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## AVT-180

New Media in the Creative Arts  
Spring 2019 | MW 7:20-8:35 p.m. | Art & Design Building 1023  
Instructor: Brant Nesbitt | [brnesbit2@gmu.edu](mailto:brnesbit2@gmu.edu)

# Course Syllabus

**Guide and Assignment/Exercise/Project Statements for Understanding and Reference**

## PREREQUISITES

None

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

[The Non-Designer's Design Book, Fourth Edition](#)

by Robin Williams

## THIS COURSE SATISFIES A MASON CORE FOUNDATION REQUIREMENT FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information technology and computing can significantly augment humans' ability to produce, consume, process, and communicate information. Thus, students need to understand ways to use such technology to enhance their lives, careers, and society, while being mindful of challenges such as security, source reliability, automation, and ethical implications. These factors have made it essential for students to understand how to effectively navigate the evolving technological landscape. IT courses offered in the majors may focus on disciplinary applications and concerns of information technology.

IT courses meet the following learning outcomes:

1. Students will understand the principles of information storage, exchange, security, and privacy and be aware of related ethical issues
2. Students will become critical consumers of digital information; they will be capable of selecting and evaluating appropriate, relevant, and trustworthy sources of information
3. Students can use appropriate information and computing technologies to organize and analyze information and use it to guide decision-making
4. Students will be able to choose and apply appropriate algorithmic methods to solve a problem

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## DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

New Media in the Creative Arts will show you how to use current computer technologies specific to artistic and design applications. This class will teach you Adobe Creative Cloud applications such as Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. You do not need prior knowledge of Adobe software to complete the class.

Through lecture, studio and computer lab time, students will learn design principles on the Macintosh platform. They will develop a series of projects—from rough schematics to final presentation—for their portfolio. They will be expected to research and utilize external graphic vendors and professionals. It is highly encouraged to join professional design organizations, such as AIGA ([aiga.org](http://aiga.org)) and others, to learn about professional practices and more.

## REQUIRED SOFTWARE & MATERIALS

- Cloud-based storage account such as Dropbox or Google Drive
- [Adobe Creative Cloud](#) (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Acrobat, etc.)
- G Suite, Microsoft Office or Web based tool like [Airtable.com](http://Airtable.com)
- [ImageAlpha](#) or [TinyPNG.com](http://TinyPNG.com) (both are open source)
- Quad-ruled Notebook/Grided Paper (preferred) or Sketchbook
- Your Mobile Device(s) to capture ideas
- Pens/Pencils
- Dry-erase Markers (optional)
- Mounting Board
- Paper adhesive such as Spray Mount, Studio Tac or Rubber Cement
- X-Acto Knife and Replacement Blades

## WHY NEW MEDIA AND THE CREATIVE ARTS?

Never before have designers played such a key role in the betterment of society. It is their duty to take hold of such responsibility and guide their audience wisely based on the content and information they put in front of their users and audience.

**New Media and the Creative Arts** is a demanding, **yet FUN**, course that will provide the building blocks of graphic design to take advantage of today's technical affordances and how we can best design with an audience-first approach. The end result: use new media to provoke thought and emotion based on the intent of the artist.

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This is accomplished by researching and understanding subject matter (what should the audience know or actions do we want them to take), audience perspective (the audience can discern information quickly and intuitively or it may be designed in an ambiguous manner which require additional thought), and technical requirements (which application or technology is needed to accomplish such tasks). Asking questions to understand content needs will allow us to take an objective approach, creating content with meaning that enhances awareness and society at large.

### **What this course is...**

This course is a foundation of project and content management with effective use of the design grid combined with aesthetics. Particular attention will be paid to file types, compression, and design best practices for use on the Web, print and beyond.

### **What this course is NOT...**

This is NOT a course on Microsoft Office or type of design framework. **Students will learn by doing**—from sketching to completion, students will have an understanding of how to brainstorm, design and develop the proper file type for any deliverable.

