

Design Concepts | ARTC 1310.6A1

CREDIT

3 Semester Credit Hours (2 hours lecture, 4 hours lab)

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

In-Person

PREREQUISITE/CO-REQUISITE:

None

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Fundamental techniques in conceptualizing. Includes all procedures from initial research to creating strategies to finalize a solution.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to

- Define the creative process as it pertains to graphic design
- Apply the design process from thumbnail sketches to final concept

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Susannah N. Dingmon, B.F.A.

Email: sndingmon@lit.edu

Office Phone: (409) 247-5328

Office Location: TA4 100B

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	3:00 PM – 3:45 PM	6:15 PM – 6:45 PM
Tuesday	8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	3:00 PM – 3:45 PM	-
Wednesday	8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	3:00 PM – 3:45 PM	6:15 PM – 6:45 PM
Thursday	8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	3:00 PM – 3:45 PM	-
Friday	8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	12:30 PM – 3:30 PM	-

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS

- **External hard Drive (Minimum 1TB Storage)**
 - *This is non-negotiable.* You are responsible for backing up your work consistently. Do not rely solely on school computers or cloud services.
 - **Note:** School computers only have USB-C ports. You may need to purchase a compatible adapter to connect your external drive.
 - **Recommended products can be found in the Resources folder on Blackboard.**
- **Camera or Smartphone with Camera Capabilities**

Approved:



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- A dedicated camera is preferred, but a high-quality smartphone camera is acceptable for project documentation and process photos.
- **Sketchbook**
 - No specific size of sketchbook or drawing tool required.
 - This is to be used for warm-ups, planning projects, or notetaking.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance is required for success in this course. Participation in class for critiques, discussions, and hands-on work time is critical to your development as a designer.

Personal Days (3 Free Absences)

You are granted **3 personal days** to use for any reason – mental health, personal obligations, or emergencies. No documentation is required for these days, but you are still responsible for submitting any assignment due that day via Blackboard.

After your 3 personal days are used, all further absences will directly impact your final grade under the **Professionalism & Participation** category.

I will not initiate follow-up meetings for attendance concerns. You are responsible for managing your attendance and understanding your standing in this course.

Attendance Expectations

You will be counted absent if you:

- Are not present in class
- Leave class early without permission
- Disappear during class for an extended period (Gone for 30+ minutes)

If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, you will be counted tardy. **Three tardies equal one absence.**

Excused Absences

If you need to miss class beyond your 3 personal days, absences can be excused with documentation for:

- Serious illness or injury
- Bereavement
- Official school activities
- Weather conditions that close the campus.

Important: Excused absences protect your attendance grade, but they do not exempt you from assignments or critiques. If you miss a critique day, you are still responsible for:

- Submitting your work on time via Blackboard
- Completing peer feedback (if applicable)
- Reviewing critique notes/recording provided by instructor

Health Policy: Do not attend class if you are visibly ill, running a fever, or contagious. I will ask you to leave if necessary. Stay home, document your absence, and manage coursework remotely.

DROP POLICY

If you wish to drop a course, you are responsible for initiating and completing the drop process by the specified date as listed in the College Calendar on the [Student Success](#) web page. If you stop coming to class and fail to drop the course, you will earn an “F” in the course.

