WHITNEY RUSH · Curriculum Vitae

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Professional work published under Whitney Holden.

EDUCATION

EXPECTED JULY 2027 — **Vermont College of Fine Arts**
Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design

2011 — **The University of Texas at Arlington**
Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art
with a Concentration in Communication Design

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2025—PRESENT — **University of North Texas • Senior Lecturer and Program Coordinator**
College of Visual Arts and Design (CVAD), Department of Design, Graphic Design concentration • Denton, Texas

UNT's Graphic Design program ranked ninth nationally among public colleges and second in Texas in Animation Career Review's 2025 rankings. UNT's Communication Design program was also named a GDUSA Top Design School for five consecutive years, 2022–2026.

2022—2025 — **University of North Texas • Lecturer and Program Coordinator**
College of Visual Arts and Design, Department of Design, Graphic Design concentration • Denton, Texas

2021—2022 — **University of North Texas • Visiting Assistant Professor**
College of Visual Arts and Design, Department of Design • Denton, Texas

2014 & 2021 — **The University of Texas at Arlington • Adjunct Instructor**
Department of Art and Art History • Arlington, Texas

COURSES TAUGHT

2021—PRESENT — **University of North Texas**
Maintained a 3–4 teaching load, totaling seven courses per academic year, alongside program coordination responsibilities.

Typical studio enrollment: 20–22 students per section.

Introduction to Communication Design • ADES 1500
Typography I • ADES 1510
Foundations for Communication Design • ADES 1540
Image Making and Color Theory • ADES 2515
Publication Design • ADES 3500
Interaction Design I • ADES 3510
Portfolio Development • ADES 4541
Professional Internship • ADES 4700

2014 & 2021

The University of Texas at Arlington

Layout • ART 2355
Sustainable Design • ART 3357
Visual Identity Systems • ART 4355

TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Select Awards and Recognition

57 projects

recognized in Graphis New Talent Awards, 2023–2026. 8 Gold, 14 Silver, 35 Honorable Mentions.

Student work from all levels earned 57 Graphis New Talent recognitions from 2023–2026, including 8 Gold, 14 Silver, and 35 Honorable Mentions, and two First Place PRINT Awards in 2024–2025. In 2026, a first-year book-cover design was selected for Graphis's Best100 exhibition in San Francisco alongside professional and student work, and a student poster was one of eleven student entries selected for the Graphis UnMuted exhibition. 9% of all accepted entries nationwide at the 2026 Dallas Society of Visual Communications (DSVC) National Student Show were projects taught directly in my courses or portfolios incorporating work from those courses. Student portfolios incorporating this work earned over $10,000 in National Student Show scholarships and prizes from 2022–2026, including all five portfolio awards in 2024: Gold, Silver, and Bronze Senior Portfolio, Best Junior Portfolio, and Best Sophomore Portfolio, totaling $5,250. Portfolio achievements reflect students' work across the curriculum and contributions from multiple instructors. The complete list of student recognition is included as a separate supporting document.

Student Perceptions of Teaching

4.8 out of 5

Median instructor effectiveness across 30 evaluations and 476 responses, 2021–2026.

Fall 2021–Spring 2026 • 30 course evaluations • 476 responses from 578 enrolled students • 82% aggregate response rate.

Instructor contribution and teaching effectiveness both received a median of 4.8 out of 5. The overall summative median was 4.7 out of 5. Students also highly rated independent thinking, engagement, feedback, creativity, and the application of new skills.

TEACHING INNOVATION AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Continually revised courses to reflect contemporary design practice and evolving technology. Treated student well-being and belonging as part of course design, alongside the skills and professional practices students needed to develop.

Shared this approach at Circles Conference in 2026 through a belonging workshop for educators and managers of entry-level designers and interns.

Contributed to course sequencing and revisions across the curriculum, including courses taught by other faculty. Tested and revised senior-year sequencing to explore collaborative course design with the User Experience Design (UX) program.

Introduction to Communication Design • ADES 1500

Taught a large lecture course comprised of 184 students. Managed and mentored a teaching assistant.

Rebuilt lectures and workbook assignments around the design practices and principles students needed to understand the mindset of a designer, and to prepare for candidacy review. Removed busy work and clarified expectations. Students not pursuing a design major gained an understanding of a designer's approach to problem solving, seeing the world, asking better questions, and being curious.