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO SUCCEED IN THIS CLASS & FAQs**

### **Do I need to buy the software?**

Buying the software for your own computer is encouraged but not required, as it is much easier to work on your projects on your own computer, use your own fonts, color palettes, etc. Keep in mind that you will need to work on assignments, homework and projects outside of class. Therefore, buying the software is highly recommended.

[Patriot Tech](#) may sell Adobe software at the (cheaper) academic price. The Creative Cloud subscription, while good for only a year, will probably be the most cost-effective for you, especially if you are planning on taking more graphic design classes.

You should also know that there is a computer lab at the top of the stairs on the second floor of the School of Art building that you are free to use on a first-come first-served basis. Plan your time carefully as the lab gets full during busy periods, especially around exam time!

**Note:** *If you buy Adobe Creative Cloud on your computer and need to also work on any machine with Adobe CS6, you will need to “save down” your work to a CS6-friendly version. The procedure to do this is different in each program.*

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### **Can I use my PC?**

Yes, you may purchase a PC version of the Adobe software to work on your own. Double-check specifications to ensure software will run properly.

### **Can I install fonts on the classroom machines?**

No. However, you may be able to set up and sync font libraries with Typekit as part of an Adobe Creative Cloud subscription.

### **How do I save my work on the classroom machines?**

Do NOT keep your work stored on the classroom computers, as they are cleaned periodically and there is no guarantee that your work will still be there for the next class. Keep your work on a flash drive or an online service such as Google Drive or Dropbox. I recommend using at least two methods for backing up purposes. Emailing files to yourself is highly discouraged.

### **I need to miss class, am I going to miss anything important?**

Yes. If you have to miss class or come in late, you are responsible for reviewing the materials for what you missed.

### **How do I turn in work?**

Assignments will be posted onto Blackboard in electronic format. To submit work for full credit, you will need to upload your original file(s) (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign) as well as an exported PDF (Portable Document Format) copy of all work onto your cloud storage location. **We will set up a cloud storage location on the first day of class which will be your main repository for all assignments.** Once completed, you will **e-mail the link to your repository to your instructor and teammates** to note for future reference.

### **NEVER rely on emailing your work and then downloading.**

Your files are your responsibility. Setting up your cloud storage location (as noted above) ensures you have access to your files at all times. If you do not have your work at the start of your class, **you receive a zero for homework.**

### **What's a critique and what do I have to do?**

On days when assignments are due you are required to bring in your project (the native file format and a pdf version as well). We will look at your work and point out what makes your work a success and what can be improved to meet objectives and aesthetics. **No prints on critique day—you will receive a zero.**

### **When are prints due? How do I print my work?**

I will announce if/when prints are due. The School of Art has a Print Studio (down the hall) that is available for you to print your work, however, **they need 48 hours lead time in order to print**

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**your work**, so please keep this in mind when you are on a deadline. **You are responsible for printing your own work and bringing it to class on the START of the appointed day.**

### **What do I have to do to get a good grade?**

In order to get a good grade, you need to show up to every class on time. Students are required to attend all class meetings, to arrive on time, and to stay for the duration of the class period. You also need to follow instructions and specifications on Assignments/Exercises/Projects—**follow the directions carefully.**

- Students are required to notify the professor by email if they will be absent
- Students are required to utilize their Mason email address so that the professor is able to contact them, as well as classmates; since class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness or early departure as de facto evidence of non-participation
- Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus

Throughout the semester you will complete 3 projects, a midterm, and many in-class assignments and quizzes on prescribed readings and videos (to be read or viewed outside of class). The assignments in class are to orient you to the tools and techniques used to create your projects. Projects will need to be submitted electronically in two versions: an original file (formats: .ZIP, .AI, .PSD) plus an exported PDF version. I need PDF versions in case you use fonts and/or images that I cannot access from my machine. You can easily make PDF files from all three programs we will be learning, but the procedures vary.

