NMC 141. APPLIED MEDIA AESTHETICS (4 credits)
Principles of visual composition, sequential imagery, interactive design, narrative structure, and cinematic language as they relate to digital communication arts and visualization. Provides core competencies in introductory digital communication arts tools.

T/TH: 9 – 11:50am  
**Professor:** Amanda Tasse  
**Email:** tassea@oregonstate.edu  
**Location:** Furman Hall 202  
**Office:** Snell 41 (basement)  
**Final Exam:** Wed. 6/14 @ Noon, Furm 202  
**Hours:** T/TH: 2-3pm or by appointment

Course Description
This course introduces and deepens student fluency in fundamental principles of visual storytelling, structure, design, and communication across media formats. Students will integrate their learning and demonstrate their understanding through both critical reflection and practical application. Just as a writer is concerned with story structure or a musician with musical structure, a media artist or designer must be concerned with visual structure. Visual structure is the only language available to media artists and designers, yet it is often misused or simply ignored. The key to using visual structure is understanding basic visual components and how visual structure relates to narrative structure.

The basic visual components are space, line, shape, color, tone, movement, and rhythm. It is through control of these basics that a designer stirs an audience's emotions, creates a visual style, gives unity to their work and links story structure to visual structure. Though this class briefly addresses sound, other OSU classes provide a much more in depth treatment of sound than this class addresses. The principles discussed in this class can be used to create and control visuals for any format including film, TV, commercials, games, visualization, interactive, or other media work using live-action, tactile, or animation techniques. This class relates the visual concepts to practical production and bridges the gap between theory and practice.

Course Outcomes
The learning outcomes of this course are described in four areas:

1. Content:
   a. Develop skills necessary to create conceptually interesting digital media communication arts projects.
2. Knowledge and Context:
   a. Learn aesthetic design concepts relevant to media communications
   b. Explore visual and narrative structure, and aesthetic principles across a range of contemporary visualization practices
3. Cognitive Skills and Reflection:
   c. Identify and analyze visual communication and design strategies from examples, readings and your own work in discussion and writing.
   d. Articulate intention and intuition and take responsibility for creative choices.
4. Competence of Craft or Technique:
   e. Acquire basic technical digital communication arts skills
   f. Demonstrate ability to effectively apply fundamental visual communication concepts and technical skills to the design of media communications projects
Methods of Instruction and Evaluation:
Instruction methods include slide lectures, demonstrations, hands-on projects, written reflection, discussion, critiques, and quizzes.

The Structure of the Class:
1. Define each basic visual component.
2. Show how to recognize these components.
3. Demonstrate how these components communicate to an audience.
4. Apply the components to a media text.
5. Discuss how the component is used technically and aesthetically in actual production.
6. Show examples from varied forms of media (film, games, etc.)

Canvas
This course is supported on Canvas. All assignments and some lectures are posted to Canvas. If necessary, I will communicate to you via your Canvas email address outside of class hours. You are required to check this email account regularly for notices. You are also required to ask me in person or via email if you don't understand an assignment, concept, or other expectation.

NO FOOD OR DRINK IN CLASS
NO CELL PHONES IN CLASS
NO SOCIAL MEDIA, SHOPPING, STREAMING, TEXTING, EMAILING IN CLASS
NO WORKING ON MATERIAL FOR OTHER CLASSES IN CLASS

Attendance Policy
Mandatory. You are allowed 3 absences for this course. Your 4th absence will lower your final grade one letter. Any absence exceeding 4 constitutes an automatic failure for the course. I do not distinguish between ‘excused’ or ‘not excused.’ An absence is an absence. No exception. Students who are consistently late or leave early more than 3 times will receive an absence. I may grant ‘optional’ work days and be lenient in case of extreme nature. Attendance means being on time, awake, ready to work, and working only on material for this class. If you sleep during this class, you will be counted as absent. If you leave early, you will be counted absent. If come to class unprepared with nothing to work on, you will be counted as absent and it will be factored into your project grade. If you are working on material for another class, surfing the web, or otherwise excessively distracting yourself or other students, you will be counted as absent. You’re paying a lot to be in school. The quality of your work, learning, and attitude are what will help you in the long run. Take yourself and the opportunity to focus 100% on your development seriously!

