Doing so is grounds for failure of the assignment. Repeated offenses will result in failure of the course, academic suspension and/or academic dismissal. The few exceptions are as a starting point for resumes and business cards and on websites for portfolios.
- Where indicated in the assignment, you must shoot photos yourself. Some assignments allow the use of Canva stock images or Creative Commons-licensed images. Do not use copyrighted images.
- You are encouraged to work ahead on assignments to develop your creative processes for the work.

### Assignments (Graphic Assignment GA, or Graphic Project GP)

GA1: Introduction Graphic (discussion post)

GA2: Designing for Facebook

GA3: Designing for LinkedIn

GA4: Designing for Instagram

GA5: Instagram Stories

GA6: Brand Logo Design

GA7: Social Media Brand Pack

GA8: Social Media Chart

GA9: Photo Editing

GA10: 60-sec. Video

GP1: Event Flyer/Poster

GP2: Brochure

GP3: Print Ad

GP4: Infographic

Final: 3-part Branding Project (Social Media, Print & Video)

Portfolio Projects: Website, Personal logo, Resume, Business Card

### Grading

- Graphics activities, 20%
- Graphics projects, 35%
- Quizzes, 15%
- Final project, 15%
- Resume & portfolio, 15%

A = 90%- 100%; B = 80%- 89.9%; C = 70%- 79.9%; D = 60%- 69.9%; F = Below 60%

### Grading philosophy

A = professional quality work that could be used with little or no modification

B = good to excellent work and exceeds requirements but would require revision to be used professionally

C = satisfactory work and adequately meets requirements but would need significant revision to be used professionally

D = barely satisfies minimum requirements and below average quality

F = unsatisfactory work that does not meet minimum requirements

### **AI/ChatGPT**

You are permitted to use ChatGPT and other AI tools to assist you in gathering information, writing drafts, and revising your writing in this course. However, you are expected to include a disclosure statement at the end of your assignment describing which AI tool you used and how you used it. For example, *"ChatGPT was used to draft about 30% of this assignment and to provide revision assistance. AI-produced content was edited for accuracy and style."* Be prepared to submit any prompts you used for assistance with your assignment as well as the original ChatGPT output and to be able to explain/show how you fact-checked and improved upon the AI's work. If your submission appears to have been written/created using AI and these instructions were not adhered to, you may either receive a failing grade or be asked to resubmit the assignment.

### **Repetition of courses and coursework**

You may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If you wish to substantially rework the original submission or to work with the general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from me. All written work will be checked via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be judged against previous submissions and other professors may be consulted. The only exception to this is your online portfolio where you are expected to use the work you have written and created in the program (like your logo, resume, and other creative pieces).

### **Other Issues**

#### **Students with disabilities & accommodations**

If you will need accommodations through [Disability Resources](#) to meet any of the requirements of this course, please let me know as soon as possible. I'm happy to work with you to provide the tools you need to succeed in this course.

#### **Stress, coursework, and resources**

If you start to feel yourself falling behind or feeling overwhelmed for any reason, please don't hesitate to reach out. I'm happy to work with you to find solutions that help you succeed. I want to see you succeed in this class, but that requires you to communicate with me. If I don't know, I can't help.

Also, the University of Memphis offers a number of excellent resources that you may find helpful in several different situations. Below are some links that you may find helpful:

Counseling and Mental Health: [Mental health Services](#)

Health & Corona Virus Information: [UofM Student Health Center](#)

[Sexual, domestic, and intimate partner violence resources](#)

[Dr. Rosie Phillips Bingham Student Emergency Fund](#)

[Emergency Food Resources](#), which includes [Tiger Pantry](#)

[Emergency Housing](#)

[Specific COVID-19 relief funds](#)

## Course schedule

*Note that all required readings/assignments for each week may not be listed here. Always defer to Canvas for the most up-to-date list of readings & assignments for each week.*

### Week 1, Aug. 25-31

#### Basics of Visual Communication

*Do you have your textbook?*

Read: Chapter 1 (textbook)

Assignments: Quiz 1, GA 1 (discussion post)

### Week 2, Sept. 1-7

#### Design Foundations

Read: Chapters 2 & 5 (textbook)

Assignments: Quiz 2, GA 2

Extra credit option: Abstract reflection

### Week 3, Sept. 8-14

#### Type and Color

Read: Chapters 7 & 8 (textbook)

Assignments: Quiz 3, GA 3, GP 1

### Week 4, Sept. 15-21

#### Photography

Read: Chapter 9 (textbook)

Assignments: Quiz 4, GP 4

### Week 5, Sept. 22-28

#### Layout

Read: Chapters 3, 4 & 6 (textbook)

Assignments: Quiz 5, GA 5, GP 2

### Week 6, Sept. 29-Oct. 5

#### Branding & Advertising

Read: Chapter 14 (textbook)

Assignments: Quiz 6, GA 6, GP 3

### Week 7, Oct. 6-12 (Fall Break Saturday, Oct. 11-14)

No assignments due; self-care

### Week 8, Oct. 13-19 (Fall Break Concludes Tuesday, Oct. 14)

#### Personal Branding

Read: Canvas resources

Assignments: Quiz 7, Resume, Business Card

### Week 9, Oct. 20-26

#### Websites

Read: Chapter 13 (textbook)