Integrated wellness, emotional regulation, work/life balance, and professionalism into the curriculum. Invited seven guest speakers from Graphic Design and UX professions to discuss career paths, balancing work and life, and practical advice for navigating the profession. Coordinated peer mentoring and support events through the AIGA student group, connecting students with design upperclassmen during the demanding review period.

Used iClicker and Microsoft Forms for live polls, quizzes, surveys, word clouds, and collective brainstorming. Evaluated learning in real time and collected anonymous questions from students less comfortable speaking in a large lecture.

Candidacy and Entry Review Redesign

Played a major role in overhauling the Graphic Design two-part portfolio review spanning two semesters. Approximately 100 students apply annually, with 44 proceeding into the Graphic Design major. Served as the sole instructor of the entry review course ADES 1540 for several years. In 2026–2027, will serve as the sole instructor for the full ADES 1500 and ADES 1540 sequence.

50% lower application fees

Reduced candidacy review fees by half for Graphic Design and UX applicants.

Examined three years of Graphic Design candidacy and entry review evaluations to assess how well each aspect of the review, including the rubric, rankings, submission content, workbook content, and interviews, anticipated students' subsequent success in the program. Used that analysis and insight from colleagues to revise the process and eliminate components that did not consistently provide useful information, including an in-person audition.

Coordinated separate Graphic Design and UX candidacy reviews in tandem with ADES 1500. For Graphic Design, clarified portfolio requirements, streamlined the rubric, and provided structured submission templates. Required the inclusion of UNT foundations work as part of the application process. Collaborated with advising and administration to improve selection and communication procedures. Reduced application fees by half for both concentrations. Worked with UX faculty to align introductory instruction and application support with their review requirements, with applicant evaluation conducted by UX faculty.

Foundations for Communication Design • ADES 1540

Redesigned the course over several years to integrate concept development, research, ideation, visual form, and instruction in Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. Removed dated or irrelevant software expectations and emphasized process, thinking on paper, and the application of design principles. Scaffolded assignments to build a body of work evaluated by the full Graphic Design faculty for entry review. Developed an independent workbook containing resources and activities students could use to deepen their learning throughout the semester.

"Her critiques were not only helpful and truthful but also delivered with kindness and understanding, which greatly enhanced my learning experience."

Foundations for Communication Design, Spring 2024

Used game-based approaches to make critique less intimidating and more engaging without lowering expectations or compromising rigor. Paired the demands of the studio with self-care, acceptance, belonging, and community.

Developed a collaborative playing-card project spanning all three course sections. Each student designed a single card within a shared system of constraints, contributing to a collective deck. Designed the packaging alongside students, presented it for their critique, and modeled how to act on feedback.

The project encouraged investment in a shared outcome and strengthened community across sections. Students responded enthusiastically and pooled resources to fund a print run so each participant could have a copy. Future plans include establishing the project as an annual tradition and exploring deck sales to support each new cohort's competition entry fees.

Student work from the course earned multiple Gold, Silver and Honorable Mention awards in Graphis New Talent. A first-year book-cover design was selected for Graphis's Best 100, an exhibition hosted by Academy of Art University in San Francisco presenting the top 100 professional and student projects from around the world.

Publication Design • ADES 3500

"Whitney wants her students to learn but also feel safe, so I wasn't nervous to make mistakes."

Publication Design, Fall 2025

Replaced the opening assignment with a collaborative annual report project, combining data visualization, editorial hierarchy, and layout with storytelling and shared workflows. The project gave students a practical portfolio piece demonstrating their ability to organize complex information within a consistent design system and work with a partner.

Developed a digital publication project extension requiring students to synthesize learning from Interaction Design and Publication Design. Students translated an established print design system into a digital mobile layout using Figma. Studied case studies of major publications' digital editions to inform design decisions.

Across 2025–2026, 12 of 20 annual report projects (60%) received Graphis New Talent recognition, including one Gold, five Silver awards, and six Honorable Mentions. For two consecutive years, an annual report project received First Place in the PRINT Awards.

Interaction Design I • ADES 3510

Structured website redesigns as group projects and holistic rebrands which include identity development, information architecture, creative copywriting, user experience research, and interface design before Figma prototyping. Used shared project contexts, including boutique hotels and travel destinations, to support classwide research and discussion. Across three semesters, nine of 16 group website projects (56%) received Graphis New Talent recognition, including one Gold and two Silver awards.

