Course syllabus
spring semester, 2018

ADES 1540.502
Foundations of Visual Communication Design

meeting time:
M & W, 3–5:50 pm

location:
Room 238, Art Building

instructor:
Professor, Michael R. Gibson
michael.gibson@unt.edu

office hours:
Tu: 4:00–5:00 pm;
Th: 9:15–10:15 am

office hours location:
Art Building, room 102

Course description
This learning experience is designed for UNT CVAD students who have been admitted into the Communication Design major through the Entry-Level Portfolio Review. Students enrolled in this course will be challenged to construct fundamental knowledge of three graphics applications software programs—Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe InDesign—so that these may be effectively used to abet the processes of creating visually communicative artifacts and information systems. Some fundamental communication design ideation processes will also be introduced.

Credits and prerequisites
ADES 1540 is a three-credit course. Acceptance into the program through the Communication Design Entry Portfolio Review is required; there are no exceptions to this stipulation.

Course content
Foundations of Visual Communication Design introduces students to three types of graphics applications software programs—Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe InDesign—as toolkits and, to a lesser degree, as computationally driven systems for managing the production of content necessary to:

- create and iteratively manipulate illustrative concepts,
- design information consisting of typography and imagery,
- manipulate photographic images

within various types of page layouts. This course will also introduce students to some of the fundamentals of typographic structure and terminology, and some basic guidelines pertinent to the design of individual letterforms, as well as what needs to occur—and what needs to be avoided—when these are organized into groups (as words, sentences, paragraphs and groups of paragraphs). Students will also be challenged to develop personal means of designing original graphic concepts.

Course objectives
- Develop and demonstrate proficiency using essential visual communication design software (specifically, Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign). Developing the knowledge and skills necessary to utilize these software programs effectively is necessary for entry into the professional discipline of visual communication design.
- Understanding the need for and effectively implementing a high level of craft-based rigor within each student’s individual design processes. As this ability and sensitivity increases,
so will each student’s ability to organize his/her respective logistical, intellectual and creative approaches to designing

- Immersing students in learning experiences wherein they begin to develop broad understandings of how to engage in the iterative processes necessary to generate viable ideas for visually communicating essential content to given audiences, or for creating effective interactive experiences on behalf of particular user groups
- Immersing students in learning experiences wherein they begin to develop the base of knowledge and skill sets necessary to develop ideas for visual communication from initial concep ting through to revisions and to final manifestation
- **Immersing students in learning situations where they begin to become familiar with the importance of “NOT falling in love with the first ideas they generate.”**
- Familiarizing students with need to effectively utilize means for organizing and categorizing various aspects of their work as they develop and refine it for eventual implementation within complex information delivery systems, such as books, websites, mobile apps, periodicals (printed and online), brand identity systems, retail packaging systems, signage systems, and information design/data visualization systems
- Help students become fundamentally proficient with typographic terminology and its associated meanings and implications within the graphics applications software systems that will be introduced during this course
- Introduce students to the basic understandings needed re: fundamental image-resolution and image-making principles necessary to create viable screen- and print- based visual communication design work
- Help students to develop and demonstrate consistently disciplined work habits combined with professionalism during and outside of class time
- Help students begin to develop the critically rigorous, self-guided, proactive, and empathetic learning abilities necessary to launch and sustain their careers as professional visual communication designers
- Help students begin to develop the ability to critically analyze and assess the increasingly broad array of visual communication design work that contextualizes and creates much of the culture of the modern world
- Introduce students to the social, cultural, technological, and economic “worlds” of and around visual communication design that affect and inform professional visual communication design decision-making processes
- Introduce students to some rudimentary means to design conceptually appropriate, evocative, and aesthetically compelling combinations of two-dimensional typographic and image-based forms
- Help students begin to cultivate broadly informed, deeply plumbed awarenesses of their individual strengths, weaknesses, and areas-of-interest as emerging visual communication designers.

