

Graphic Design (GDES) Courses

GDES1010 Design Thinking & Creative Process

This course introduces students to the fundamental principles of design thinking and the creative process, equipping them with the skills to approach design challenges strategically and innovatively. Through a combination of lectures, demonstrations, hands-on projects and critiques, students learn how to empathize with users, define problems, ideate solutions and prototype ideas. The course emphasizes a human-centered approach to design and explores creative problem-solving techniques applicable across various design disciplines. Upon completion of the course, students develop a solid foundation in the design process, with the ability to generate ideas, refine concepts and present their solutions effectively. No prior design experience is necessary.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

GDES1020 Design Theory and Practice

Students learn how to thoughtfully apply the creative process to design projects, participate in a number of non-digital project-oriented experiences, and develop basic skills and practices to be successful in the program and in the industry. The class is structured with an overview of design industries, historical art movements, design trends, and an introduction to key figures. Exploring the creative process and traditional tools, students build a visual vocabulary and are exposed to the critical components of success in a university-level design program and in a collaborative learning space. Topics include elements and principles of design, layout and composition, branding, product families, packaging, and color theory. Instruction includes design analysis and critique, creative research and finding inspiration, hands-on problem solving and public speaking. Relevant connections to current and historical contexts are woven throughout the course.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

GDES1040 Foundations of Web Design

This course introduces students to the concepts, techniques and principles needed to design modern web sites. Students consider user research, contemporary visual approaches, compositional design principles, user interface design models, and responsive coding practices in the process of creating a series of project-based website prototypes. Emphasis is on understanding and applying current approaches in planning and design as well as securing a functional grasp of the prototyping techniques required to present these solutions as planned.

Offered at Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

GDES1060 User Experience and Content Design I

This course introduces students to the foundations of user experience design for digital products. Students learn to develop, prototype, test and refine user-focused concepts for websites and mobile applications. Topics include design research, user interface design, interaction design, style guides, user interface toolkits and basic principles of accessibility. Students gain experience with industry-standard design and prototyping software.

Offered at Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

GDES1080 Vector Drawing & Image Editing

In this foundation-level course, students learn to use both vector-based and raster-based software through hands-on learning and creative project-based assignments. Through demonstrations and practical exercises, students develop an understanding of the capabilities and uses of these industry-standard tools in graphic design. From creating scalable objects and color management in vector software to manipulating and enhancing photos in raster software, students gain valuable skills that are crucial in today's design industry. The course discusses the good and bad of generative AI and how the applications work together cohesively. Students should feel confident at the end of the course to continue exploring and using these powerful programs.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

GDES2000 Typography

Typography is a critical foundation of visual communications. Letterforms, typestyle, shape and size communicate subtle messages and convey important information. Successful design solutions always benefit from thoughtful and creative use of type, whether on a printed page or in digital space. This course presents the fundamentals of typography and letterforms including history, anatomy, theory and practice, while teaching students to appreciate type as a critical element of design and to identify type by respective classifications and families. Emphasis is placed on developing a current, practical typographic knowledge based on current industry standards. Typographic design in graphic communications is explored through project-based work.

Prerequisite(s): GDES1030 or GDES1080.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

GDES2020 Motion Graphics I

This course introduces the fundamentals of contemporary digital motion graphics. Students cover both animation and video techniques. Digital motion concepts and creation techniques are also covered. The course uses a range of software and hardware tools. Students experiment with motion image origination through basic animation and camera applications. Various editing tools are introduced.

Prerequisite(s): GDES1030 or GDES1080.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

GDES2030 Editorial & Publication Design

This course introduces the creative and technical development of text composition, layout and the hierarchy of information with emphasis on dynamic use of the grid, page structure, text/image integration and multi-page layout and design. Emphasis is on typographic composition and page layout. Using industry-standard page layout applications, this project-based class helps students develop their skills as designers by the creation of sophisticated editorial and publication design assignments.

Prerequisite(s): GDES2000.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

GDES2050 Content Management Systems

In this course, students explore the workings of a popular content management system (CMS) as well as a strategic process for organizing and delivering their website content. Students use a variety of skills to build, deploy and test multi-page websites. Potential projects include ecommerce, portfolio, blog, small business, and progressive web apps. Students build upon content strategy, user experience, information architecture, and front-end coding skills.