Portfolio Development • ADES 4541

Taught portfolio curation and presentation, interview preparation, freelance business practices, compensation research, and job hunting strategies. Encouraged students to develop professional identities, present their work and define success for themselves with intention.

"There were many moments I felt unsure of myself, and she was able to pull me back and show me that I was doing some pretty dang cool things."

Portfolio Development, Fall 2023

Overall Course and Instructor Ratings

Measure	*Median*	*N*	*Top two ratings*
Instructor contribution	4.8/5	476	94%
Instructor effectiveness	4.8/5	476	91%
Course content	4.7/5	476	89%
Course as a whole	4.6/5	476	87%

N = 476 for each item. Percentages combine the two highest rating categories shown in the report and are approximate because the source percentages are rounded.

The Studio Learning Experience

Measure	*Median*	*N*
Encouraged independent thinking	6.9/7	407
Created an atmosphere of engagement	6.8/7	408
Stimulated new skills and approaches	6.8/7	408
Structured the course to facilitate learning	6.8/7	408
Valuable instructor feedback during the process	6.8/7	407
Integrated the course with the rest of the curriculum	6.8/7	408
Valuable peer feedback	6.6/7	408
Valuable feedback from visitors and outside reviewers	6.5/7	405

Medians on a seven-point frequency scale, with 7 representing Always.

Student Learning Outcomes

Measure	*Median*	*N*
Develop and use creativity	6.8/7	408
Practice design strategies and processes	6.8/7	408
Integrate and apply new skills and knowledge	6.8/7	406
Apply principles from past work and examples	6.8/7	408
Express ideas in artistic or graphic form	6.7/7	408
Work in fluid or ambiguous situations	6.7/7	408
Develop self-critique	6.7/7	408
Provide peer critique	6.6/7	408
Develop oral communication and presentation skills	6.3/7	408
Work effectively in teams	6.0/7	407

Medians on a seven-point learning-benefit scale, with 7 representing Very Much.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

2022—PRESENT

Program Coordinator • Graphic Design concentration

> "I always admire how thoughtful and balanced your responses to conflict are. Just glad to see our students being heard and our program's rigor and boundaries are still respected."
>
> **Erica Holeman, Associate Professor, Graphic Design**

Student and Faculty Support and Advocacy

Connected students to campus and community resources when health concerns or financial barriers affected their quality of life and ability to fully participate in the classroom. Supported faculty in navigating challenging behavioral situations and consulted on disability accommodations, helping instructors respond with empathy, consideration of individual student needs, and consistent expectations. Mediated instructor–student conflicts and academic integrity issues.

Formally mentored Interior Design lecturer Tracey Filbeck beginning in 2025.

Scholarships, Competitions, and Senior Exhibition

Coordinated Graphic Design program scholarships and student competition entries, including sponsorship decisions, to maintain equitable access.

Co-organized a joint senior exhibition with the UX program, including a gallery reception for students and their families, student recognition, awards, and the presentation of thousands of dollars in Graphic Design scholarships.

Program Operations and Institutional Assessment

Coordinated schedules for six faculty across 29 annual sections of required ADES coursework, in addition to internship offerings. Managed annual program budgets of up to $10,000 and implemented cost-saving measures, including use of the work-study program during lean years. Managed program-level service commitments and meetings, the Gough Design Research Space, and a student worker. Planning future fundraising through sales of design merchandise.

Established the program's SharePoint site as a central system for file sharing and curriculum archiving, building faculty consensus around its structure. Maintained the archive of course materials and shared budgeting and scheduling information so instructors can access program records and assume teaching responsibilities when needed.

Conducted annual assessment through the Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP) for institutional accreditation and coordinated program data collection and reporting.

Hired, managed, and mentored two to four adjunct faculty annually. Supported teaching, critique, student communication, professional boundaries, Canvas use, and practical onboarding.

2026—PRESENT

Common Experience Committee • College of Visual Arts and Design

Collaborating with the Common Experience Committee to examine how students experience their first year in CVAD and where they encounter barriers to belonging and progression. Helping plan qualitative analysis of student evaluations, review retention patterns, and map the first-year experience to identify unnecessary friction that may contribute to attrition.