**Course structure**

This course will operate according to a schedule guided by challenging the students enrolled in it to engage in a series of assigned, deadline-specific visual communication design-based “problems” and software-specific tutorials.

In-class time will be divided between lectures, software-specific demonstrations, and assigned work that can at least be partially completed in-class. Students will be required to complete assigned work outside of class throughout the duration of the semester.
Each student will need to spend approximately two to three hours working outside of class time for each hour he/she spends in class each week. This will amount to a total of approximately 12 to 18 hours spent outside of class each week completing the assigned coursework. Not being able to devote this much time per week to the assigned coursework of ADES 1540 will likely jeopardize an individual student’s ability to achieve a successful learning experience within it and could cause the student to flunk the course.

Course components

There are two types. The first of these will include both “in-class” and “at-home” practice exercises designed to help students begin to build their bases of knowledge and skill sets in and around the three graphics applications software programs that will be emphasized over the duration of the semester. Each unit that constitutes the coursework will require students to complete and hand in a set of exercises for grading. Three to five practice exercises will be assigned and collected for grading between January 17 and May 2.

The second of these are the three main course projects. One will be assigned to support the learning experience students will have with each of the three graphics applications software programs that will be emphasized during the course (Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, and InDesign). Each of these main course projects will be graded upon their completion, and will be assessed according to:

- how effectively an individual student engaged in the processes of design as the project progressed;
- how physically well-crafted an individual student was able to render his/her completed version of the assigned visual communication design artifact;
- how effectively an individual student was able to satisfy the design parameters/criteria assigned that particular project.

Each main course project will be supported by a handout that articulates its primary and secondary objectives, and that explains the parameters/criteria that will be used to assess it.

An overview of how each practice exercise and main course project will be graded

**Illustrator Homework**: 10% of each student’s final course grade
**Illustrator Test**: 10% of each student’s final course grade
**Illustrator Main Project**: 10% of each student’s final course grade

**Photoshop Homework**: 10% of each student’s final course grade
**Photoshop Test**: 10% of each student’s final course grade
**Photoshop Main Project**: 10% of each student’s final course grade

**InDesign Homework**: 10% of each student’s final course grade
**InDesign Main Project**: 20% of each student’s final course grade
**Illustrator Pen Tool Quizzes**: 10% of each student’s final course grade

Homework and Main Projects turned in late will not be graded (this is worse than earning an “F”).

Course risk factor

ADES 1540 has been classified as a course that carries a UNT Policy Risk Factor of Category Two (2). Students enrolled in this course will be exposed to some significant hazards, but these are not likely
to cause serious bodily injury. In this course, those risks are related to X-Acto knife usage, and exposure to adhesives and the fumes they generate, as well as repetitive stress injuries related to extended computer usage. Students enrolled in ADES 1540 will be informed of any potential health hazards or potential for bodily injury connected with the use of any materials and/or processes they may encounter during their enrollment in this course, and will be instructed as necessary regarding how to proceed without endangering themselves or others.

Required texts (purchasing these online/as Ebooks may save students money)¹

Required supplies
· One metal-edged, 18” to 24” ruler with cork backing that can serve as a cutting edge
· A selection of four to ten graphite-based drawing pencils (HB, 2H, 4H, 6H, etc.)
· An inexpensive pencil sharpener that is easily transportable²
· A set of “Pink Pearl,” “White,” and kneadable erasers that are easily transportable
· At least one (preferably two) X-Acto knife(ves) and a package of at least 10 #11 blades³
· One matte knife and five blades that fit it
· One 9” x 12” self-healing cutting mat that you’ll use in the Art Building and in your home⁴
· One Bienfang brand 100-sheet “Parchment 100 Tracing Paper” pad (9” x 12”)
· One Bienfang brand 50-sheet “Graphics 360” pad (9” x 12”)
· At least four Sharpie brand “Fine Point” black markers
· At least four Sharpie brand “Ultra-Fine Point” black markers
· Letramax brand black mat board as needed (you’ll need two to three 20” x 30” sheets)
· Adhesives (choose one method and stick with it throughout the semester): either a can of 3M brand “Artist’s Spray Mount” or “Super 77 Spray Mount”), or one jar/can of rubber cement, a can of Bestine brand rubber cement thinner, and a rubber cement pick-up

