

The
Graphic
Design
Program
@ Cal State Long Beach

Resource Guide

GRAPHIC DESIGN FACULTY

All pre-majors are **strongly** encouraged to meet with the following members of the design faculty prior to submitting work for review.

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GRAPHIC DESIGN PROGRAM PORTFOLIO REVIEW

The Graphic Design Program within the Department of Art is a two-year full time program consisting of several pre-determined courses. The program is considered impacted at the CSULB campus, meaning that there are more students applying than there are spaces available. In order to be admitted into the program, pre-majors must submit a portfolio of their creative work for a formal review by the faculty. The review is held twice a year (once a semester), to determine the following year's Junior class.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The following will required in order to process an application:

- Submission of BFA Portfolio Review application form by deadline (available @ Art Office FA4-106)
- Transcripts from all colleges attended on file in the Art Office
- Minimum of 3.0 or "B" average in at least 15 units of Art and Design

PORTFOLIO PREP COURSES

Pre-Major Courses

- Art 223 Lettering-Typography
- Art 318 Typographic Design
- Art 321 Graphic Design I: Introduction to Graphic Design
- Art 327 Graphic Design II: Intermediate Graphic Design
- Art 331 Visual Communication Design / Comping Skills

Additional / Supplemental Elective Courses

- Art 332 Graphic Design: Professional Preparation
- Art 365 Media Design: Motion Graphics
- Art 366 Media Design: Web and Interactive Design
- Art 421 Advanced Typography
- Art 430 Bookmaking & Papermaking

GRAPHIC DESIGN PROGRAM COURSES

The following is a brief rundown of the courses and events a student can expect to experience upon being accepted into the program after portfolio review. Students can expect an intensive 2-year course of study (Junior and Senior year), covering the following courses:

Major Courses

- Art 334 Graphic Design III: Exploration & Experimentation
- Art 335 Advertising II: Intermediate Concept Development / Art Direction
- Art 336 Graphic Design IV: Development & Analysis
- Art 337 Graphic Design V: Packaging Design
- Art 423 Graphic Design VI: Advanced Topics
- Art 424 Advertising III: Advanced Topics

Additional / Supplemental Elective Courses

- Art 420 Visual Communication Design Workshop
- Art 421 Advanced Typography
- Art 442 Internship in Visual Communication
- Art 486 Media Design: Advanced Topics
- Art 499S Special Studies in Visual Communication Design

PORTFOLIO ASSIGNMENT EXAMPLES

Advertisement: Consumer / Non-Profit Organization Magazine

- Transit Poster
- Billboard
- Magazine
- Newspaper
- Guerilla / Non-Traditional

Brochure (Multi-page)

- Retail/trade product catalog (clothing, furniture, automotive, etc.)
- Service/organization (museum, non-profit, etc.)
- Event/festival information (sports, culture, food, etc.)

Editorial Spread

- Celebrity
- Event article
- Artist

Annual Report

- Fortune 500 company
- Nonprofit organization

Packaging

- Food label: paper box (i.e. tea, dry goods), bag (i.e. cookies, pasta), can (i.e. coffee, drink mix)
- Beverage Label: glass jar (i.e. beer, wine, juice, etc.)
- Software: box, cd, and user manual
- Health/Beauty Product: shampoo, lotion etc.
- Cosmetic: Perfume, lipstick packaging etc.
- Book covers: Paperback, hardcover, innovative

Corporate Identity

- Logo: corporate, non-profit, event logos, high-end logo, personal and more.
- Collateral: letter head, envelope and business card
- Applications: transportation, clothing, building signage, etc.

Poster Design

- Event: lecture, festival, etc.
- New Product Announcement
- Music: Band or Concert
- Astrology (ie. zodiac)
- Movie

New Media

- Website or Motion Graphics

Fill in the Blank

- _____

Use your imagination and interests to come up with an original assignment. Initiative can pay off.

PORTFOLIO TIPS & TOOLS

Three things: Concept, Variety, Risk

When putting your portfolio together, try to keep in mind:

- Concept is key. Without good concept, your designs are as good as a house of cards – one puff and it all falls down. Coming up with a good concept helps solidify your idea, and you'll find that when you come up with a good one, everything falls into line.
- Have a good variety of pieces from each category on the list that VCDA has provided. You want to show them that you're flexible and talented and can do all kinds of design. To help guard against monotony, look for patterns in your book – lay out all of your projects on the floor and look for similar colors or typefaces that you use again and again. Mix it up, show them you can pool from a variety of colors, layouts, and typefaces.
- The last one is the easiest to say, but the hardest to implement – risk. Quit your addiction to design magazines for a while and stop trying to look like “everyone else” – try to step out of your safe zone and come up with something innovative and outside of the box. Of course be sure to discuss your ideas with the faculty to get feedback, but don't be afraid to try something that stretches the boundaries a bit.