2024 **NASAD Accreditation Task Force**

Collaborated with Graphic Design faculty to author the Graphic Design concentration's contribution to the NASAD accreditation self-study.

Faculty Search Committees

2026 Graphic Design clinical faculty search committee
2024 Graphic Design faculty search committee
2023 Graphic Design Visiting Assistant Professor search committee
2022–2023 Graphic Design tenure-track faculty search committee

2023, 2025, 2026 **Non-Tenure Track Personnel Action Committee • Co-Chair**

STUDENT MENTORING AND INDUSTRY CONNECTION

"I feel more prepared for the job search after having the time to really consider my personal brand, how I present myself, and how to prepare for an interview."

Portfolio Development, Spring 2025

Career Connections and Professional Preparation

Built and sustained industry and alumni relationships to connect students with internships, freelance work, and employment. Worked with leaders in the Dallas Society of Visual Communications (DSVC) and American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) to connect students with the professional community.

Organized portfolio reviews and guest critiques with designers from Google, Cinemark, and other agencies and in-house teams. Partnered with CVAD's Career Development Coaches to conduct mock interviews.

Wrote 15 letters of recommendation in the past year. Led an annual career workshop for the AIGA student group on job hunting, interviewing, and freelancing for internships and entry-level positions. Provided individual guidance as students pursued these opportunities.

Industry and Community Engagement

Connected students with regional design agencies, in-house teams, printers, vendors, and professional organizations through on-site visits and ongoing partnerships.

2024–2026 Coordinated participation in the Minority Creative Workshop at The Star, the Dallas Cowboys' headquarters and practice facility in Frisco, Texas.

PRECOLLEGE TEACHING AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

2025–2026 **Creative U • Onstead Institute for Education in the Visual Arts and Design**

Developed and taught six summer workshops for high school students exploring careers in Graphic Design. Taught four of Creative U's twelve workshops in 2026, representing one-third of the program's offerings. Creative U is a core precollege outreach and recruitment initiative in CVAD's 2026–2030 strategic plan.

Introduced typography, concert-poster design, visual identity, mobile app design and Figma prototyping, digital and traditional illustration, and album-cover design through hands-on projects. Guided students in creating interactive prototypes, finished art prints, and full-scale printed album covers.

"You are a wonderful instructor, and I truly hope you continue teaching. Your enthusiasm, creativity, and encouragement made a lasting impression on my daughter."

Creative U Parent, Summer 2026

RESEARCH AND CREATIVE INQUIRY

My research centers on belonging as an experience that can be crafted and designed, creating environments where students can bring their whole selves to the classroom. I practice pedagogy as a form of care, with particular attention to neurodivergent accessibility, emotional regulation, and clarity of communication. My teaching and research inform one another, grounded in years of practice and explored more formally through my MFA research at Vermont College of Fine Arts (VCFA).

"I'm neurodivergent and Whitney makes it very easy for me to learn in her class even though I learn a different way."

Foundations for Communication Design, Spring 2023

A Conversation Guide for Neurodivergent Students and their Design Instructors • In Progress

Developing a conversation guide for neurodivergent students and their instructors under the working title "*Little Bridges*". Traditional academic accommodations often do not anticipate the needs of design studio courses. This tool is intended to help students and instructors bridge that gap, informed by my personal lived experience and reflective teaching practice.

The framework developed organically over five years of teaching at UNT, working with approximately 15 students with documented accommodations each year. A zine-format prototype is in progress.

2024—PRESENT

PARACLE • Publication Design Partnership

Collaborating with PARACLE, an all-female group of autistic researchers and scientists developing resources to help parents and clinical practitioners better understand autistic experiences. Designing a publication for families of newly diagnosed autistic children and teens that challenges common medicalized and pathologized narratives around autism through affirming language and friendlier design.

PRESENTATIONS AND INVITED SPEAKING

2026

Circles Conference • Workshop • Grapevine, Texas

From Classroom to Career: How Community and Belonging Create Competitive Work

Developed and facilitated a 90-minute workshop for 17 attendees on crafting classroom situations that support students' sense of belonging and help them do their best work. Guided discussion on identifying classroom friction points and using them as opportunities to design interventions. Adapted the content for managers of entry-level designers and interns.

Created an interactive workzine to guide reflection and discussion, drawing on teaching and management experience and social psychology research.