DROP DATES

Last day for students to drop with refund: September 9

Last day for students to drop WITHOUT academic penalty: September 25

Last day for students to drop with academic penalty: October 30

COURSE CALENDAR

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS (Due on this Date)
8/25	Week 1 Getting Started	Discussion: Hey Designers, let's meet!
8/27	Week 1 EMPATHIZE - Persona + Empathy Map	Tool Practice: EMPATHIZE - Persona + Empathy Map Show + Tell: a logo that tells you who it is for
9/1	Week 2 DEFINE - Competitive Audit + Cheatsheet	
9/3	Week 2 Business Pitch + Class Vote	Tool Practice: DEFINE - Competitive Audit + Cheatsheet Analysis: which audience is hardest to design for? Business Pitch + Class Vote
9/8	Week 3 IDEATE – Stir the Cauldron	
9/10	Week 3 IDEATE - Stir the Cauldron	Tool Practice: IDEATE - Stir the Cauldron (Due 9/14)
9/15	Week 4 IDEATE - Ladle It Out	
9/17	Week 4 Peer Assumption Challenge	Tool Practice: IDEATE - Ladle It Out Peer Assumption Challenge
9/22	Week 5 PROTOTYPE I - Vector Construction	
9/24	Week 5 PROTOTYPE I cont.	Tool Practice: PROTOTYPE I - Vector Construction (Due 9/28)
9/29	Week 6 PROTOTYPE II - Logotype	

10/1	Week 6 PROTOTYPE II cont.	Tool Practice: PROTOTYPE II – Logotype (Due 10/5)
10/6	Week 7 PROTOTYPE III - Color with Intent	
10/8	Week 7 Logo Small Group Critique	Tool Practice: PROTOTYPE III - Color with Intent (Due 10/12) Small Group Critique - first draft of the identity End-of-Course Scrapbook Check-in 1
10/13	Week 8 TEST + DELIVER - Reduction Test and Export	Tool Practice: TEST + DELIVER - Reduction Test and Export
10/15	Week 8 Logo Final Critique	PROJECT 1 DUE: Brand Identity (Due 10/14) Final Critique - defend the concept against the persona
10/20	Week 9 Dieline Setup	
10/22	Week 9 Dieline Setup cont.	Tool Practice: Dieline Setup (Due 10/26) Analysis: what job does each package panel do?
10/27	Week 10 IDEATE, Compressed - Panel Thumbnails	
10/29	Week 10 Package Concept Check-in	Tool Practice: IDEATE, Compressed - Panel Thumbnails (Due 11/2) Package Concept Check-in End-of-Course Scrapbook Check-in 2
11/3	Week 11 PROTOTYPE - Pattern + Illustration	
11/5	Week 11 PROTOTYPE - Pattern + Illustration cont.	Tool Practice: PROTOTYPE - Pattern + Illustration (Due 11/9)
11/10	Week 12 PROTOTYPE - Packaging Typography	
11/12	Week 12 PROTOTYPE - Packaging Typography cont.	Tool Practice: PROTOTYPE - Packaging Typography (Due 11/16)
11/17	Week 13 Color for Print - CMYK	
11/19	Week 13 Package Small Group Critique	Tool Practice: Color for Print – CMYK (Due 11/23) Small Group Critique - flat draft, all panels
11/24	Week 14 Thanksgiving Week - No New Content	

11/26	Week 14 NO CLASS - Thanksgiving	
12/1	Week 15 PROTOTYPE + TEST - Build the Mockup	Tool Practice: PROTOTYPE + TEST - Build the Mockup
12/3	Week 15 Package Final Critique	PROJECT 2 DUE: Product Packaging (Due 12/2) Final Critique - defend design decisions
12/8	FINAL EXAMS End-of-Course Scrapbook	End-of-Course Scrapbook DUE

COURSE EVALUATION

Final grades will be calculated according to the following criteria:

Project 1	20%
Project 2	20%
End of Course Scrapbook	20%
Critique & Peer Review Engagement	15%
Assignments (Skill-Building Exercises)	15%
Professionalism & Participation	10%

1. Project & Assignment Submissions (Content Mastery)

- a. These grades evaluate the final quality of your work.
- b. You will be assessed on:
 - i. How effectively your design meets the project brief
 - ii. Technical execution and craftsmanship
 - iii. Visual communication and creative problem-solving
 - iv. Proper file preparation and professional presentation
- c. These are graded using detailed rubrics provided for each major project.

2. Critique & Peer Review (Process Engagement)

- a. This grade evaluates your engagement with the critique process.
- b. You will be graded on:
 - i. Attendance and preparation for scheduled critiques
 - ii. Timely submission of work for feedback at project milestones
 - iii. Quality and thoughtfulness of feedback given to peers
 - iv. Evidence of growth and revision based on feedback received
- c. Detailed critique policies and expectation can be found in the "Critique & Peer Review Policy" section.

