

Department of Arts,  
Culture & Media (ACM)

**Jennifer Bernstein**

Associate Professor  
Warren Street, Room 510  
jennifer.bernstein@rutgers.edu

Office hours:  
By appointment

ACM Chair: Ned Drew  
Course pre-requisites:  
As specified by major sequence

\*This course is a BFA in  
Graphic Design Requirement.

# CROSS- MEDIA DESIGN STUDIO

**“Each medium, independent of the content it mediates, has its own intrinsic effects which are its unique message.”**

MARSHALL McLuhan

**“But whatever the programmatic demand, the graphic answer is almost invariably narrative. Graphic design [is narrative], in that it shapes texts, organizes information flow, structures hierarchies, navigates spaces, and is doled out in chunks that find their completion in an imagined public.”**

MICHAEL ROCK

**“Communication is ultimately dealing with what you wish to happen in someone else’s mind. So, what kind of response are you trying to achieve? And, or, what kind of information do you need to pass on? And which are the appropriate devices?”**

BRUNO MONGUZZI

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**COURSE INTRODUCTION**

This advanced senior level course focuses on an investigation of the role of medium in communication design. Through a series of investigations and projects, students will explore how the choice of medium itself is an integral part of a design solution, and how to utilize each medium's inherent strengths through the creation of multiple experiences across a diverse set of mediums. This course will provide students with the opportunity to deepen their understanding and experience working in static, time-based, and participatory design modalities.

Graphic designers are required to understand the nuances of a very broad range of mediums. Designers need to understand the nature and inherent affordances of different mediums, and how to identify the most appropriate venue for a particular message to be communicated to a particular audience.

**This course will include:**

- / Collaborative exercises that will center around analysing media to better understand what each provides to the designer.
- / The introduction of a research praxis that will assist each student in content development and strategic use of different media forms.
- / The main course project which culminate with a multi-media solution.
- / During the last few weeks of the course, the Capstone theme will be introduced, and students will research and conceive of the project that they will further develop in the Spring, and exhibit during the Senior Graphic Design Exhibition.

**Core questions we will investigate:**

- / What are the essential aspects of an experience?
- / What are the unique attributes of different mediums, and how can their inherent strengths and affordances be utilized and exploited?
- / How does a designer shape elements or data or information to build a narrative?
- / How can experience can communicate a message?
- / And for whom?

**DELIVERABLES****If This Were A Medium**

- / Collaborative Project research & analysis
- / Collaborative Project presentation

**Cross-Media Narrative Project**

- / Development of story concepts and narrative mapping
- / A rigorous research and narrative exploration sketch process
- / A fully refined and executed Final Narrative Project

**Capstone Research & Ideation**

- / Capstone research and ideation
- / Refinement/development of Capstone Concept
- / Capstone Concept Didactic

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- / Investigate fundamental questions of creating visual narrative in communication design, whether in print, interactive, time-based media, etc.
- / Recognize and begin to understand narrative structures
- / Understand the unique attributes of different mediums
- / Use a rigorous research process to develop content and explore how to shape elements, data, and/or information into an engaging narrative

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/ Further develop independence in decision-making, and ability to self-critique  
/ Finesse critical thinking to solve communication problems  
/ Apply writing as a tool to strengthen critical thinking  
/ Synthesize and translate research into visualized work  
/ Hone collaboration and presentation skills

**EXPECTATIONS**

You will be expected to apply previously gained notions in printed and digital means, where typographic principles, the relationships between form and meaning, sign and symbols, visual/informational hierarchy, type specifications, comprehensive understanding of composition, grid systems & problem solving process skills, are habitual considerations.

Through the semester, you will be required to conduct mindful research and make use of the DANA Library archives for further assessment. We will also expect you to **actively participate in class critiques, make use of critical analysis towards your work and the work of your peers, apply your design vocabulary, formally present and defend your work, read all assigned materials, write your own content (when assigned), improve your craft skills as much as your competency in design software, explore alternative media, and to pursue references beyond the fields of art and design to broaden your perspectives and add depth to your work.**

**CLASS FORMAT**

This course will operate as an experimental "laboratory," and will be grounded in collaborative learning. Individual projects will be realized both through outside efforts and directed experiments within the classroom laboratory. Students should be prepared for each class session with appropriate materials and completed outside assignments. They are expected to work diligently throughout the duration of each session on the course work. Students will also be responsible for the overall success of the studio through participation in peer reviews and peer tutoring.