Attendance is mandatory for everyone at the final exam, which will consist of final project presentations and critique.

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities
Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at http://ds.oregonstate.edu. DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations.
Required Materials

Media
- *Journey* (PS3 Game) Available in NMC Game Lab in Snell
- Film/TV selections, available for rental or digital download (Netflix, Amazon Prime, iTunes)
- Additional links to videos or texts will be on Canvas

Tools and Supplies
- External Hard-drive, 64+ gigs
- Smartphone or DSLR
- Sketchbook & Drawing Tools (don’t need to be high quality)

Software
- Photoshop, Premiere
- Presentation Software (Keynote, PowerPoint)
- Lynda.com Account (free for SAC students, non-SAC students may need to purchase a subscription)

Recommended Resources:

**Film/TV & Motiongraphics**
- [https://film-grab.com/](https://film-grab.com/)
- [http://www.artofthetitle.com/](http://www.artofthetitle.com/)
- [http://motionographer.com/](http://motionographer.com/)
- [https://vimeo.com/channels/staffpicks](https://vimeo.com/channels/staffpicks)

**Infographics & General Media Arts**
- [http://www.informationisbeautiful.net/](http://www.informationisbeautiful.net/)
- [http://infosthetics.com/](http://infosthetics.com/)

Course Content

In class lectures cover concepts in the book and expand upon it to include relevant examples across art, film, animation, infographics, data visualization, object design, exhibition design and many aspects of digital visual culture. Students are expected to actively engage in discussion and critique related to class material.

Outside of class, you are expected to do the following:
- Assigned readings
- Canvas-based quizzes to demonstrate your understanding of the readings and concepts in class
- Lynda.com tutorials while taking notes
- Hands-on projects to practice your understanding of concepts covered in the class

The weekly Canvas quizzes cover material in the readings and in lectures. They are open-book, but have a time limit. To complete them within the given time, it will be essential that you have already done the reading and taken notes on it, and paid attention during class lectures. Please coordinate DAS accommodations directly with the professor ahead of time.

Hands-on assignments require demonstrated working knowledge of tools, techniques, and concepts covered in the assigned tutorials and in class. If you are having difficulty with a tool,
technique, or concept, don't wait until the last minute to figure it out. Google can be your ally for solving technical issues and is good preparation for proactively solving problems in your professional career. I am available to help in office hours or via email, but you must allow for adequate response time, which can be slower on evenings/weekends. Email questions at least 24 hours in advance of an assignment being due. In the mean-time do your best to proceed.

Digital Communication Arts requires practitioners to continually update their technical and conceptual skills. Students are expected to complete Photoshop and Premiere tutorials outside of class, and to take notes while doing these, which must be handed in at the end of the quarter for a grade. The suggested tutorials are beginner level. Those with more experience are encouraged to complete more advanced tutorials, all of which are available on Lynda.com.

**Backing Up Your Work**

*You must continually back up your work to at least two locations* (your external hard-drive and another location such as Canvas, Google Drive, your personal computer). Save often! Losing work or coming to class unprepared with your files due to forgetting your hard-drive, Canvas outages, personal computer crashes, or other preventable technical problems will not be acceptable excuses for being unprepared in class or turning work in late.

**Assignments**

Descriptions/Guidelines of Projects are on Canvas.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative Projects</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical Skill Development</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concepts</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Creative Projects**

1. Space (10 pts)
2. Color, Shape Line (10 pts)
3. Movement & Rhythm (10 pts)
4. Concept Ideation (10 pts)
5. Final Project (30 pts)

**Analysis**

1. Narrative & Visual Structural Analysis – Digital Game (7.5)
2. Narrative & Visual Structural Analysis – Film (7.5)

**Participation**

Your participation grade consists of your attentive participation in class lectures and discussion. This includes active listening (being present - paying attention), note-taking, and sharing of your insights based on what you’ve learned from class, the readings, and your creative practice. Your participation will be downgraded for disruptive behaviors such as distracting yourself or others through texting, using social media, or doing other activities not related to class during class
time. Excessive distraction, sleeping, leaving class early, or other disruptive behaviors will result in an absence for the day.

**Grading Structure**

Grades will be posted to Canvas. Note that the attendance grade will be factored in separately at the end of the quarter. The grading rubric for individual assignments is listed on Canvas.