Assignments: Quiz 8, Portfolio Site

### Week 10, Oct. 27-Nov. 2

#### **Social Media**

Read: Chapter 12 (textbook)

Assignments: Quiz 9, GA 7

### Week 11, Nov. 3-9

#### **Data Visualization**

Readings: Chapter 10 (textbook)

Assignments: Quiz 10, GA 8, GP 4

### Week 12, Nov. 10-16

#### **Photo Editing Tools**

Read: Chapter 11 (textbook)

Assignments: Quiz 11, GA 9, Quiz 12, GA 10

### Week 13, Nov. 17-23

#### **Video**

Review: Chapter 11 (textbook)

Assignments: Quiz 12, GA 10

### Week 14, Nov. 24-30 (Thanksgiving Break Wednesday, Nov. 26-30)

#### **Work Week**

Work on your final projects this week! Schedule a meeting with me if desired (email me!)

### Week 15, Dec. 1-3 – (all deadlines for this week are Wednesday, Dec. 3, the last day of classes):

#### **Wrapping Up**

Submit project by Wednesday, Dec. 3 by 11:59 p.m.

## **ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES**

### **Professional Values and Competencies in JRSM 3905**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.
- Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.

- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

## How professional values and competencies will be met

### *Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically)*

- Show a technical awareness of digital design tools through class assignments, lectures and demonstrations.
- Interpret various theories and practices of visual communication and how they connect with diverse target audiences.
- Identify the basic principles of layout, design and typography and their varied applications in the world.
- Familiarity with current and emerging developments in technology and the use of contemporary software for the design and production of specific editorial, print and collateral material.

### *Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)*

- Produce designs for print and digital media.
- Apply various photo editing methods for print and digital production.
- Combine multiple techniques for styling typography.
- Integrate photos, graphics and text into a layout.

## How assessment of student learning will be met

### *Awareness*

- Become aware of visual communications development and ethics of visual communications.

### *Understanding*

- Understand different steps of the design process, including target audience, principles of design and standards of production.

### *Application*

- Create at least five projects, including social media graphics, advertisements, personal branding and a multi-page publication; all showcasing proficiency in digital creative platforms.

## JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

### Portfolio requirement

As an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, you are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of your work. Portfolios begin in JRSM 3900/3905. The portfolio should contain samples of coursework and/or professional experiences and should develop as you build skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while you are enrolled in your capstone course.

You may use any type of web hosting for your portfolio, but it must have an independent and professional URL. You may use any content management system, but you are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or Squarespace. It is also encouraged to purchase a URL if you plan to use the portfolio long term. You must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

You should have a professional email address you plan to use throughout your professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Professional social media links (minimum LinkedIn)

You may wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, presentations, design PDFs, audio files or writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career you seek after graduation. Your portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

### Email

You must have your UofM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have all UofM emails forwarded to that account. Go to the [account management website](#) for information about implementing email forwarding. You are required to check your email daily.

### Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

### AI/Chat GPT

The use of artificial intelligence software, such as Chat GPT, is prohibited in some courses and required in others in Journalism & Strategic Media. Please refer to specific guidelines for this course in the course-specific part of the syllabus.

### Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism & Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual tardiness.

### Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade (C-) in a class required by your program of study in Journalism & Strategic Media after three attempts will be dropped from the program.

You may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. Substantially reworking the original submission, or working with the same general idea, may be permissible upon discussion and with written approval from the professor of the current course.

### Academic integrity

The University of Memphis expects all students to behave honestly and follow the policies stated in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. If you need more information about the University policy on academic integrity visit the [Office of Student Accountability's website](#).

In addition to University-wide policies, the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on your own, as acts of cheating and punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, you are expected to comply with copyright and intellectual property laws and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas and to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. All creative work may be checked for policy adherence by the professor. The only exception to this policy is your online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo). By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

### **Online SETEs**

You are encouraged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. If completed, once the instructor has posted final grades, you can immediately see that grade. To access evaluation forms, log in to MyMemphis; click the "Student Pages" dropdown menu and select "My Resources" and find the SETE evaluation forms; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and is appreciated.

### **Deadlines**

All deadlines are firm. Because Journalism & Strategic Media is a professional program, students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

You may be permitted to make up missing work if it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented.

### **AP Style and grammar**

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. You are responsible for learning these rules and checking your work for errors.

### **Disability and accommodations**

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

### **Diversity and inclusivity**

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all its forms. Some of these forms include ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality,



race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, and other personal identities and experiences. As such, students are expected to participate in fostering an inclusive environment that respects the differences of others.

Students are expected to approach their work through a diverse lens. Creating messages that resonate with diverse audiences requires an understanding of a variety of perspectives, which are carried out through multiple platforms, such as digital and traditional media outlets.

The department seeks to foster healthy and positive classroom discussions and experiences. As such, faculty and students are expected to remain respectful and professional at all times.

### **Weather policy**

Always check with local media, the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather.

### **Student support**

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, visit the Student Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php> or contact the Dean of Students Office at 901-678-2187, or in person in Suite 359 in the University Center for assistance. You may also talk with course instructors about the challenges you are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting you with campus or community support.