ADES 1540 attendance policy
Good attendance and punctuality are expected for this class and will strongly affect your grades. Roll will be taken at the beginning of each class session. A student will be considered late/tardy if he/she arrives after roll has been taken. If a student is late/tardy, it is his/her responsibility during that class session to make sure the instructor knows that he/she is present before he/she leaves that particular class session. Each student will receive two (2) “free tardies” over the course of the semester. After the first two tardies, every two (2) tardies will equal one (1) unexcused absence. Only two (2) unexcused absences over the course of the will be accepted. The third unexcused absence will lower a student’s final course grade by one letter grade. The fourth unexcused absence will lower a student’s final course grade by two letter grades. The fifth unexcused absence will lower a student’s final course grade by three letter grades. A total of six absences, excused or unexcused, will result in the student receiving a final course grade of “F,” which will result in a flunking of ADES 1540 during the spring semester of 2018. Students who sleep during class will be counted absent.

¹. All UNT CVAD Com Design majors have FREE access to a wide variety of online-facilitated, video-based tutorials from Lynda.com that cover graphics applications, motion design and interaction design software. Making “good use of them” on a weekly or at least a bi-weekly basis is highly recommended. Some students may wish to use books from the Adobe Classroom in a Book Series instead of the Visual Quickstart Guides. This will be fine, as long as you match your reading to the motion design and interaction requirements to earn a degree.

⁴. If you’re serious about continuing on in the Visual Communication Design major here, purchase a “100-pack” of these blades (if you can afford it), as you’ll use them relatively quickly over the next 18 months or so of your enrollment experience in this program.

⁵. Do not ever cut paper or any other material with an X-Acto knife on any surface in the art building without using a cutting mat!
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There are no excused absences for anything other than a verifiable death in the immediate family (obituary, funeral home notice or death certificate must be presented), or a verifiable illness suffered by the student accompanied by printed and signed doctor’s note provided on his/her stationery with a telephone number. The doctor’s note must be presented during the class immediately after the one that was missed. A receipt from the doctor’s office is not acceptable.

A dental appointment—unless it was necessitated by an emergency—does not count as an excused absence.

Because this course meets twice per week, a student will be counted absent—and this absence will be unexcused—if he/she comes to a given class session more than 30 minutes late. A student who exhibits a pattern of not bringing any or bringing only incomplete work to a series of three or more class sessions may earn additional unexcused absences at the discretion of the professor.

If a student comes to a class session without his/her assigned work for that day, that student will be counted absent. If a student is absent from a given class session, that student is responsible for contacting a class member in order to get any information or assignments that were given during the class session that was missed. INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS MAY NOT CONTACT THE INSTRUCTOR TO GAIN INFORMATION ABOUT “WHAT THEY MISSED DURING A GIVEN CLASS SESSION,” NOR CAN “WHAT THEY MISSED” BE MADE UP DURING AN OFFICE HOURS SESSION WITH THE INSTRUCTOR.

The instructor will not use any class time to repeat missed lectures or assignments. Do not—for any reason—call the main office or the Department of Design office of UNT CVAD to leave the instructor a message that you will be missing a given class session of ADES 1540. Under no circumstances should you leave a project with anyone in either of these offices for the instructor to “retrieve later.” Neither of these offices will accept student projects.

Personal screen/mobile course policy
All smart phones, tablets, and phablets must be turned offswitched into “airplane mode” as soon as class begins. Laptops should only be opened to engage in class work.

