



**VISC 470**

**Visual Communication Capstone**

## **Instructor Contact Information**

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Alex Anderson

**Email:** alex-anderson@ku.edu

**Office**

Chalmers Hall 311

**Office Hours**

by appointment

## **Class Time and Location**

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TuTh 3:20 PM - 5:50 PM CHAL 315

## **Course Hours**

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Credit Hours: 4

A [credit hour](#) is a way to measure the amount of work you're expected to do for a class. It's based on the learning goals of the course and how much time you'll spend on it. During a full length (15-week) semester, you can expect to spend about one hour in class and another two hours on homework or studying each week for each credit hour.

For classes completed in other formats, like an 8-week semester, the time commitment may be different. The exact hours can vary, but you can generally expect to spend a similar amount of time in class and on coursework in total, adjusted for the shorter timeframe.

## **Instructional Methods**

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In Person

## Course Description

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With emphasis on research analysis, and synthesis of complex visual problems, this studio focuses on goal-oriented graphic design problem-solving. The course provides in-depth study of professional design issues and topics and a forum for multi-disciplinary collaboration with related professional disciplines. Prerequisite: VISC 402 with semester grades of "C" or higher or instructor permission.

## Learning Outcomes

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Students will research analyze and synthesize complex visual problems, and focus on goal-oriented graphic design problem-solving.

- Students will collaborate effectively as part of teams
- Students will analyze and critique the work of peers

## Course Materials

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**No Books Needed!**

## Technology Requirements

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All students will need access to a computer.

The following supplies will also be needed:

### **Supplies List:**

Students will be expected to present their work in a professional manner. Quality tools and materials should be considered as an investment in one's future. Please don't

purchase all at once in advance. If materials are needed in class we will do our best to let you know a class period in advance.

- notebook for class notes and assignments (bring to every class)
- box of binder clips (medium size)
- tracing paper (pad or roll min.12 inches wide)
- self-healing mat to cut on in class (not too big not too small)
- push pins (always bring to class)
- fine and thick nibbed markers for sketching
- transparent tape
- white paper tape or masking tape
- steel ruler with cork back (18 inches) AND a heavy ruler at least 24 inches
- x-acto knife with #11 blades

## Technical Support

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### REQUIRED SOFTWARE

Please note: School of Architecture & Design degree programs receive a personal license to Adobe Creative Cloud at no cost. ArcD majors do not need to purchase or renew Adobe Creative Suite at the KU Bookstore.

Additional Requirements: Behance, Dropbox or Google Drive

### KU IT Educational Technology Team

If you have issues or questions about Canvas, contact the Educational Technologists.

Available Monday-Friday (8am-5pm)

itedtech@ku.edu

785-864-2600

### **KU IT Customer Service Center**

Contact the CSC if you need help with passwords or to report issues during extended support hours.

Available Monday-Thursday (8am-8pm), Friday (8am-5pm), Saturday (10am-6pm) and Sunday (Noon-8pm).

itcsc@ku.edu

785-864-8080

## **Course Assignments and Requirements**

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Due Date	Name	Type	Points
	Game Design		
	Student Generated Project		

## **Student Survey of Teaching**

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You will have multiple opportunities to provide feedback on your experience in this course. Suggestions and constructive criticism are encouraged throughout the course and may be particularly valuable early in the semester. To that end, I will use mid-semester surveys and/or reflection assignments to gather input on what is working well and what could be improved. You will also be asked to complete an end-of-semester, online Student Survey of Teaching, which could inform modifications to this course (and other courses that I teach) in the future.

## **Grading**

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This course is a mandatory requirement listed under the major studies section on your degree check sheet. And is part of the sophomore review. To progress to the next course in the sequence, it is necessary to achieve a grade of C (2.0) or higher. The final grade for each project will be determined by the collective assessment of several key components: Participation, Process, Exploration, Refinement, Final Product, and Craft.

**A** superior/excellent/exceeds expectations

**B** very good

**C** satisfactory / meets expectations

**D** unsatisfactory / did not meet expectations

**F** unacceptable

To achieve an “A” grade, it is crucial that your process, product, and participation surpass expectations. Merely completing the project requirements will not be sufficient to earn an “A.” It is not merely a matter of fulfilling basic criteria. Every one of you has the potential to earn an “A.” Strive for excellence consistently. Meeting the minimum expectations by being prepared and fulfilling assigned tasks corresponds to a “satisfactory” effort, which equates to a “C” grade. Remember, a “B” grade reflects Very Good!

## GRADING BREAKDOWN

40% Process: includes demonstrated process of idea development, research, type/image studies, concept development, quantity and quality of sketches. More than just one idea explored, prepared for class and critique participation. I will keep track of your process. A process book will be handed in with each project. The process book contains ALL your sketches, refinements, notes from the project. It should be organized, neat and professional.

50% Product: comprehension of problem, originality of solution, appropriateness of solution, typography, visual invention, visual aesthetic, application/translation of concept, followed the assignment sheet or directives given in class.