3. Professionalism & Participation

- a. This grade reflects how you conduct yourself as a future professional:
 - i. Attendance and punctuality
 - ii. Meeting deadlines without reminders
 - iii. Communicating responsibly about absences or challenges

- iv. Maintaining a respectful, engaged presence during class sessions.
- b. Think of this as practicing the soft skills that will define your reputation in the design industry.

GRADE SCALE

- 90-100 A
- 80-89 B
- 70-79 C
- 60-69 D
- 0-59 F

FINAL GRADE REQUIREMENTS

To receive course credit for a General Education course you need a letter grade of “D” or better. To receive course credit for a Program Specific course you need a letter grade of “C” or better.

To understand if a course is a General Education requirement or a Program requirement for your degree, please check DegreeWorks on my.lit.edu

INCOMPLETE GRADE

There is an application to request for an “Incomplete” for a grade. Be aware this is an application, whether you receive an “Incomplete” as a grade is up to your Instructor’s discretion and usually only awarded in dire and extenuating circumstances where the student is truly unable to finish the course.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

For the latest technical requirements, including hardware, compatible browsers, operating systems, etc., review the Minimum Computer and Equipment Requirements on the [LIT Online Experience](#) page. A functional broadband internet connection, such as DSL, cable, or WiFi is necessary to maximize the use of online technology and resources.

DISABILITIES STATEMENT

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights for persons with disabilities. LIT provides reasonable accommodations as defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, to students with a diagnosed disability. The Special Populations Office is located in the Eagles’ Nest Room 129 and helps foster a supportive and inclusive educational environment by maintaining partnerships with faculty and staff, as well as promoting awareness among all members of the Lamar Institute of Technology community. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Special Populations Coordinator at (409)-951-5708 or email specialpopulations@lit.edu. You may also visit the online resource at [Special Populations - Lamar Institute of Technology \(lit.edu\)](#).

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT STATEMENT

It is the responsibility of all registered Lamar Institute of Technology students to access, read, understand and abide by all published policies, regulations, and procedures listed in the *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook*. The *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook* may be accessed at www.lit.edu. Please note that the online version of the *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook* supersedes all other versions of the same document.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE STATEMENT

Lamar Institute of Technology (LIT) recognizes the recent advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI), such as ChatGPT, have changed the landscape of many career disciplines and will impact many students in and out of the classroom. To prepare students for their selected careers, LIT desires to guide students in the ethical use of these technologies and incorporate AI into classroom instruction and assignments appropriately. Appropriate use of these technologies is at the discretion of the instructor. Students are reminded that all submitted work must be their own original work unless otherwise specified. Students should contact their instructor with any questions as to the acceptable use of AI/ChatGPT in their courses.

AI Use Policy – Professional Standards for Responsible Integration

AI is rapidly becoming part of the creative industries, but using it well requires thoughtful decision-making and personal accountability. In this course, AI is treated as a **supplementary tool**, not a replacement for your creative process or personal development. You are expected to use AI responsibly, ethically, and transparently.

1. Permitted AI Usage

a. Idea Generation

- i. AI tools may be used to brainstorm concepts, create moodboards, or explore early visual directions. This should serve as inspiration, not final output.

b. Technical Assistance

- i. You may use AI-driven software features for efficiency tasks (e.g., resizing, color correction, background removal, or automating repetitive actions).

c. Reference & Exploration

- i. AI-generated visuals may be consulted for style and reference, but your final designs must demonstrate original creative input and significant manual refinement.

2. Transparency and Disclosure

a. Citing AI Tools Used

- i. You must clearly document any AI tools or services involved in your project and explain their specific role.

b. Process Documentation

- i. In your project notes or reflection, describe how AI contributed to your design process and what creative decisions *you* made to finalize the work.