**PROCESS**

Along with your assignments, you will be expected to keep track of your process, research and evaluations visually. This documentation may be manifested as a sketch/scrap book or a digital representation of it, like a personal blog or folder structures of process that backup your projects, but notes, sketches and visual revisions must be uploaded as part of the Final Deliverables for the course.

**REQUIRED READING**

**Lupton, Ellen. Design Is Storytelling.** (Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2017) Available on Amazon.

Additional readings will be assigned over the course of the semester, and will be posted to our class website. Our class site is: <http://acmgd.info/cms>

**MATERIALS**

Students should have materials for sketching and idea-generation for all classes (sketch pads, tracing paper, pencils, pens, etc) a device for backing up their work on a source other than their computer (digital backup), and a sketchbook.

**DIGITAL POLICY**

The responsibility for backing up digital files lies solely with the individual student. Corruption of files containing coursework will not be considered a valid excuse for missing a deadline. It is each student's responsibility to consistently back up work on multiple devices in case of file corruption, disk or computer failure. **We will use a shared Google Drive where you will be required to upload your work before the end of each class session. This can also serve as an additional backup of your work.**

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**PREPARATION FOR CLASS**

Students are to be prepared at the start of each class with assigned work and supplies. This includes the presentation of sketches and comps for projects, in required form, for class critiques. Students who are not prepared and do not participate in class critiques or individual discussions with faculty when scheduled to do so should not expect private critiques at a later date.

Students are also responsible for the knowledge and practice of tools, materials and methods previously covered in class. **Students who miss lectures, classes, and class discussion due to absences must obtain notes and assignments for subsequent classes from a responsible student prior to the next class period, and should be prepared with work due that day.** While we will be happy to clarify information for students who are confused, we cannot repeat lectures or elaborate project descriptions on an individual basis. Students should make every attempt to obtain general information from classmates before discussing details with me. For students who need to reach me outside of class time, my email address is listed on the left-hand side of this handout.

**DEADLINES**

This course is structured so that all work can be completed during a normal semester. There will be no incomplete grades given without a serious, documented excuse. Completion of ALL required projects, course milestones, and participation in the Final Exam is mandatory to pass the course. Any project not completed by the deadline must be turned in by the beginning of the next class at which time it will automatically receive one grade lower. All projects must be handed in at the deadline but may be further developed and refined for the final review. The new grade assigned will be the average of the original and new project.

**ATTENDANCE**

Consistent and prompt attendance develops responsible professional behavior and ensures that students have access to the full range of experiences and information necessary to complete class assignments and acquire the skills and knowledge emphasized in a university education.

Attendance is required during scheduled class periods. Punctual arrival, effective use of the full studio period, and participation in assigned work are required.

**Students are allotted 2 absences per semester to accommodate emergencies, significant events, and documented illness (doctor's note required).** Doctor appointments, advisor conferences, trips to supply stores, employment, etc. should not be scheduled to conflict with class.

More than 2 absences will affect the final course grade. Each additional absence will lower the final grade by one letter grade, unless supported by a doctor's note or approved as a pre-arranged excused absence.

*The following will also count toward absences:*

/ 3 instances of lateness = 1 absence

/ Arriving more than 1 hour late = 1 absence

/ Early departures, excessive break time, lack of participation in assigned studio activities, or not having required homework may count as equivalent to an absence.

Lateness is defined as arriving 10 or more minutes after the start of class or departing before the class has been formally dismissed.