2026 **Vermont College of Fine Arts · Summer Residency · California Institute of the Arts campus · Valencia, California**

Inner Worlds: A Collage Workshop for Mindful Exploration

Developed and facilitated a 90-minute workshop for MFA participants at VCFA's summer residency. Used traditional collage as a tool for exploring internal experiences, emotions, sensations, and states of mind that resist direct explanation. Invited participants to follow curiosity rather than solve a problem, making meaning from found imagery through a dialogue between intention and discovery.

2021 Innovate(her) Conference, The University of Texas at Dallas · Guest Speaker

2012 National Association of Professional Women, Fort Worth · Guest Speaker

PROFESSIONAL AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

2026 DSVC Dallas Show, Bronze, *Liquid Soul Sustainable Coffee*, Packaging Design

2026 Creative Quarterly, Winner, *Liquid Soul Sustainable Coffee*, Packaging Design

2025 Graphis Packaging 11, Silver, *Liquid Soul Sustainable Coffee*, Packaging Design

2025 62nd GDUSA Design Awards, Winner, *Liquid Soul Sustainable Coffee*, Packaging Design

2025 62nd GDUSA Design Awards, Winner, *It's About Time*, Book Cover Illustration

2024 61st GDUSA Design Awards, Winner, *Autism: The Invisible Spectrum*, Collage Series

2024 Graphis Design 2025, Silver, *Autism: The Invisible Spectrum*, Collage Series

2024 DSVC Dallas Show, Bronze Bulb, *Autism: The Invisible Spectrum*, Collage Series

2024 Creative Quarterly Issue 76, Winner, *Autism: The Invisible Spectrum*, Collage Series

2018 AAF and Ad 2 Dallas, 32 Under 32 Honoree

PUBLISHED WRITING

2021 **Shutterstock Blog · Educational Writing**

Authored 12 educational articles for the Shutterstock Blog, including tutorials on Adobe InDesign and print production covering paragraph styles, file packaging, PDF export, and preparing files for press.

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

2020—PRESENT **Rush Creative (formerly Studio Holden) · Creative Practice**

Operated an independent design practice as Studio Holden, now Rush Creative in partnership with spouse.

Redesigned the Continental Battery e-commerce website. Design services span brand identity, print, and interaction design. Clients include American Airlines, madison/miles media, Ronald McDonald House Charities, Shutterstock, and Rooster Teeth.

2020 **Dodd Creative Group • Creative Director**

Directed branding, high-end print collateral, and signage design projects for luxury apartment developers and various clientele. Dallas, Texas.

2017–2020 **Mary Kay Inc. • Design Studio Supervisor**

Supervised a team of seven designers and production artists of varying experience levels. Responsible for the design and production of major publications and sales support materials. Addison, Texas.

2013–2017 **madison/miles media • Graphic Designer**

Designed publications, print and digital collateral, websites and presentations. Arlington, Texas.

2013–2014 **Group 1200 Media • Funimation, Echolight, Giant Ape • Graphic Designer**

Branded and designed packaging for titles ranging from popular anime to award-winning foreign cinema and US-based indie film productions. Designed the *Attack on Titan* logo. Flower Mound, Texas.

2012–2013 **Living Magazine and Chansen Media Group • Digital Media Manager**

2011–2012 **Culture Farm • Art Director and Designer**

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND MEMBERSHIPS

AIGA Dallas Fort Worth

2010–PRESENT Active Member
2021–2022 Advisory Board Member
2016–2018; 2012–2013 Membership Director
2011 Secretary and Project Manager
2010 UTA Student Group Co-Founder and President

AIGA Community Programming

Created *The Deck*, a community project in which each member designed a card for a collective deck. The project became an annual tradition spanning a decade; chaired in 2017–2018.

Chaired the INitiative Series in 2012–2013 and DFW Design Week's Women in Design Day in 2012. Also chaired Sappi Standard 5 in Dallas and Mentor Matchmaking 1 and 3.

Represented AIGA DFW as a guest speaker at Circles Conference in 2017 and 2018. Selected to attend the AIGA National Leadership Retreat in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2017.

Dallas Society of Visual Communications

2024–PRESENT UNT Liaison
2024–PRESENT Member

2024 **Lone Star International Wine Competition • Label Design Competition Judge**

Grapevine, Texas.