All Assignments/Exercises/Projects are due before class begins on the specified date.

### **What if I have questions?**

Questions are highly encouraged! Ask questions in person or send an e-mail if clarification is needed. ***Please don't assume anything.*** Responses will be handled at my earliest convenience—typically within 24-48 hours. When sending an e-mail, please write your class name and the question in the subject line.

## **CONTENT & METHODOLOGY**

Students will receive an **electronic document** for each assignment/exercise/project in .pdf or .epub format via Blackboard (unless otherwise noted by the instructor). They are to download files to their cloud drive and reference as needed. Work that is not complete, late or does not meet the specs and objectives will have points deducted.

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**Participation is 20% of your entire class grade.** You will receive the total of 20% toward your final grade if you are in class for each scheduled session and have participated in all class work. Lack of participation during any class will reduce this 20% portion of your total class grade in a proportionate manner. **Failure to participate in FIVE of the scheduled class sessions will result in loss of 20% of your total grade.** Attendance also affects participation and your final grade. More information regarding attendance is available in the attendance section of this document.

Projects and assignments may overlap. In addition to resources covered in class, **Mason has a wealth of resources available to students**—including the Writing Center, IT Services and the MIX—take advantage as a student! We will plan to take a walking tour at the beginning of the semester to help you locate each resource.

### **Class Structure and Summary:**

1. **We will work in groups** and respect our teammates by providing objective, constructive feedback and criticism—this is a hands-on class reflecting real world scenarios
2. **A buddy/team system** will be used to review content and ensure work meets assignment/project objectives—innovation is a team effort
3. Most (if not all) assignments will be posted electronically in PDF and/or ePub formats (iBooks or other eReader); save them to your computer, mobile and/or tablet devices on a virtual drive such as Dropbox or Google Drive
4. **Prescribed reading, online tutorials and enrichment lessons are expected to be completed in between classes** with quizzes will most likely follow
5. Exercises, videos, student provided articles for sharing and other supplemental material will be assigned accordingly or reviewed in class

**15-30 minutes lecture/review on reading/terms and shared articles**

**45-60 minutes for Critique or Work**

## **EVALUATION**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Percentage of Grade</b>
Attendance/Participation	20%
Assignments/Exercises	20%
Midterm	10%
Project One	15%

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Project Two	15%
Project Three	20%

## **COURSE POLICIES & IMPORTANT NOTES**

**This course is very demanding.** You are expected to spend a lot of time outside the class to work on the exercises and projects. If you can not put in the time and effort, please take this course when you can make this commitment. Attendance is mandatory and will be factored into your grade based on participation.

### **Class Attendance Policy**

Students must be prepared for class to be counted as present, i.e., having all necessary supplies, computer files, sketches. They are also required to notify the professor by e-mail if they will be absent using their Mason e-mail address so that the professor is able to contact them. The door closes right at the scheduled start time. If you are running late you may e-mail the instructor though there are no guarantees this will not affect your grade.

Furthermore, arriving more than 15 minutes late on 3 separate occasions (unexcused) for class, or leaving before the end of class, will result in a loss of 4% from their final grade (considered 1 absence). It is a student's responsibility to make up any missed information due to absences.

Any of the following constitutes a "0" for participation for the class session *and* one absence:

1. Arriving more than 15 minutes late to class
2. Leaving before the end of class
3. Not being in class to participate
4. Taking breaks passed the time indicated by the professor
5. Unauthorized mobile phone usage, inappropriate behavior and/or lack of participation in class activities, to be determined by the professor. Students in violation of the student code of conduct in the student handbook will be asked to leave the class.

**Note:** *Failure to come to class prepared with all assignments and required materials within the first 15 minutes of class will result in a "0" for participation for that class session which will impact the student's course grade. Deduction of 4% will only be applied after 3 occurrences. After 3 occurrences, no credit will be applied towards the 20% for Attendance/Participation.*

### **Consequences *and* incentives for attendance and participation.**

1. Three (3) absences = Grade will be reduced by a 1 letter grade for the entire course. Beyond three (3) absences results in a failing grade.
2. Arriving more than 15 minutes late on an exam day = Can't take the exam.