10% Craftsmanship: presentation of final, neatness, precision, technical proficiency, appropriate materials. Poor craft can reduce a project grade by 1 full grade. You are learning to be professional and craft is a large part of being professional.

## **Incomplete Grades**

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You may be assigned an 'I' (Incomplete) grade if you are unable to complete some portion of the assigned coursework because of an unanticipated illness, accident, work-related responsibility, family hardship, or verified learning disability. An Incomplete grade is not intended to give you additional time to complete course assignments or extra credit unless there is indication that the specified circumstances prevented you from completing course assignments on time.

## **Attendance Policy**

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Students are required to attend class. Please be in class on time and remain for the entire period. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class period. Three late marks will equal one absence. A total of 3 absences will be allowed for any reason, including excused absences. On your 4th absence, your grade will drop by one full letter grade, or you may be asked to withdraw from the course.

In the event of any absence, students are still responsible for obtaining all information and materials from the class period and completing all assignments on time. It is your sole responsibility to find out about any new work assigned during your absence.

If you miss a class for any reason, you must obtain the information and materials you may have missed. It is not the instructor's duty to provide you with the missed content.

## **Late Work/Make-up Policy**

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All projects and assignments are due on the date given and due at the beginning of class. Late projects will be penalized by lowering the project grade by one full letter grade. After three days, late projects will no longer be accepted.

## **Academic Integrity**

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It is mandatory that all work submitted for this class is original and created by you specifically for this semester and this class. Any instances where work is discovered to closely resemble material found online will be regarded as plagiarism. In such cases,

appropriate sanctions will be implemented for all individuals involved in plagiarizing coursework. Plagiarism is a violation of the University Senate Rules and Regulations and will not be tolerated. Consequences may include failing the project, disqualification from the Viscom Sophomore Review, course failure, departmental suspension, or expulsion from the university. Plagiarism is reported to the Department Chair, the Dean's office and to the University and is a form of academic misconduct.

Important note about Artificial Intelligence: If AI is used to help create text or images in this project (or any project in any of your classes), it is imperative to be transparent and honest about its involvement. AI can be embraced and explored as a tool used to enhance the creative process. Maintaining mastery over the AI and making necessary alterations to all final deliverables is crucial. Failure to inform us that you are using AI at any point in the project will be considered plagiarism, and strict consequences will follow.

As we navigate this learning process, we must remember to exercise responsible AI usage and ensure that AI serves as a valuable assistant rather than a substitute for creativity and originality. Together, we can leverage AI to augment our process. Honesty and integrity could lead to a more insightful and ethical exploration of AI's potential in the creative domain.

## **Subject to Change Statement**

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Information listed on the syllabus may be subject to change, including how the Instructor will communicate changes to students and document such modifications.

## **Student Resources and University Policies**

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Please visit the Student Resources website ([KU Academic Success](#)) for a list of student resources and university policies.

## **Accommodation**

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The Student Access Center (SAC) coordinates academic accommodations and services for all eligible KU students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted SAC, please do so as soon as possible. They are located in 22 Strong Hall and can be reached at 785-864-4064

(V/TTY). Information about their services can be found at [access.ku.edu](https://access.ku.edu). Please contact me privately in regard to your needs in this course.

## **Professionalism & Participation**

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In order to maximize your learning and growth as a designer in this class, active engagement with the coursework is essential. Adopt a serious attitude and be willing to go beyond the assigned tasks. Challenge yourself and embrace the philosophy of learning through hands-on experience. Design is a competitive yet rewarding profession, and this course is designed with that mindset. Expectations include diligent effort every day, not just for grades, but for personal development and skill enhancement.

To truly benefit from this course, it is important to approach it with curiosity, self-initiative, and a dedicated investment of time. The work we will be doing can be time-consuming, slow, occasionally frustrating, and involve repetitive tasks. Embrace the opportunity to immerse yourself, actively participate, share ideas, and explore new possibilities. If this approach does not resonate with you, it may be worth discussing alternative course options with your advisor.

Effective verbal communication skills are paramount in conveying your ideas to clients and fellow design team members. During critiques, students are expected to come prepared to present their concepts, explain how their design form supports the underlying concept, and describe the process behind their ideas. Offering feedback to your peers is a privilege. Engaging in both giving and receiving feedback is beneficial. While you do not have to personally “like” someone else’s work, it is crucial to provide insightful commentary in a respectful and constructive manner.

A lack of professionalism can effectively lower your grade by one full letter grade.

- Attend class on time and stay throughout the whole class period
- Prepared for every class
- Participate in classroom discussions/crits
- Use class time to work on projects for this class
- Maintain a positive and open-minded attitude



- Demonstrate deliberate self-disciplined and timely work habits
- Progressively strive for and achieve the highest standards of quality

## **Medical Related Absences**

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Because of the fast-paced, project-based nature of studio curricula, absences as the result of a medical condition will count in the same way as non-medical absences. Excessive absence for any reason, as outlined in this policy, is irreparably detrimental to a student's ability to succeed in our studio curriculum.

