

PROJECT 1

A Symbol of our Family

Graphic Design II

201:085:232:02

Spring 2026

Design is all about relationships. Asymmetrical balance, scale, and contrast are just a few of the principles we will explore over the next few weeks.

How do you create a dynamic symbol that conveys a visual narrative using type and image? The objective of this exercise is to explore how you visually represent your family in a symbol. You will first be asked to thoroughly investigate and document in writing the history of who you are. What is your heritage? What are your customs? Origins of your family name? What colors have meaning to your family? What symbols? Momentos, Bank notes, stamps, If you are from somewhere far away and it's a whole different language. That is you. Through your research you will call up your mom, dad, aunts, uncles, ask questions, you will discover interesting things about yourself. This includes identifying family traditions, inside jokes, phrases, myths, etc. Next, you will gather images of reference. This includes looking at existing family crests, what shapes are used, symbols, colors, styles and how can these inspire your own choices. Through experiments with form, image, and typography you will create a dynamic and engaging complex symbol that reveals a visual narrative about your family. We will explore how the visual elements relate in form, composition, messaging and our interactions as the viewer. This will involve experimenting with form and interpretation while gaining a greater understanding of the principles of visual language.

Tools: Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign and sketching on paper.

PROJECT BRIEF

Create a complex symbol that best tells a narrative about your family. Your illustration should integrate words + images that highlight specific details or points of interest in your family history. The text or words could be informative, humorous, thought provoking or ironic. This text should communicate a perspective about your family. Your images should be simplified symbols that allow for a quick read and you should consider color to be used as a strategic design element.

SPECS

8 X 8

Complex symbol created in illustrator

Color must be used in a strategic manner

PROJECT 1 | FAMILY SYMBOL CONT'D

PROCESS

Phase 1 / content development

Start: Jan. 22

Due: Jan. 27 Due at the beginning of class. Create a "message board" and/or "image board" (20" x 30" white ¼ foam core) that includes everything you have gathered to this point. Photos, symbols, family artifacts, etc. This is an on-going process so you will be adding to this throughout this project. You will be presenting who you and your family are to your classmates. This is information that you are intimately familiar with and uniquely understand. BE PREPARED.

Graphic Design II

201:085:232:02

Spring 2026

Questionnaire

Discover who you are by considering and answering these questions:

1. Where is your family from?
2. Where do they live now? If relocated, why did they move to current location?
3. What is your family known for?
4. What are your family traditions? Rituals? Is there an annual event, gathering that brings your family together? Why is this important?
5. What colors have significance to your family heritage?
6. Is there a translation or meaning derived from your family name?
7. Who was/is the leader of your family? Are there any phrases, sayings, jokes that have significance in your family?
8. What language(s) does your family speak?

Visual Research

You will create a folder that you will store all your visual research and reference material in. This research should help you with defining... What is a coat of arms? What are the standard components? What are the shapes you come across in your research? Laurel, Lion, Sword, Banner, Crest, Icons, Type, Color, etc. Start to gather visuals that pertain to your story. This will be the reference material you will be building from.

Tutorial: Illustrator, shape builder, path finder, step and repeat

Phase 2 / design

Start: Jan. 27

Due: Jan. 29 Due at the beginning of class. Be prepared to share your sketches and talk about your choices.

Create a minimum of 10 unique sketches. These sketches should be a minimum of 4 x 4, created by hand. (ie. pencil, marker) These investigations should explore various shapes, feel and hierarchy. Considerations like, choice of font, palette, shape of containers and choice of images, phrases and/or words should be explored at this point. Allow yourself to explore multiple ideas rather than settling on the first idea that comes to mind.

PROJECT 1 | FAMILY SYMBOL CONT'D**Phase 3 / Finalization**

Start: Jan 29

Due: Feb. 5 Due **Final PDF****Graphic Design II**

201:085:232:02

Spring 2026

Now that you have developed a diverse pool of sketches, thoughts, and notations about your family you are ready to start building your crest. You are editing down your sketches and making decisions on what content and the visualization of the content you will work with. You will want to start to map out how the images will work, what order they should appear. Considerations such as scale, placement and juxtapositioning should be given.

Tutorial: Illustrator: Layers, Color, Pen tool, Align

Considerations:

- + For composition purposes, visual principles such as balance, rhythm, unity and contrast.
- + For clarity, consider principles of legibility, color, space and foreground-background relationships.
- + Carefully consider the typographic hierarchy of the information presented. A viewer should be able to easily understand your message. Use an interesting variety of type sizes (some big, some small), consider its integration in your composition it should not be an after thought.
- + For conceptual development, take into account visual and verbal metaphors, correspondence, exaggeration, combination and substitution.

Final Deliverable:

8 x 8 pdf

Complex symbol created in Illustrator

Color must be used in a strategic manner

Visually possibilities:

Texture	simple/complex layered/unlayered
Tone	dark/light simple/complex
Scale	small/large
Dimension	flat/deep opaque/transparent
Interval	narrow/wide
Rhythm	regular/irregular regular/progressive regular/alternative
Direction	vertical/horizontal divergent/convergent vertical/circular
Width	Thin/thick
Weight	light/heavy
Slant	oblique/vertical
Shape	geometric/organic
Space	positive/negative
Jionery	connected/disconnected
Grouping	consonance/dissonance
Hierarchy	Dominate/subordinate
Focus	micro/macro
Randomness	order/chaos
Distortion	integrated/mutilated
Tension	relieved/unrelieved

Graphic Design II
201:085:232:02
Spring 2026