During the semester you are applying:

- Don't overload your schedule! Give yourself plenty of time to work on your book.
- Take Professional Preparation (if available)! This does three things: it'll help you stay on top of your work, it gives you guaranteed time with a faculty member, and most importantly it allows you to get feedback from your peers. And speaking of peers, try to organize a review / creative group outside of class. Peer critique is an important asset – your friends are going to be the most honest and accessible sources of feedback when you're putting your book together...they will also help keep you sane. Have work sessions, send each other in-progress pieces, vent to one another – don't overlook your peers.
- Print what you can on your own printer at home, not Kinko's – your life will be *much* easier if you don't have to deal with someone else's printer. If it's within your means, get an Epson 1400 or 2880 – it is a bit of money up front, but the return on investment in terms of how many headaches you'll be saved is more than any amount of money.
- If you need to get something printed at a service bureau, call ahead and ask them if they can do it the way you want. Then get the specifics on how to set up your file so they can be ready for print. Bring a proof sheet or a mock up of how your piece should look. Also on a disk, include your font suitcases or change them to outlines, and include any linked files. Never pay them in full until you have what you want.

PORTFOLIO TIPS & TOOLS (CONTINUED)

Pacing

When stacking boards during review, the order your work is presented in will emphasize the diversity of your projects. It's a subtlety that should be considered a finishing touch, and *not* a make-or-break element. Pace work by showing the best piece first, the second-best piece at the end, and the third best piece in the middle. Mix up similar types of projects.

Details, Techniques, and More.

- Make sure all of your boards are exactly the same size, color, and texture. When cutting your matte boards, use a new X-Acto blade with every single board, or better yet buy a scalpel (they can be purchased in the art supply store). This will prevent you from making any mistakes and help keep the boards look clean and consistent. Or have them cut all at once by an art store pro.
- Hand skills – make everything perfect! Even if it takes two or three times mounting it, you should have it look flawless. Take the extra time – it's worth it.
- Rubdowns / chromotechs – call ahead and get the specs on how to set up your file and choose a PMS color. Also, bring a proof sheet so that there are no mistakes. Most importantly, there are two types of mylar that they print the chromotechs on, so ask for the clear one, not the frosted one.
- Put tags on the back of each of your boards. Include your name and personal information. You can also take the time to title each work and put the specs on the back. Tags can be designed if you are so inclined and have time, but they *should not* be a top priority – a simple printed card with your name, email and phone number is sufficient. **Always credit outside sources and don't take credit for anything that is not yours!**
- Overall, work and stay motivated! Demonstrate that you're willing to really dedicate yourself to your projects and think outside the box. All the same, don't slack off in your design classes during review. Try to fold your portfolio work into your classwork if you can, that way you can kill two birds with one stone. Always be planning ahead – a conservative rule of thumb is that production (i.e. printing, mounting, rubdowns, etc.) will probably take about two to three weeks to get everything completed, and that's taking mess-ups and reprints into account.

Above all, trust your instincts:

“ The first couple years that you're making stuff, what you're making isn't so good — it's not that great. It's trying to be good, it has ambition to be good, but it's not quite that good. But your taste, the thing that got you into the game, your taste is still killer and your taste is good enough that you can tell that what you're making is kind of a disappointment to you — you can tell that it's still sort of crappy. A lot of people never get past that phase and a lot of people at that point quit.

And the thing I would just like say to you with all my heart is that most everybody I know who does interesting creative work, they went through a phase of years where they had really good taste and they could tell what they were making wasn't as good as they wanted it to be. We knew that it didn't have the special thing that we wanted it to have and the thing is — everybody goes through that. And for you to go through it, if you're going through it right now, if you're just getting out of that phase or if you're just starting off and you're entering into that phase, you've got to know it's totally normal and the most important possible thing you can do is do a lot of work. Do a huge volume of work. ”

Ira Glass

ART SUPPLIES

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www.artsuppliesonline.com

Art Supply Warehouse

www.artsupplywarehouse.com

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FA-4

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www.graphaids.com

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