Prerequisite(s): Sophomore status.

Offered at Online, Providence

3 Semester Credits

GDES2060 Portfolio Assessment for Digital

In this course, students conceive, design and develop their own portfolio website, incorporating the projects and personal branding developed in Portfolio Assessment for Print (GDES2061). Students use their evolving knowledge of interactive design and front-end web development to organize and structure their portfolio, ensuring that their website is useable, accessible and visually appealing. Work originally designed for print is converted to a web-friendly format. Previously-produced web-based projects are revised and improved. Website design is prototyped for optimal user experience. Additional consideration is paid to formatting student work for delivery on common online platforms.

Prerequisite(s): GDES1060, GDES2030, sophomore status, Co-requisite: GDES2061.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

GDES2061 Portfolio Assessment for Print

In this course, students assemble a comprehensive portfolio that demonstrates their increasingly sophisticated mastery of design. With faculty guidance, students gather, revise and organize their best works. Students begin to identify and present themselves as independent designers through the development and design of a focused personal brand identity that carries through to all of their presentational materials. Emphasis is placed on both self-branding and self-revision through reinforcement of design skills and concepts learned in the program thus far. In the final week of the course, students present and defend their work to a select group of faculty. Success in this course depends on the progress of the student, which is identified through both in-class and out-of-class assignments. There is an expectation that students display a high degree of involvement, which includes such behaviors as encountering all classwork and assignments with commitment, obvious preparation, and a willingness to become actively engaged in class activities and discussion.

Prerequisite(s): GDES1060, GDES2030, sophomore status, Co-requisite: GDES2060.

Offered at Providence
3 Semester Credits

GDES3015 Design Team I

This course provides students with hands-on design and development projects from real-world clients. With faculty supervision, students work on a wide range of team-based design projects involving print and screen media. The resulting work supports the day-to-day operations of nonprofit client organizations, community partners and interdisciplinary collaborative work. This course is the direct, practical application of skills learned in prior academic courses and prepares students for future career success.

Prerequisite(s): GDES3250.

Offered at Providence
4 Semester Credits

GDES3025 Design Team II

This course expands on the real-world client projects begun in Design Team I. This course provides students with hands-on design and development projects from real-world clients. With faculty supervision, students work on a wide range of team-based design projects involving print and screen media. The resulting work supports the day-to-day operations of nonprofit client organizations, community partners and interdisciplinary collaborative work. This course is the direct, practical application of skills learned in prior academic courses and prepares students for future career success.

Prerequisite(s): GDES3015.

Offered at Providence
4 Semester Credits

GDES3050 Basics of Graphic Design

This course introduces the student to the fundamental principles of graphic design. Using both traditional tools as well as industry-standard software, students learn the essential visual design concepts, processes, and workflow practices used in graphic design. The introduction of design theory and practical applications of graphic design is included.

Offered at Charlotte, Online, Providence
3 Semester Credits

GDES3140 Motion Graphics II

This course teaches students advanced digital production techniques and tools for full motion, sound and video editing. Participants explore current and emerging media standards and applications. Topics include converging digital media, content creation and use of digital media communication tools for internet-enabled application. Students work independently and on project teams.

Prerequisite(s): GDES2020, sophomore status.

Offered at Providence
3 Semester Credits

GDES3210 Advanced Publication & Print

This course reinforces the creative and technical development of text composition, layout and hierarchy of information. Through various projects, students conceive, compose and produce multi-page layouts using sophisticated and advanced visual design techniques for print and screen. Students visually coordinate images and typographical content across multiple and emerging media specific to editorial and publication design.

Prerequisite(s): GDES2030.

Offered at Providence
3 Semester Credits

GDES3215 Coding for Web Design

This course develops the student's understanding of the web design and web development process. Students advance their knowledge of client-side coding languages (HTML, CSS and JavaScript) through a series of real-world projects and weekly design challenges. Through this process, students expand their ability to conceive of, design and build modern, responsive interfaces for websites and web apps. Topics include user interface design, usability and accessibility, design prototyping, front-end development with HTML, CSS and JavaScript, performance optimization, basic version control, and publishing content on the internet.

Prerequisite(s): GDES1040.