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3. Perfect attendance = 4 bonus percentage points to be applied to category of choice; miss only one class or less than four tardies = 2 bonus percentage points.

### **Late Work, Deadlines and Submission of Work**

Late assignments, exercises and projects will not be accepted without valid documentation. The same goes for the midterm. If you are absent during the midterm exam, you must present valid documentation in order to make-up the exam. (Any deviation from this policy will be extremely rare and at the discretion of the professor).

Each assignment, exercise or project will have specific guidelines stated for their deadlines. Work due must be ready prior to date and time specified.

Computer crashes, failure of backing up work, forgetting work at home, not finishing on time, files erased from lab computers, and other **excuses will not be accepted**. If you are facing an emergency and are unavailable to be in class, you are responsible of notifying the instructor prior to the class time (in person or email) in order to discuss a possible alternate arrangement. Students must take full responsibility for their work and deadlines.

Attendance to critiques is mandatory; you may be counted as absent if you do not have the required work to present at the progress and final critiques. Assignments, exercises and projects are due before the beginning of class unless otherwise indicated. **Assignments, exercises or projects not turned in at the time they are due will receive a grade of an "F."** You are required to turn in all materials and files related to each project on time. **Late work will not be accepted.** You will turn in all files related to your assignments in the proper area indicated by the professor.

## **UNIVERSITY & SCHOOL OF ART POLICIES**

In accordance with George Mason University policy, turn off all beepers, cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class. The instructor of the class will keep his/her cell phone active to assure receipt of any Mason Alerts in a timely fashion; or in the event that the instructor does not have a cell phone, he/she will designate one student to keep a cell phone active to receive such alerts.

### **Commitment to Diversity**

This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran's status, or physical ability.

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## **Statement on Ethics in Teaching and Practicing Art and Design**

As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the School of Art adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

## **Open Studio Hours**

SOA teaching studios are open to students for extended periods of time mornings, evenings and weekends whenever classes are not in progress. Policies, procedures and schedules for studio use are established by the SOA studio faculty and are posted in the studios.

## **ArtsBus – Dates for Spring 2019**

February 23, 2019

March 30, 2019

April 13, 2019

## **ArtsBus Credit**

- Each student must have up to 5 AVT 300/Artsbus credits before graduation. For credit to appear on your transcript you must enroll in AVT 300. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment.
- If you plan/need to go on multiple Artsbus trips during a semester and need them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300. Please go to the Artsbus website: <http://artsbus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding Artsbus policy.
- Non-AVT majors taking art classes do not need Artsbus credit BUT may need to go on the Artsbus for a class assignment. You can either sign up for AVT 300 or buy a ticket for the bus trip at the Center of the Arts. Alternate trips must be approved by the instructor of the course that is requiring an Artsbus trip.

## **Visual Voices Lecture Series Spring 2019**

Visual Voices is a year-long series of lectures by artists, art historians and others about contemporary art and art practice. Visual Voices lectures are held on Thursday evenings from 7:20- 9:00 p.m. in Harris Theater: <http://soa.gmu.edu/visualvoices/>

**January 24, 2019** – Margaret Boozer – Strother “Keep a Shovel in your Truck”

**February 21, 2019** – Jeremy Boyle – Rev/Fwd

**February 28, 2019** – Montri Nuchnang – “Magnificent”

**March 7, 2019** – Dorothy Moss – “Active Presence at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery: Reverberations of the Obama Portraits”