Prolonged illness should be verified by a physician. If a student is unable to attend regularly or complete coursework in a comprehensive and timely manner, withdrawal from the course may be necessary. **In some instances, unsatisfactory attendance may result in a failing grade.**

**EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT**

Throughout the semester we will use a combination of formative assessment (discussion and critique) leading to summative evaluation (a grade). You are expected to play an active role in this process. Final grades will be determined using the following criteria:

**The quality of your design process:**

/ Quality of Research

/ Conceptual Strength

/ Conceptual Development (sketches, roughs, drafts)

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- / Attention to Detail (Craft, Presentation of Work)
- / Syntactic Quality of Work (form, composition)
- / Semantic Quality of Work (message, communication)
- / Pragmatic Quality of Work (function)
- / Understanding of the role of medium & technology as an ever-changing entity in order to serve communication goals
- / Motivation
- / Successful completion of all Final Deliverables

**Your professionalism and conduct (as a member of the studio):**

- / Participation in Critiques and Discussions
- / Written Articulation
- / Verbal Articulation
- / Overall Attitude
- / Class Attendance / Punctuality
- / Deadlines / Class Preparation
- / Respect for your work and the work of others
- / Meeting Objectives of Assignments
- / Mastery of the objectives of the course

**GRADING**

**The grading system for this course is the following:**

- A Excellent without exception
- B+ Well above average
- B Above average
- B- Above average
- C+ Average
- C Average
- C- or below, failing
- INC Incomplete

**HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS CLASS**

- / Self-advocate. If you do not understand something, or need help, make your project advisors and classmates aware of the situation. This is part of the collaborative approach to a "learning community."
- / Set individual progress milestones as well as meeting those held in common within the class.
- / Be flexible in your problem-solving approaches.
- / Develop project management and organizational strategies or seek out help to it to do so, if you lack these skills.
- / Be willing to tutor another student if you have knowledge or skills that would be useful to help them progress.
- / Critique constructively and do not offer false praise.

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**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University's educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. The entire Academic Integrity Policy can be found here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy>

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USAGE**

AI-generated content must not replace original creative work or core design decisions. While AI tools may be used to support the creative process, their use must be guided by critical thinking and thoughtful reflection. Students who choose to use these tools are fully responsible for any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies in their work. Furthermore, all AI-assisted content must be clearly documented in an appendix. Please refer to the ACM-GD Policy addendum on AI Tools Usage Guidelines at the end of this document for detailed instructions and ethical considerations.

**ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT**

**For Individuals Experiencing Disability:** The Office of Disability Services (ODS) works with students with medical, physical, and/or mental conditions who encounter disabling barriers in order to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations for access. Students who have completed the process with ODS and have approved accommodations are provided a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) specific to each course. To initiate accommodations for their course students must both provide the LOA to and have a conversation with the course instructor about the accommodations. This should occur as early in the semester as possible. More information can be found at the RU-N ODS website ([ods.newark.rutgers.edu](https://ods.newark.rutgers.edu)). Contact ODS at (973) 353-5375 or via email at [ods@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:ods@newark.rutgers.edu).

**For Individuals who are Pregnant:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu).

**For Absence Verification:** The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to University Policy 10.2.7 for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing [deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu).

**For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries:** The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.

**For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu). Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: [tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm](https://tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm). For more information, students should refer to the University's Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures located at <https://uec.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/60-1-33-current-1.pdf>

**For support related to Interpersonal Violence:** The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA) can provide any student with confidential support. The office does not have a reporting obligation to Title IX. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing [run.vpva@rutgers.edu](mailto:run.vpva@rutgers.edu). There is also a confidential text-based helpline available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support. Students do not need to be a victim/survivor of violence; any student can receive services, information and support.

**For Crisis and Concerns:** The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a plan of support plan and address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Connect with the CARE Team by using the following link: [tinyurl.com/RUNCARE](https://tinyurl.com/RUNCARE) or emailing [careteam@rutgers.edu](mailto:careteam@rutgers.edu).

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**For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being:** The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: [counseling@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:counseling@newark.rutgers.edu) or (973) 353-5805. If students are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out Sanvello for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support. Visit <https://my.rutgers.edu/>, click on Sanvello: Wellness @ RUN, and log in with your netid to begin your journey toward wellness.

**For emergencies, call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.**

**LEARNING RESOURCES****Rutgers Learning Center**

(tutoring services)  
Hahne & Co.  
54 Halsey Street, Newark, NJ  
Room 245  
973-353-5608  
<https://sasn.rutgers.edu/learning-center-tutoring>

**The Writing Center**

(tutoring & writing workshops)  
Hahne & Co.  
54 Halsey Street, Newark, NJ  
Room 245 & 250  
973-353-5849  
[nwc@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:nwc@newark.rutgers.edu)

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This syllabus is subject to change.