It is the mission of Oregon State University, and higher education in general, to offer you an opportunity and environment to expand your critical capacity and creative potential. Grades are not entitlement; they are evaluations of growth, development and craftsmanship. It is the expectation in this course that you will work hard; hard work alone does not merit a mark of excellence.

As such, here is the basic grading rubric for this course:

- **A. Exceptional.** Work demonstrates exceptional understanding and production effort beyond the basic assignment and exudes extreme care and development both aesthetically and conceptually. It is unusually sophisticated, insightful and genuinely invested in exploration. Reserved for projects that exhibit only the highest quality of experimentation, conceptual nuance and development, and superior technical craftsmanship. Highest distinction, typically very few if any students receive this grade.
- **B. Good.** Work exceeds requirements and shows creative thought and care in production, resulting in a work that is cohesive and successful. It is inquisitive and engaged and both aesthetic and conceptual development is of high quality.
- **C. Satisfactory.** Work meets basic criteria and demonstrates basic understanding and competency of production skills. Aesthetic and conceptual development is adequate, but does not push the criteria in form or content. The work may lack a certain degree of cohesion.
- **D. Unsatisfactory.** Work may meet basic criteria but portrays a careless approach to production and little creative development. It is limited in scope, formulaic and looks as though it may have been thrown together the night before class. Conceptual development is clearly lacking and technical skills lack adequate mastery.
- **F. Fail.** Work fails to meet basic criteria and is problematic on multiple fronts.

**Schedule**

The professor reserves the right to modify these dates, topics, and assignments based on the needs of the class. The most up-to-date version of the schedule is on the Canvas class homepage. If modifications on due dates or assignments are made, I will additionally notify the class via email and during class. Please double check Canvas and your email throughout the course!

Readings, Quizzes, and Tutorials are listed by the date they are assigned, and are to be finished before the following class. Late Quizzes will not be accepted. Assignments are listed by the date they are assigned, but their varying due dates are listed. Late assignments will be downgraded by 10% for each day late. Final projects will not be accepted late.
Week 1  Applied Media Aesthetics, Media Ethics, Visual Components

Tues. 4/4  Zettl Ch. 1 (Canvas)
Block Ch. 1, 2 (Canvas)
Photoshop CC 2017 Essential Training: The Basics (Intro, Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4) – Lynda.com

Thurs. 4/6  Block Ch. 3 (Part One)
Concept Ideation Exercise 1 (due Tues. 4/11)
Quiz 1

Week 2  Contrast & Affinity; Space: 4 basic categories, aspect ratio, screen formats, surface divisions, open and closed

Tues. 4/11  Block Ch. 3 (Part Two)
Space Project (Due Tues. 4/18)
Photoshop CC 2017 Essential Training: The Basics (5, 6, 7) – Lynda.com

Thurs. 4/13  Quiz 2
Space Project (Due Tues. 4/18)

Week 3  Space (Cont’d); Visual & Narrative Structure

Tues. 4/18  Block Ch. 9
Play “Journey” (PS3 videogame, available in Snell Gamelab) (Due Tues. 4/25)
Narrative & Visual Structural Analysis “Journey” (Due Tues. 4/25)

Thurs. 4/20  Block Ch. 10
Quiz 3
Play “Journey” (PS3 videogame, available in Snell Gamelab) (Due Tues. 4/25)
Narrative & Visual Structural Analysis “Journey” (Due Tues. 4/25)

Week 4  Visual & Narrative Structure (Cont’d), Analysis, Graphing, Visual Change

Tues. 4/25  Watch “Designing Journey” (Due Thurs. 4/27)
Photoshop CC 2017 Essential Training: The Basics (8, 9) – Lynda.com

Thurs. 4/27  Block Ch. 4
Watch “Ex Machina”. Visual Structure Graph & Analysis (Due Thurs. 5/4)
Quiz 4