## **Religious Observations**

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Students who plan to observe religious holidays should inform instructors of the day(s) they intend to be absent due to religious observance. You should inform the instructor before the absence. Doing so allows enough time for you and your professor to prepare accordingly and/or have a discussion to "reach a mutually acceptable solution."

<https://diversity.ku.edu/religious-observances>

## **Academic Misconduct**

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Academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this class. Academic misconduct by a student shall include, but not be limited to, disruption of classes; threatening an instructor or fellow student in an academic setting; giving or receiving of unauthorized aid on examinations, reports or other assignments; knowingly misrepresenting the source of any academic work; unauthorized changing of grades; unauthorized use of University approvals or forging of signatures; plagiarizing of another's work; or otherwise acting dishonestly.

Disruptive Behavior: The scope and content of the material included in this course are defined by the instructor in consultation with the responsible academic unit. While the orderly exchange of ideas, including questions and discussions prompted by lectures, discussion sessions and laboratories, is viewed as a normal part of the educational environment, the instructor has the right to limit the scope and duration of these

interactions. Students who engage in disruptive behavior, including persistent refusal to observe boundaries defined by the instructor regarding inappropriate talking, discussions, and questions in the classroom or laboratory may be subject to discipline for non-academic misconduct for disruption of teaching or academic misconduct.

<https://policy.ku.edu/governance/USRR#art2sect7>

All academic misconduct is reported to the Department Chair, the Dean's office and to the University.

Consequences may include course failure, departmental suspension, or expulsion from the University.

## Critique

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Critique is one of the most valuable parts of formal design education. It is also one of the most difficult aspects of the design school experience. It is a collaborative activity that takes quite a bit of time to learn — both in terms of how to give feedback, and how to accept feedback.

How can you help your classmates be the best designer they can be?

Please be collegial classmates and motivate each other to excellence every day.

Critique is not a competition; it is an opportunity for everyone to learn and grow.

Critique is a collaborative activity that requires time to learn how to give and accept feedback. Both givers and receivers of critique play a role in creating a positive and constructive environment.

Pay attention to critiques of other students' work as there is much to learn beyond your own projects.

Understand the goals of the critique, whether it is exploring concepts, refining details, or celebrating project completion.

Critiques should be honest but not cruel or disrespectful.

The purpose of critique is to improve the work.

A critique should leave you empowered to improve your work.

## **Expected Workload**

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As required by NASAD Accreditation. For Studio Courses 1 credit hour carries 3 hours of homework. For a 3-credit course that is a minimum of 9 hours of homework a week. For a 4-credit-hour course a minimum of 12 hours of homework a week. If you have a job that requires you to work more than 20 hours a week you may find it difficult to succeed in your studios. Please let your instructors know if you are working full-time and we can talk through strategies to help you succeed.

## **ARCH/D Student Hub**

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Weekly announcements, advising info, policies and resources, job postings, internships, scholarship opportunities, upcoming electives, and study abroad trips, student organizations information and events!

[www.arcd.ku.edu/current-students](http://www.arcd.ku.edu/current-students)

## **Connect with Academic Advisors**

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Real-time conversations with an academic advisor are the fastest path to assistance and support. The ARC/D advisors offer two kinds of real-time availability: 1. Virtual Drop-In Hours - Any undergraduate student is welcome at virtual drop-in hours and 2. Scheduled In-Person Appointments. Check out the website for more information or to set up an appointment.

[www.arcd.ku.edu/advising](http://www.arcd.ku.edu/advising)

## **Use of Artificial Intelligence**

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The use of AI is increasingly part of the world of graphic design, illustration and UI / UX Design. This technology is changing and advancing rapidly.

It is important as a student of design to be transparent and respectful about the use of AI in your work. Being transparent means being open and honest about when you are using AI as a tool. AI is also only one tool in your toolbox as a designer. The best designers leverage all the tools in the toolbox not just leaning on one.

Being respectful means understanding how AI works and using it in a way that respects the craft, people, and environment in which design is created. As a tool AI can do all of these things or it can do the opposite. As with any tool it is all about how, by whom and when it is used.

Our industry is already so over optimized for speed and not creativity. We don't want AI tools to deprive young designers of the chance to find themselves somewhere unexpected.

Machines tend to think in straight linear lines vs. designers who think in non-linear paths and combine things in unexpected ways. The best design comes from happy accidents, unexpected combinations, and a human touch. AI can't create beautiful pieces by happenstance. There are never happy accidents with AI.

As you explore AI in your design work, remember that every prompt, render, and use carries an environmental cost in energy use and resource/water consumption to our home planet. Consider your choices in tools, scale, and frequency and how we might minimize these impacts by not using AI or, if using AI then to use it very thoughtfully.

If you are transparent, respectful and honest about how you are using AI in your work then use it as one tool in your toolbox for what you make in this class. Keep in mind that you are here in school to learn to do the work of a designer. If AI is doing all the work, then what are you really learning?

AI serves as a valuable assistant rather than a substitute for creativity and originality.