NORTHWESTERN POLYTECHNIC

DEPARTMENT **OF FINE ARTS**

COURSE OUTLINE – Winter 2026

DD1104 (A3): Digital Design I – 5 (2.5-0-2.5) 75 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

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CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: This course is an introduction to the technical and conceptual aspects of digital design. Utilizing lectures, technical exercises, and creative projects, students will employ digital programs to process ideas and generate professionally designed digital outputs. Formerly: 2D Digital Design Studio

PREREQUISITE(S): N/A
COREQUISITE(S): N/A

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

No textbook is required for this course. The primary project mediums will be digital. Software for digital projects, including Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop, will be available in the Media Lab (Room A303).

To help you stay organized in class, please bring the following items:

Sketchbook – Useful for brainstorming and sketching out ideas before beginning your digital work.

USB Drive – Recommended for saving and transferring your files between the studio computers and other devices, as well as for backup purposes.

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DELIVERY MODE(S): Lecture and lab

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate competency in a range of digital programs, including raster (Adobe Photoshop) and vector drawing (Adobe Illustrator).
- Apply the elements and principles of two-dimensional digital design.
- Practice introductory-level skills in vector drawing, image editing, digital collaging, importing photographs, scanning materials, digitally translating drawings or photographs to create vector images, and printing to hard copy.
- Express personal ideas in digital formats—whether representational, abstract, or conceptual.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page http://www.transferalberta.alberta.ca.

** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. **Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability.**

EVALUATIONS:

Assignment	**Value**
Assignment 1. Sequential Illustration: Storytelling	15
Assignment 2. Surreal Collage	15
Assignment 3. Product Package Design	20
Assignment 4. Typographic Poster (Image + Text Integration)	20
Final exam (in-class) – Illustrator and Photoshop	20
Participation/Attendance	10

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Evaluation Criteria
Students will be evaluated based on the following:

- Proficiency in effectively communicating ideas digitally.
- Creativity and technical understanding of relevant 2D design programs (Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop).
- Quality of project and assignment presentations, with an emphasis on artistic and inventive approaches.
- Active participation in class and meaningful contribution to a dynamic learning environment.

Late Assignments
Deadlines must be met to avoid late penalties. Please allow sufficient time to complete, export, and submit your projects. Late submissions will be penalized as follows:

- 5% deduction within the first 24 hours after the deadline.
- 15% deduction for up to one week after the deadline (including weekends).
- 20% deduction for projects submitted more than one week late, up to two weeks past the deadline.
- 30% deduction for projects submitted more than two weeks late, if received on or before the last day of class.

Please note that most institutions will not accept your course for transfer credit IF your grade is less than C-.

Grading Chart for courses with Alpha Grading:

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines		Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100		C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94		C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84		C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79		D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76		D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72		F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

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Week	Session	Date	Topic
1	1	Tue. Jan 6	Course Introduction, understand course objectives, navigate Illustrator & Photoshop interface Warm-Up Collage Activity (In Class)
	2	Thu. Jan 8	Illustrator basics, learn vector graphics, essential for drawing tools Lecture: Basic design principles, point and line **Assignment 1. Sequential Illustration: Storytelling**
2	3	Tue. Jan 13	Understand paths, anchor points, pen and curve tools, turn hand drawing into digital Work on assignment 1
	4	Thu. Jan 15	Basic shapes, colour Lecture: Colour Work on assignment 1
3	5	Tue. Jan 20	Work on assignment 1
	6	Thu. Jan 22	Work on assignment 1
4	7	Tue. Jan 27	Work on assignment 1 **Assignment 1 – Due Today**
	8	Thu. Jan 29	Photoshop basics, learn raster graphics, layers and selection tools **Assignment 2. Surreal Collage**
5	9	Tue. Feb 3	Masking & adjustment layers, basic image editing, effects Work on assignment 2
	10	Thu. Feb 5	Image compositing techniques Work on assignment 2
6	11	Tue. Feb 10	Work on assignment 2
	12	Thu. Feb 12	Work on assignment 2 **Assignment 2 – Due Today**
7	-	Tue. Feb 17	Winter Break. No Class
	-	Thu. Feb 19	Winter Break. No Class
8	13	Tue. Feb 24	Understand hierarchy and spacing Lecture: packaging design basics **Assignment 3. Product Package Design**
	14	Thu. Feb 26	Combining shapes, colour gradients and patterns

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Week	Session	Date	Topic
			Lecture: Colours psychology
9	15	Tue. Mar 3	Text and type tools, grids, alignment Work on assignment 3
	16	Thu. Mar 5	Lecture: Gestalt rules Work on assignment 3
10	17	Tue. Mar 10	Work on assignment 3
	18	Thu. Mar 12	Work on assignment 3
11	19	Tue. Mar 17	Work on assignment 3 **Assignment 3 – Due Today**
	20	Thu. Mar 19	Printing of Product Package Design Projects and Mock-ups
12	21	Tue. Mar 24	Type and paragraph tools Lecture: Typographic **Assignment 4. Typographic Poster (Image + Text Integration)**
	22	Thu. Mar 26	Shapes, pen and transform tools Work on assignment 4
13	23	Tue. Mar 31	Smart objects, filters and effects tools Work on assignment 4
	24	Thu. Apr 2	Work on assignment 4
14	25	Tue. Apr 7	Work on assignment 4 **Assignment 4 – Due Today**
	26	Thu. Apr 9	Final exam (in-class) – Illustrator and Photoshop Last day of class

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Students are expected to dedicate a minimum of three hours outside of class each week to complete assignments and prepare for exams.

Regular attendance is required, as this course includes ongoing in-class activities, lectures, and tutorials. Information covered in class will not be repeated except under special circumstances.

Absences of up to two classes may be excused in cases such as illness or emergencies; students must notify the instructor as soon as possible in these situations. For each additional absence beyond this limit, a 2% deduction from the final grade may be applied. Consistent attendance is essential to support your learning, participation, and overall success in the course.

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Students who miss six or more classes may not be able to meet the course requirements and risk receiving a failing grade.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/polytechnic-leadership/policies-directory.

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

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