PROFESSOR FIRST NAME /LAST NAME

[Course Name, Semester 2018](#)

[Course Number and Section](#)

[Course Meeting Schedule](#)

[Location \(Building/Room #\)](#)

KEY

5 Excellent

4 Good

3 Satisfactory

2 Unsatisfactory

1 Unacceptable

NA Not Applicable

Student Name:

[Project X - Name of Project](#)

## PROCESS + REALIZATION

|                                                     |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Research Development & Implementation               | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Formal Development (sketches & process)             | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Formal Strength & Realization                       | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Conceptual Development (sketches & process)         | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Conceptual Strength & Realization                   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Syntactic Quality of Work (Form/Comp/Vis Hierarchy) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Semantic Quality of Work (Message, Communication)   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Pragmatic Quality of Work (Function)                | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Working with Technology                             | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Attention to Detail / Craft / Presentation of Work  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Meeting Objectives of Assignment                    | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |

## PROFESSIONALISM

|                                          |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Participation in Critiques / Discussions | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Motivation                               | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Verbal Articulation                      | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Written Articulation                     | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Overall Attitude                         | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Class Attendance / Punctuality           | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |
| Deadlines / Class Preparation            | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA |

Final Grade

# ACM-GD Policy: Guidelines for AI-Assisted Graphics, CHatGPT and Other Tools

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**“How do we instill a lasting value for wondering and exploring? The kind of knowledge you gain by wrestling with tough questions shouldn’t be undermined or replaced by quick, easy answers. That’s the heart of the challenge for younger generations who now have this powerful tool: leaving room for the unexpected, the unresolved, and sometimes the longer route. Because it’s the journey—the struggle, the discovery, the exploration—that builds real learning. And while not every subject requires this approach, it’s the underlying spirit of education that matters most. That’s where we need to get creative right now.”**

— Maria Fernanda La Rotta

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In concert with Rutgers’ code of conduct, which mandates that “all work submitted in a course, academic research, or other activity is the student’s own and created without the aid of impermissible technologies, materials, or collaborations,” this course is designed to help you develop knowledge and emerging skills that will be valuable in your professional career.

AI tools may be used as an aid in the creative process but must be accompanied by critical thinking and reflection. Students who choose to use these tools are responsible for any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies in their work. Additionally, any AI-assisted content must be fully documented in an appendix, including:

- / The AI tool(s) used
- / The prompts or inputs provided
- / The AI-generated output
- / A thoughtful reflection on its role in the work

**AI-generated content must not replace original creative work or fundamental design decisions.**

When appropriate, students may also be asked to consider the environmental and social costs associated with AI tools.

## AI Use in Visual Design Work

AI may be used to support the creative process in the following ways:

- / Generating patterns or textures
- / Removing backgrounds from images
- / Refining or modifying images you have created
- / Silhouetting elements
- / Generating word lists for concept development
- / Assisting with research and idea organization
- / Extracting or generating minor elements (e.g., adding hair to an illustration)
- / Supplement research references

AI cannot be used in the following ways:

- / Submitting AI-generated images, illustrations, or compositions as your own work
  - / Using AI to replace essential design decisions (e.g., typography, layout, composition)
  - / Failing to document AI use in an appendix
- 

## AI Use in Written Content

AI may be used to assist with writing in the following ways:

- / Generating word lists or brainstorming ideas
- / Helping structure an outline
- / Refining sentence structure or grammar of your own writing
- / Assisting with research (acting a supplementary tool while critically evaluating sources)

AI cannot be used in the following ways:

- / Writing full project rationales, abstracts, artist statements, or critical reflections without significant student revision
  - / Replacing the student's personal voice, analysis, or perspective
  - / Submitting AI-generated content as-is, without meaningful revision
  - / Failing to document AI use in an appendix
- 

## Documentation Requirements

Any use of AI in an assignment must be **fully documented in an appendix**, detailing:

/ The tool(s) used

/ How AI was applied in the design process or writing

/ How AI-generated content was integrated or modified within the final submission

Students should also be prepared to critically assess the role of AI in their work, considering its impact on authorship, originality, and ethical implications in visual design and writing.