No social media, checking email or text messaging will be allowed for any reason during class time. Failure to comply with this policy may result in point deductions on the “Main Project” grade for whichever of these the student was working toward when a given “failure to comply with this policy” occurred. Let your instructor know in advance if you have an extenuating circumstance with regard to abiding by any of these policies (if you have a need to “check your device” due to these types of circumstances, please step outside the classroom space and into the hallway to do this).

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is literary or artistic theft. It is the false assumption of authorship, the wrongful act of taking the product of another person’s mind and presenting it as one’s own. Copying someone else’s writing, design or art work, intact or with inconsequential changes, and adding one’s name to the result constitutes plagiarism. If the instructor suspects a given student of an incidence of plagiarism, he/she will notify this student of this concern within 48 hours of the suspicion being raised. Plagiarism may result in disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, expulsion (permanent), or the revocation of your degree, and it will cause you to flunk this course.

Accommodations for students with special needs
The College of Visual Arts and Design is committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. In keeping with this commitment, and in order
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to facilitate equality of educational access, faculty members in the College will make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with a disability, such as appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methodologies when doing so does not fundamentally alter the course.

If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to obtain verifying information from the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) and to inform me of your need for an accommodation.

Requests for accommodation must be given to me no later than the end of the first week of classes for students registered with the ODA as of the beginning of the current semester. If you register with the ODA after the first week of classes, your accommodation requests will be considered after this deadline.

Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed. Information about how to obtain academic accommodations can be found in UNT Policy 18.1.14, at www.unt.edu/oda, and by visiting the ODA in Sage Hall, 167. You also may call the ODA at 940.565.4323 and discuss issues related to accommodations with them.

Dealing with emergencies (fire, weather related, etc.)

In case of emergency (alarm will sound), please follow the building evacuation plans posted on each floor of your building—in this case, the Art Building—and proceed to the nearest parking lot (due to construction near the Art Building, please gather in the parking lot immediately west of Curry Hall). In case of a tornado (campus sirens will sound) or other weather-related threat, please go to the nearest hallway or room on your floor without exterior windows and remain there until an all clear signal is sounded. Follow the instructions of your instructor(s) and act accordingly.

Changes to the syllabus

The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments/changes to the course syllabus with or without notice as he/she sees fit/deems necessary as the semester progresses. The daily course schedule for ADES 1540.502 begins on the next page.

A brief note on the danger to Com Design majors who are easily bored, or who simply are not very interesting people (and, really, all other Com Design majors)

To quote from Gloria Steinhem, “Those [people] who are ‘boring’ have a high tendency to be easily ‘bored,’ those [people] who are ‘easily bored’ have a high tendency to be ‘boring.’” Com Design is a major that leads to entry into a professional discipline that demands a broadly informed, deeply examined sense-of-self. Those who practice it well enough to sustain careers and fulfill life paths cultivate knowledge and understandings from diverse sources, are well and broadly read, and are good at formulating probative questions that interrogate status quos across extant social, technological, economic, environmental and political spectras. They listen as well as they speak, and develop the ability to engage in working processes that do not usually yield predictable outcomes.