Offered at Providence
3 Semester Credits

GDES3235 User Experience and Content Design II

This course builds on the design process introduced in User Experience and Content Design I. Students consider common approaches for designing effective user experiences and user interfaces through the creation of several project-based applications. The focus is on adopting a carefully considered process of discovery, strategy, design and testing that can help designers understand the problem they are solving and offer intelligent solutions that satisfy both user needs and business goals.

Prerequisite(s): GDES1060.

Offered at Providence
3 Semester Credits

GDES3250 Brand Identity Design and Development

The course is an immersion into the brand identity and development process, through strategy, design, implementation and presentation. Utilizing industry-standard software programs, students learn how to design identity systems that are unique, memorable, meaningful, appropriate and differentiated from competitors. In addition, students gain a better understanding of brand standards, brand equity, competitors, target audiences and cohesiveness across different forms of print and digital media.

Prerequisite(s): GDES2030.

Offered at Providence
3 Semester Credits

GDES3260 Package Design

This advanced level graphics course is a hands-on, project-based class where students are expected to further refine their level of craft in prototyping, while applying their knowledge of branding and typography as it pertains to package design. Students are educated about new product and package development, visual coding, structural packaging, understanding competitors audits, visual hierarchy, brand equity, shelf presence, cohesiveness, material sourcing, understanding target audience and demographic, developing supportive marketing collateral, and food and beverage requirements within the package design industry.

Prerequisite(s): GDES3250.

Offered at Providence
3 Semester Credits

GDES3270 Wayfinding & Environmental Graphics

In this advanced-level course, students explore the nuances of wayfinding and environmental graphics. Students gain a clear understanding of applying brand identity to various environmental spaces and the impact it can have, both from a visual and marketing aspect. Projects explore wayfinding systems, icon development, effective environmental graphics, signage, visitor flow, directional hierarchy, interactivity, visual clues and exhibit design.

Prerequisite(s): GDES3250.

Offered at Providence
3 Semester Credits

GDES3300 Design for Video I

Students participating in this course are introduced to digital production techniques, theory, and tools for full motion and video editing. Students explore current and emerging media standards and applications. Topics include converging digital media, content creation, and social media platforms.

Offered at Online, Providence
3 Semester Credits

GDES3310 Design for Video II

This advanced course explores different genres and narrative codes, including documentaries, TV ads and post-modern narratives, in experiential team assignments. Exercises in set lighting, advanced framing and advanced camera movement enhance already acquired production techniques. Additional sound and audio production as well as more in-depth digital editing and special effects are provided for post-production. Topics include contemporary digital media history and film genres. Financing and project management are reviewed.

Prerequisite(s): GDES3300, sophomore status.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

GDES3315 Introduction to Programming with JavaScript

This course presents an overview of the core components found in many programming environments using the popular JavaScript language as a model. The use of core programming concepts is explored through the creation of project-based programs. Students gain an understanding of the basics of programming, easing adaption of new ideas and practices in web development.

Prerequisite(s): GDES3215.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

GDES3355 Web Design & User Experience Studio

This studio course provides students an opportunity to showcase the skills acquired throughout their web design and user experience coursework. Students draw on the breadth of their learning experiences to create a comprehensive design project that demonstrates their understanding of contemporary design practices in the respective fields of web design and user experience. At the conclusion of the course, students create a detailed case study outlining their process and outcomes.

Prerequisite(s): GDES2050, (GDES3215 or GDES3235).

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

GDES3500 3D Modeling & Animation

This course introduces the essentials of 3D models and animations. Students learn to use basic objects to create realistic computerized 3D images.

Dynamic models are created and set into motion. Professional concepts and techniques create the platform for primary applications and skills. Industry-standard software is used to offer students a real work experience.

Prerequisite(s): GDES2020.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits

GDES4050 Design Capstone

This capstone course guides students through the assembly of a comprehensive physical and digital portfolio that demonstrates their increasingly sophisticated mastery of design. With faculty guidance, students gather, revise and organize their best completed works as well as enhance their portfolios with additional advanced design projects. Portfolios consist of a minimum of 12 professional works showcasing a range of design capabilities. In the final week of the course, students present and defend their work to a select group of faculty and visiting professionals.

Prerequisite(s): GDES3250.

Offered at Providence

3 Semester Credits