3. Ethical Considerations

a. Creative Ownership

- i. Passing off AI-generated content as fully your own without modification or personal contribution is unethical and will not be accepted. Your portfolio should reflect *your* skills and creative thinking.

b. Overreliance

- i. Relying excessively on AI to generate creative solutions without meaningful human input will negatively impact your project evaluation. AI is a tool. *You* are the designer.

c. Bias & Inclusivity

- i. AI-generated content often reflects bias from the datasets it's trained on. As a responsible designer, you must remain critically aware of these issues.

STARFISH

LIT utilizes an early alert system called Starfish. Throughout the semester, you may receive emails from Starfish regarding your course grades, attendance, or academic performance. Faculty members record student attendance, raise flags and kudos to express concern or give praise, and you can make an appointment with faculty and staff all through the Starfish home page. You can also login to Blackboard or MyLIT and click on the Starfish link to view academic alerts and detailed information. It is the responsibility of the student to pay attention to these emails and information in Starfish and consider taking the recommended actions. Starfish is used to help you be a successful student at LIT.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES/INFORMATION

How to submit work

Assignments are to be turned in via Blackboard following a prescribed naming convention and save format that will be outlined in the submission instructions. If a project requires a physical submission then you submit files to Blackboard AND provide the physical project to me directly. It will be returned when grades are posted.

Missed or Late Work – Professional Accountability

Projects

- Late projects will receive a **-5 point deduction per calendar day** past the due date.
- *Example:* if Project 1 is submitted 3 days late, the highest possible grade is 85%.
- Projects submitted more than 7 days late will receive a zero. Late work beyond this point will not receive feedback or grading.

Assignments

- Assignment are designed to build specific skills and prepare you for larger projects.
- **Late assignment will not be accepted.** Missed deadlines result in a zero for that assignment.

Critiques & Peer Review Policy

Critique participation is a required part of your professional development and is directly tied to your grade. Your success in this field depends not only on the quality of your work, but also on your ability to present ideas, receive feedback, and contribute to the creative growth of others.

- **Presentation:**
 - If your work is not submitted by the project deadline, you will receive a zero for the presentation portion of the critique.
 - *You may still present for feedback, but no presentation credit will be earned for late work.*
- **Participation (Feedback Requirements)**
 - **One-on-One Critiques:** No peer feedback required. These sessions focus on instructor feedback and personal project review.
 - **Small Group Critiques:** You are required to provide feedback to *every peer in your group through peer feedback forms or online discussion boards.*
 - **Full-Class Critiques:** You are required to contribute to a minimum of *three meaningful, constructive comments* during the session.

Critique Rules – Professional Collaboration Expectations

- 1. Arrive Prepared with Your Work**
 - a. Critiques are working sessions. The more prepared you are, the more valuable feedback you'll receive. Bring your best version to each critique, even if it's still in progress.
- 2. Present Your Work with Confidence**
 - a. Be ready to discuss your concept clearly and professionally.
 - b. Explain your creative decisions and why your piece fits the project brief.
 - c. *Avoid "poisoning the well" by leading with what you think is wrong.* Present as if you're speaking to a client.
- 3. Invite and Guide Constructive Criticism**
 - a. Take ownership of the critique by asking focused questions:
 - i. "What's the least successful part of my design?"
 - ii. "Where would you suggest I focus my revisions?"
- 4. Listen Actively. Respond Professionally.**
 - a. Feedback is not personal.
 - b. Stay open-minded, avoid defensiveness, and focus on how your design communicates, not how it reflects on you personally.
- 5. Remember: You Are Not Your Work**
 - a. Design is a process. If your piece doesn't communicate as intended, that's a learning opportunity, not a personal failure. Growth happens through missteps.
- 6. Record and Retain Feedback**
 - a. Take notes or appoint someone to do so during critique.
 - b. You may record audio feedback with the class's permission, just ask before starting.
- 7. Give Feedback Professionally**

- a. Be constructive, specific, and respectful. Balance critique with what's working well.
- b. *Before offering solutions, ask: "Would you like a suggestion?"*

8. Critique Feedback is Input, Not Command

- a. You are responsible for deciding which feedback to implement. Not every suggestion will serve your design vision. Analyze, decide, and revise intentionally.