If one of your primary goals in college and life is to “go with flow,” “not stick out too much,” “wait to see how everyone else is acting before you act,” Com Design is not the major for you. This is also not the major for you if you can’t figure out how to disconnect from social media and other e-based modes of communication for the extended periods necessary to construct the kinds of knowledge you’ll need to succeed in this demanding but richly rewarding major and career. If you can’t “go dark” for the few hours necessary almost every day to “get thoughtful work planned and done,” you won’t make it in Com Design. You also won’t make it if you haven’t matured enough to treat your collegiate experience as something beyond “13th grade.”
Semester schedule for ADES 1540 | Foundations for Visual Communication Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 01</th>
<th>In class:</th>
<th>Assigned Work:</th>
<th>Due:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 01</td>
<td>Overview of class policies &amp; syllabus; overview of class projects; Vector v. Raster (contours vs. pixels); overview of AI tools panel (part 1);</td>
<td>Read/practice AI chapters 1-4</td>
<td>Finish readings + practice by Jan 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 02</td>
<td>Overview of AI tools panel (part 2); use pen tool to render letterforms</td>
<td>Read/practice AI chapter 21</td>
<td>Al Lesson 1 due on W Jan 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 03</td>
<td>Geometric Objects, freehand drawing &amp; brushes; selections; moving, copying &amp; aligning objects</td>
<td>Read/practice AI chapter 6-9</td>
<td>Al Lesson 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 04</td>
<td>Intro to AI’s live paint feature; type creation, styling and editing; acquiring images; working with brushes &amp; gradients</td>
<td>Read/practice AI chapters 10-13</td>
<td>Finish readings + practice by Feb 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 05</td>
<td>Working w/ symbols; printing &amp; exporting; work in class on the &quot;Mimic Project&quot;</td>
<td>Read/practice AI chapters 27-31</td>
<td>Al Lesson 3 due on M Feb 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 06</td>
<td>Review for Illustrator skills test + pen tooling practice, Pen Tool quiz: 30 min</td>
<td>Read/practice AI chapters 25, 26, 27</td>
<td>Finish readings + practice by Feb 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 07</td>
<td>Re-sizing, cropping &amp; rotating images in PS; understanding layers; transparency Intro to masks; working w/ selections &amp; masks; History; color modes; color picker; Pen Tool quiz: 20 min</td>
<td>Read/practice PS chapter 5 &amp; 6 pgs. 1-4, 14-16</td>
<td>Finish readings + practice by Mar 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. The Com Design faculty has scheduled all CDES courses this semester so that none of them meet on Fridays. This has been done for a variety of reasons, but the one that most applies to the working habits of CDES students is this: each of you should “use your Friday time” to engage in assigned readings, practice with Lynda.com tutorials, and get a significant portion of your assigned coursework done. Fridays should be considered “Com Design work days,” which means that these are BAD days to work at a part-time job (unless you do so at night) and BAD days to spend 8 to 10 hours gaming or binge watching TV series on HBO Go, Netflix, Acorn, Amazon Prime, etc.

8. If you suffer from the classic, college student affliction known as “can’t-get-your-sk**-together-itis,” Communication Design is NOT a good major course of study for you. Consider changing your major to a course of study that this affliction won’t affect as adversely as it will if you are a Communication Design major.