## Important University Dates & Deadlines

Description	Date
Martin Luther King Day (no classes)	Mon Jan 21
<b>First day of classes</b> ; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date; full semester waitlists removed	Tue Jan 22
<b>Last day to add classes</b> —all individualized section forms due	Tue Jan 29
<b>Last Day to Drop (with 100% tuition refund)</b>	Feb 5
<b>Drop period begins with a TBD refund percentage</b>	Feb 6
Final Drop Deadline ( <b>TBD tuition refund percentage</b> )	Feb 12
<b>Student Self-Withdrawal</b>	February 13 – February 25
Immunization Record Deadline	Thu Mar 1
Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via <a href="#">Patriot Web</a>	Mon Feb 18 – Fri Mar 22
<b>Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only) (100% tuition liability)</b>	February 26 – March 25
<b>Spring Break</b>	Mon Mar 11 - Sun Mar 17
<b>Incomplete work from Fall 2018 due to Instructor</b>	Fri March 29
<b>Incomplete grade changes from Fall 2018 due to Registrar</b>	Tue April 2
Dissertation/Thesis Deadline	<b>Fri May 3</b>
<b>Last day of classes</b>	Mon May 6
<b>Reading Days</b> Reading days provide students with additional study time for final examinations. Faculty may schedule optional study sessions, but regular classes or exams may not be held.	Tue May 7
<b>Exam Period (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)</b>	Wed May 8 – Wed May 15
<b>Commencement</b>	Fri May 17
<b>Degree Conferral Date</b>	Sat May 18

Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for late adds (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the SoA office (or the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid being processed) , LATE ADD fee will apply. Requests for

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non-selective withdrawals and retroactive adds (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student's major is located. For AVT majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, Performing Arts Building A407.

### **Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences**

If you have a diagnosed disability or learning difference and you need academic accommodations, please inform me at the beginning of the semester and contact the Disabilities Resource Center (SUB I room 234, 703-993-2474). You must provide me with a faculty contact sheet from that office outlining the accommodations needed for your disability or learning difference. All academic accommodations must be arranged in advance through the DRC.

### **Official Communications via GMU E-Mail**

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

### **Attendance Policies**

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

### **Honor Code**

Students in this class are bound by the Honor Code, as stated in the George Mason University Catalog. The honor code requires that the work you do as an individual be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas. (This does not prohibit collaborative work when it is approved by your instructor.) As a faculty member, I have an obligation to refer the names of students who may have violated the Honor Code to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously. No grade is important enough to justify cheating, for which there are serious consequences that will follow you for the rest of your life. If you feel unusual pressure about your grade in this or any other course, please talk to me or to a member of the GMU Counseling Center staff.

Using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is plagiarism, a very serious Honor Code offense. It is very important to understand how to prevent committing plagiarism when using material from a source. If you wish to quote verbatim, you must use the exact words and punctuation just as the passage appears in the original and must use quotation marks and

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page numbers in your citation. If you want to paraphrase or summarize ideas from a source, you must put the ideas into your own words, and you must cite the source, using the APA or MLA format. (For assistance with documentation, I recommend Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*.) The exception to this rule is information termed general knowledge—information that is widely known and stated in a number of sources. Determining what is general knowledge can be complicated, so the wise course is, “When in doubt, cite.”

Be especially careful when using the Internet for research. Not all Internet sources are equally reliable; some are just plain wrong. Also, since you can download text, it becomes very easy to inadvertently plagiarize. If you use an Internet source, you must cite the exact URL in your paper and include with it the last date that you successfully accessed the site.

### **Writing Center**

Students who are in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). The services of the Writing Center are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis.

The Collaborative Learning Hub Located in Johnson Center 311 (703-993-3141), the lab offers in-person one-on-one support for the Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, Blackboard, and a variety of other software. Dual monitor PCs make the lab ideal for collaborating on group projects, Macs are also available; as well as a digital recording space, collaborative tables, and a SMART Board. **Free workshops are also available** (Adobe and Microsoft) through Training and Certification; visit [ittraining.gmu.edu](http://ittraining.gmu.edu) to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.