

Fine Arts Department

COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2026

DD1103-Section A2-3 (1.5-0-1.5) for 15 Weeks-45hours

Monday and Wednesday from 10:00 AM to 11:20 AM

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are situated on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. 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.

INSTRUCTOR:

J.Garbe

OFFICE: C414

PHONE: N/A

E-MAIL:

JGarbe@nwpolytech.ca

OFFICE HOURS:

**By appointment
(please email)**

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: Visual Communication is designed for students to develop visual literacy and critical skills when responding to diverse forms of media. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, this course includes the study of cinema, photography, visual art, performance, print, as well as digital formats. Students engage in a series of written and oral assignments in response to diverse forms of mediated communication. Visual Communication is a foundational course that teaches transferable skills required in both academic and professional settings. These skills include writing, ethical research, oral presentations, AI integration, as well as increasing competency in describing and discussing visual media.

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE(S): None

REQUIRED MATERIALS: A detailed material list will be provided and discussed in class.

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus: Lecture and Studio

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

- Describe and discuss visual media through critical analysis, academic writing, and oral presentations.
- Identify basic formal choices across multiple forms of visual media and make connections to the content that they are relating.
- Demonstrate the ability to effectively use academic formatting and citations in essay writing.
- Understand the basics of the ethical integration of Artificial Intelligence into research methods.

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:

Course Grading Weights /100

Project 1: Visual Media Analysis: Connotative/ Denotative/Semiotics/Relevant Personal Experience Description/Interpretation/Critical Response — 15 hours — 25%

Students analyze a selected film, photograph, artwork, performance, print, or digital media piece through written and oral responses.

Project 2: Visual Storytelling: Image/Text/Composition/Sequence — 15 hours — 30%

Students create a short visual narrative/ storyboard using photography, drawing, collage, or digital media, accompanied by an artist statement that explains their choices.

Project 3: DIY Magazine/Zine: Research/Design/Editing/AI Integration — 15 hours — 45%

Students produce an individual or collaborative zine exploring a visual communication theme. The project includes ethical research, written content, visual design, image selection, editing, and a short oral presentation.

Total: 45 class hours — 100%

Project 1 — Visual Media Analysis

25% of final course grade

Criteria	Weight	What I am looking for
Understanding & Description	20%	Clearly identifies and describes the chosen visual/media work, including relevant details, context, subject matter, and visual elements.
Interpretation & Analysis	30%	Explains meaning, themes, messages, symbolism, mood, and the effect of artistic/media choices. Goes beyond simply describing what is seen.
Critical Response	25%	Develops thoughtful personal and/or critical responses supported with specific examples from the work. Demonstrates independent thinking.
Use of Visual/Media Vocabulary	10%	Uses appropriate terminology such as composition, colour, contrast, framing, perspective, typography, editing, lighting, etc.
Communication & Organization	10%	Written and oral responses are clear, organized, understandable, and appropriate for the assignment.
Process, Preparation & Completion	5%	Uses class time effectively, comes prepared, meets requirements, and submits a complete project.

Project 2 — Visual Storytelling

30% of final course grade

Criteria	Weight	What I am looking for
Concept & Storytelling	25%	Communicates a clear idea, story, theme, experience, or message through the sequence of images and/or text.
Composition & Visual Communication	25%	Makes intentional choices involving composition, framing, colour, scale, layout, perspective, text, and other visual elements.
Sequence & Cohesion	15%	Images/text work together in a purposeful order. The narrative has flow and feels unified rather than like unrelated pieces.
Creativity & Personal Voice	15%	Demonstrates originality, experimentation, personal expression, and thoughtful decision-making.
Artist Statement & Reflection	15%	Clearly explains the concept, process, visual choices, influences, challenges, and intentions behind the work.



Criteria	Weight	What I am looking for
Process, Craftspersonship & Completion	5%	Demonstrates effort, effective use of class time, care in presentation, and completion of required components.

Project 3 — DIY Magazine / Zine

45% of final course grade

Criteria	Weight	What I am looking for
Concept, Theme & Content Development	20%	Develops a clear and engaging visual communication theme with appropriate written and visual content.
Research & Critical Thinking	15%	Uses credible and relevant research; demonstrates understanding of sources, ideas, audience, and context. Sources are acknowledged appropriately.
Visual Design & Layout	20%	Uses typography, hierarchy, composition, colour, imagery, spacing, and page layout intentionally and consistently.
Writing, Editing & Communication	15%	Written content is clear, purposeful, edited, and appropriate for the intended audience and zine format.
Image Selection / Creation & Integration	10%	Images are relevant, well-chosen or created, appropriately edited, and integrated effectively with the written content.
AI Integration & Ethical Practice	10%	Uses AI, if applicable, thoughtfully and transparently. Demonstrates ethical use, fact-checking, attribution where required, and significant student decision-making rather than relying on AI to produce the entire project.
Oral Presentation & Reflection	5%	Clearly communicates the project's concept, creative decisions, research, process, and learning.
Process, Collaboration & Completion	5%	Uses time effectively, contributes responsibly if working collaboratively, responds to feedback, and submits a polished completed project.

Late submissions: –5% per day, up to 15% maximum.

No mid-term or final exams.

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

Grades for this course will be assigned as a percentage. The minimum passing grade is 50%.

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE: A detailed Course Schedule and Assignment timeline will be given during class.

Student Responsibilities

- Arrive prepared and set up before class; be ready for lectures and demos.
- If late, catch up with classmates; if absent, email the instructor within 24–48 hours.
- Maintain clean, respectful use of space, materials, and shared areas.
- Complete **minimum 3 hours of outside work per week**.
- Headphones allowed during work time, but you must hear instructions
- **No AI use** unless permitted in project guidelines.
- Check **email and MyClass** regularly for course updates.

Professionalism

- Communicate respectfully and professionally with peers, instructor, and support staff in all course-related interactions.

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.