9. This is the first of several—at least six—pen tool quizzes you’ll be challenged to complete this semester. Of all of the formal software skills you’ll need to master between January 17 and the end of this semester, and most especially between January 17 and the first day of your classes in the 2000-level of our program this fall, gaining mastery with this tool may be the most important. Prospective Communication Design majors who cannot learn to use the pen tool in a way that becomes “second nature” to them do not usually advance beyond our mid-point (a.k.a. “sophomore”) review.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In class:</th>
<th>Assigned Work:</th>
<th>Due:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 08</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>M Mar 12</td>
<td><em>Spring break week: no classes</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>W Mar 14</td>
<td><em>Please: don’t sexually harass anyone! If you witness sexual harassment, don’t just stand there: INTERVENE! AND—please avoid engaging in activities that could cause you to be thrown in jail!</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 09</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>M Mar 19</td>
<td>Eyedropper; creating custom patterns; ‘more’ about layers; adjustment layers</td>
<td>Read/practice PS chapter 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>W Mar 21</td>
<td>histogram; levels &amp; curves; hue/saturation; color matching; smart objects</td>
<td>Finish readings + practice by Mar 21</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reminder: PS Lesson 2 due on Mar 21</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 10</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>M Mar 26</td>
<td>Refining selections and masks; using the clone stamp tool; painting; using custom brushes; using the eraser tool; using the history brush</td>
<td>Read/practice PS chapters 14 &amp; 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Mar 28</td>
<td>Pen Tool quiz: 20 min</td>
<td>Finish readings + practice by Mar 28</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thumbnail sketches; scanning; engaging in visual research effectively; retouching; using the healing brush; spot healing; making color adjustments; making ‘content aware’ fills and moves</td>
<td>Introduction of PS Project</td>
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<td><strong>Week 11</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>M Apr 2</td>
<td>Blurring and sharpening; using clipping masks; blending layers; using the ‘puppet warp’, ‘liquefy’; using filters; layer styles; deploying drop shadows, glows, &amp; other FX (and using them appropriately…)</td>
<td>Read/practice PS chapters 18 &amp; 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Apr 4</td>
<td>Pen Tool quiz: 20 min</td>
<td>Finish readings + practice by Apr 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Photoshop Test; Introduction to ID; Overview of ID Tools Panel</td>
<td>PHOTO SHOP PROJECT</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Read/practice ID chapters 1–3</td>
<td>Finish readings + practice by Apr 9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 12</strong></td>
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<td>M Apr 9</td>
<td>Overview of ID Workspace; setting up a document; designing a well-structured grid</td>
<td>Read/practice ID chapters 4 &amp; 8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finish readings + practice by Apr 11</td>
<td>Introduction of ID Project; Assign fonts &amp; designer for “Reference Book”; ID Lesson 1 due on Apr 11: Three Reference Book Style Guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Apr 11</td>
<td>Demo of one-page layout populated w/ text &amp; objects; demo of one-page layout populated w/ text &amp; photos</td>
<td>Read/practice ID chapters 16 &amp; 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ID LESSON 1</td>
<td>Finish readings + practice by Apr 16</td>
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#### Semester schedule for ADES 1540 | Foundations for Visual Communication Design (continued further)

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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 13</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| M Apr 16 | Demo one-page layout w/ color & objects; demo one-page layout w/ text effects | ID Lesson 2 due on Apr 18:  
Three Color Palette Layouts  
Read/practice ID chapters 6 & 7  
Finish readings + practice by Apr 18 | |
| W Apr 18 | Demo book format & set styles  
*Pen Tool quiz: 20 min* | Read/practice ID chapter 9 & 10  
Finish readings + practice by Apr 23  
ID Lesson 3 due on Apr 25:  
Three Software Tutorial Layouts | |

| Week 14 |  | | | |
| M Apr 23 | Demo book format & set styles | Read/practice ID chapter 14 & 15  
Finish readings + practice by Apr 25 | |
| W Apr 25 | Demo book format & set styles:  
Demo book format & libraries  
*Pen Tool quiz: 20 min* | Read/practice ID chapter 11 & 12  
Finish readings + practice by Apr 30 | ID LESSON 3 |

| Week 15 |  | | | |
| M Apr 30 | Demo interactive options | Read/practice ID chapter 13  
Finish readings + practice by May 2  
Three Designer Page Layouts | |
| W May 2 | Critique Reference Books | | |

**Week 16**  
**W May 9**

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Turn in Reference Books (this will be the final project students enrolled in ADES 1540 will turn in this semester; there is no final exam for ADES 1540). **Students should bear in mind that both a printed reference book and a version created in Adobe InDesign must be submitted by 3:00 pm this afternoon to meet this final project deadline.**
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Student acknowledgement

I, _________________________________________________ acknowledge that I have read the course syllabus. I understand the course structure, grading, attendance policies, as well as the risk factor rating. I hereby agree to this syllabus and its provisions.

________________________________________________________________________
student signature

________________________________________________________________________
student name (please print)

date

________________________________________________________________________
faculty signature

date

Michael R. Gibson,
Professor, Communication Design
UNT CVAD Department of Design

Contact information

Please provide the following information:

________________________________________________________________________
e-mail address (your official, UNT-sanctioned e-mail address)