Sketchbook Prompts

Each week, a visual problem-solving prompt will be displayed at the start of class. You will have **15 minutes** to sketch or brainstorm solutions in your sketchbook before class begins. Prompts will also be posted on Blackboard for reference.

Purpose: This is a low-stakes habit-building exercise to develop your visual thinking and ideation skills. Sketching regularly strengthens your ability to generate concepts quickly—an essential professional skill.

Grading:

- Sketchbooks will be collected **two times during the semester** (after each major project).
- You will be graded on **completion**, not quality or creativity.
- Each collection covers approximately 5-6 weeks of prompts.
- Sketchbooks fall under the "Assignment" category.

Format:

- Physical or digital sketchbooks are acceptable.
- No specific size or drawing tool required—use what works for you.

Tip: Arriving on time gives you the full 15 minutes to work. Prompts are brief and meant to be exploratory, not polished.

Scholastic Dishonesty

A student attending LIT assumes responsibility for conduct compatible with the Academic Honesty statement in the LIT handbook. Students have the responsibility to submit coursework that is the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. Students must follow all instructions given by faculty or designated college representatives when taking examination, placement assessments, tests, quizzes, and evaluations. Plagiarism, copyright infringement, trademark infringement, or cheating, in any form, IS NOT acceptable. Your instructor reserves the right to check any and all submitted work for plagiarism.

In design courses, this includes submitting work created by others (including AI-generated content without disclosure), copying peer work, or misrepresenting collaborative contributions.

Cell Phone Policy

Cellphones and other electronic devices must be turned off while in class or used only with permission of the instructor.

Computer Requirements

Computer lab hours will be allotted to the students for the completion of classroom assignments and projects so please use your time wisely while on campus. Please bring a personal set of headphones to use when reviewing lesson tutorials/working ahead. Adobe

Creative Cloud can be accessed on your personal home computer as well, but you will need to meet minimum application specifications for the programs to run properly. Problems with your personal devices are not the instructor's responsibility.

Computer Literacy

It is expected that you have working knowledge of basic computer skills. These skills include but are not limited to powering up your computer, uploading and downloading files, opening and closing web browsers and programs, saving your work, knowing the difference between hardware and software. These concepts will not be taught in this course.

Classroom Policies

1. Food and Drink

- a. Food and bottled drinks are allowed, but please keep them away from computers and equipment. Be mindful of keeping your workspace clean and free from damage.

2. Internet Usage

- a. Professional net etiquette is expected for all course communications, assignment submissions, and online discussions.

3. Headphones & Audio Use

- a. Headphones are encouraged for watching tutorials or listening to music during independent work time. During lectures, tutorials, or critiques, please remove headphones and remain fully engaged.
- b. If you require headphones for sensory regulation, please notify me in advance.

Instructor Communication

For all forms of communication with me (Email and Phone calls):

Please allow 24-hours for me to get back to your inquiry.

Notes: If you email or leave me a message on Friday, I will get back to you Monday morning. If you message me in Blackboard, please checkbox "Send email copy". Blackboard notifications are unreliable.

Discord Communication

The graphic design program has a discord channel for students to communicate with each other outside of school. You can post memes, videos, artwork, birthdays, etc.

Graphic Design Organization

We do have an organization known as LGA or Lamar Graphics Association. It is a student-led organization that encourages creativity and fostering a community with other designers. This organization is how the program fundraises so we can take trips to design studios or events held in Houston or further. If you'd like to join please let me know.

Optional Material Resources

The following resources are not required for this course, but will give you a more in-depth understanding in regard to subject matter will be covering.

Graphic Design: The New Basics, 2nd Edition
978-1616893323

Graphic Design Thinking: Beyond Brainstorming
978-1568989792

AIGA membership - *\$50/year for students*

AIGA is the professional association for design. This membership will give you opportunities to have your portfolio reviewed, invites to design conferences, and access to other creative professionals.

I reserve the right to make adjustments to the syllabus with proper notice to students.