Week 5  Line and Shape, Linear Motif, Basic Shapes, Perception of Line

Tues. 5/2  Watch “Ex Machina”. Visual Structure Graph & Analysis (Due Thurs. 5/4)
Photoshop CC Selections and Layer Masking Workshop (Intro, Ch. 1) – Lynda.com
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Resources, Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. 5/4</td>
<td>Block Ch. 5, 6 Color, Shape, Line Project (Due Tues. 5/16)</td>
<td><em>Photoshop CC Selections and Layer Masking Workshop</em> (Ch. 2, 3) – Lynda.com Quiz 5</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Color, Tone, Light</td>
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<td>Tues. 5/9</td>
<td>Color, Shape, Line Project (Due Tues. 5/16)</td>
<td><em>Getting Started with Premiere Pro CC (2015)</em> – Lynda.com</td>
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<td>Thurs. 5/11</td>
<td>Block Ch. 7 Color, Shape, Line Project (Due Tues. 5/16)</td>
<td>Quiz 6</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Movement &amp; Rhythm</td>
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<td>Tues. 5/16</td>
<td>Block Ch. 8 Movement &amp; Rhythm Project (Storyboard &amp; Visual Plan -Due Thur. 5/18)</td>
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<td>Thurs. 5/18</td>
<td>Movement &amp; Rhythm Project (Due Tues. 5/23)</td>
<td>Quiz 7</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Concept &amp; Visual Development, Sound</td>
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<td>Tues. 5/23</td>
<td>Concept Ideation Exercise 2 (due Thurs. 5/25)</td>
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<td>Thurs. 5/25</td>
<td>Final Project Proposal &amp; Visual Development (due Tues. 5/30)</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Concept &amp; Visual Development, In Class Critique</td>
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<td>Tues. 5/30</td>
<td>Final Project Draft (to be screened in class Thurs.) (due Thurs. 6/1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs. 6/1</td>
<td>Work on Final Project (due Thurs. 6/8 or Wed. 6/14)</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Principles of Interactivity &amp; Visualization</td>
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<td>Tues. 6/6</td>
<td>Work on Final Project (due Thurs. 6/8 or Wed. 6/14)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs. 6/8</td>
<td>Final Presentations &amp; Critique: Group 1</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Final Exam (Presentations &amp; Critique)</td>
<td>MANDATORY ATTENDANCE FOR ALL</td>
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<td>Wed. 6/14</td>
<td>Final Presentations &amp; Critique: Group 2</td>
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Policies

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY
As a manufacturer of cultural content, you have an immense responsibility. Racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination are unacceptable. There is no tolerance for words, speech, behavior, actions, or clothing/possessions that insult, diminish, demean, or belittle any individual or group of persons based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual identity, ability, economic class, national origin, language, or age. This is qualitatively different that a critical engagement with the realities of racism, sexism, etc. We must recognize the line between what is ‘discriminatory’ and what is a critical engagement with content can be a fuzzy one. If you are uncertain, you MUST speak with me. Work submitted for this class that violates this policy will receive a mark of a ‘zero.’

Academic freedom, freedom of speech, and freedom of discourse DO NOT protect racism or other acts of harassment and forms of discrimination within the Oregon State University educational environment.

Complete information regarding the university policy on student conduct and offenses can be found here: [http://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/offenses-0](http://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/offenses-0)

Academic or Scholarly Dishonesty:
Academic or Scholarly Dishonesty is defined as an act of deception in which a Student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person, or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work or research, either through the Student's own efforts or the efforts of another. It includes:

1) CHEATING - use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information or study aids, or an act of deceit by which a Student attempts to misrepresent mastery of academic effort or information.
   a) All work for this class must be created during the term. No prior work is accepted.

2) FABRICATION - falsification or invention of any information including but not limited to falsifying research, inventing or exaggerating data, or listing incorrect or fictitious references.

3) ASSISTING - helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty. This includes but is not limited to paying or bribing someone to acquire a test or assignment, changing someone's grades or academic records, taking a test/doing an assignment for someone else by any means, including misuse of an electronic device.

4) TAMPERING - altering or interfering with evaluation instruments or documents.

5) PLAGIARISM - representing the words or ideas of another person or presenting someone else's words, ideas, artistry or data as one's own, or using one's own previously submitted work. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to copying another person's work (including unpublished material) without appropriate referencing, presenting someone else's opinions and theories as one's own, or working jointly on a project and then submitting it as one's own. This resource on Academic Integrity may be helpful: [http://guides.library.oregonstate.edu/subject-guide/1771-Academic-Integrity-for-Students](http://guides.library.oregonstate.edu/subject-guide/1771-Academic-Integrity-for-Students)