

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**

EDIT 571.DL – Visual Design & App: Photoshop  
2 Credits, Fall 2020  
Online  
Aug 24, 2020- Oct 11, 2020

**Faculty**

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**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

None

**University Catalog Course Description**

Provides basic knowledge of the range of capabilities of available graphic and visual design applications. Students learn to cultivate effective visual design practices for creating instructional products.

**Course Overview**

This course provides an overview of the visual design capabilities of Adobe Photoshop CC for instructional design practice. Through a series of technical assignments and a culminating portfolio project, you will demonstrate skill in editing and combining images, selecting and adjusting color, basic lighting effects, basic photo retouching, applying selective filters to images, and creating a basic project wireframe using Photoshop. Each week, you will engage in a peer critique of one of your technical assignments. This course is ideal for an instructional design or technology professional looking to learn some basic visual design strategies within Photoshop or expand upon basic skills to continually add to a repertoire of technical and creative skills.

**Course Delivery Method**

This course will be delivered online using an asynchronous format via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before “@masonlive.gmu.edu”) and email password. The course site will be available on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

**Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.**

*Technical Requirements*

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard’s supported browsers see:

[https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting\\_Started/Browser\\_Support#supported-browsers](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers)

To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see:

[https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting\\_Started/Browser\\_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems)

- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students will need a headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool if they opt to participate in optional synchronous office hours.

- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download: [Add or delete options, as desire.]
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
  - Windows Media Player: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
  - Apple Quick Time Player: [www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)

### *Expectations*

- Course Week: Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will **start** on Sunday, and **finish** on Saturday, with the exception of the first week, which starts on Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Log-in Frequency:  
Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week.
- Participation:  
Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- Technical Competence:  
Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- Technical Issues:  
Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- Workload:  
Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- Instructor Support:  
Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
- Netiquette:  
The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.
- Accommodations:  
Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

### **Learner Outcomes or Objectives**

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

- Implement basic visual design strategies to an instructional design process
- Use the tools and features of the Adobe Photoshop for their optimal uses in instructional design
- Edit, modify, combine, and enhance bitmap and vector graphics in Photoshop
- Demonstrate use of basic visual design strategies, including the use of contrast, alignment, repetition, and proximity to emphasize information
- Implement the use of a color scheme in a project and adjust color in images using Photoshop
- Incorporate the use of lighting to create a focal point

- Publish graphics in a variety of formats, particularly for use on the web
- Synthesize design and editing skills with Photoshop to create an instructional design project

**Professional Standards (International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction ([IBSTPI](#))).**

Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards:

- Professional Foundations
  1. Communicate effectively in visual, oral, and written form
  3. Update and improve knowledge, skills, and attitudes pertaining to the instructional design process and related fields.
  5. Identify ethical, legal & political implications of design in the workplace
- Planning and Analysis
  9. Analyze the characteristics of existing and emerging technologies and their potential use.
  14. Select or modify existing instructional materials
  15. Develop instructional materials

**Required Texts**

**A. Linked-in Learning tutorials (formerly Lynda.com):**

The required instructional resource for this course is multimedia tutorials through <https://lil.gmu.edu/> (Log-in with your GMU Credentials).

**B. Adobe Photoshop CC Software:**

You will need access to Adobe Photography plan. You can [sign up for a free 7-day trial](#), and then you'll need to purchase access to fulfill the course requirements. Adobe currently offers this [photography package for 9.99/month](#). The catch is you do have to pay for a year up front. You can choose to purchase a student version of all creative cloud products for a year (19.99/month, paid for 1 year up front), but it is not necessary for this course.

**Course Performance Evaluation**

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy).

**Assignments and/or Examinations**

	#	Points	Weighted %
1) Weekly Technical Assignments	6	5	60%
2) Technical Assignment Peer Critiques	6	5	
Group Synthesizer	1	5	
3) Learning Reflections	2	5	10%
4) Quiz	1	10	10%
5) Final Project	1	15	20%
			100

- 1) **Weekly Technical Assignments:** There will be 6 technical assignments submitted throughout the course.
- 2) **Weekly Peer Critique/Discussion:** In Week 1, everyone will participate in an icebreaker activity that will feature one of the first technical assignments, which will count as an introductory discussion. In weeks 2-7, you will post technical assignments for the week's objectives to the discussion board for peer review and

critique with peer review teams.

- **Group Synthesizer:** A responsibility of the peer critique process will be serving as a **group synthesizer**, a role which will rotate during Weeks 2-7. For this role, you will be responsible for gathering 2-3 best practice tips to share with the class at the end of that week's peer critique.
- 3) **Learning Reflections:** You will have two learning reflections- one at the beginning and one at the end of the course to document your goals in taking this course and self-assess the progress you have made toward these goals.
  - 4) **Quiz:** There will be one quiz that covers concepts explored in the course. You can take this quiz up to 3 times and retain your highest grade.
  - 5) **Final Project:** The final project submitted will be a choice of a storyboard or webpage wireframe that incorporates the principles and skills you have learned throughout the course. You will start thinking about the theme of that project early in the course so you can plan your technical assignments and tailor them to contribute to your work on this project. In Week 6, these will be the technical assignment and you will revise your Final Project for submission at the end of Week 8.

- **Option 1: Storyboard**

One of your options for the final project is to create a visual storyboard. This visual storyboard could be a plan for a microlearning campaign, an infographic or a similar visual learning design challenge. The storyboard should address an instructional problem or sequence. You could compose a series of instructional steps or you could craft a visual story connected to the creation of instructional materials, such as a case study or role play.

A visual storyboard can be a helpful tool for conceptualizing an instructional design project. As you map out the best way to communicate your concept to the learners and plan the best way to communicate your message.

Your storyboard should contain at least 5 images and no more than 10-15 images. You can compose the storyboard completely in Photoshop or you can use another software tool (such as PowerPoint or Word) to arrange the images, but you must demonstrate that you have done photo editing in Photoshop

File size will potentially be an issue with this project, so one of the issues you should be cognizant of is balancing image quality with file size.

Accompanying your project, you will include citations of any borrowed images and a brief statement (~250 words) that includes:

- How you addressed the criteria in the rubric
- Changes you made to your final project based on peer review feedback
- How you optimized the file size of your final project file

- **Option 2: Webpage Wireframe**

The second option for the final project is a webpage wireframe. A wireframe is a helpful tool for laying out interactive content such as a webpage in a static page to communicate the general look, feel, and functionality of a design. For this project, it will be helpful to have an instructional design project in mind. You could use an existing project or site and conceptualize a redesign. You will need to incorporate at least three images into your wireframe. The entire project must be laid out in Photoshop.

File size can potentially be an issue with this project, so one of the issues you should be cognizant of is balancing image quality with file size.

Accompanying your project, you should include citations of any borrowed images and a brief statement (~250 words) that includes:

- How you addressed the criteria in the rubric
- Changes you made to your final project based on peer review feedback
- How you optimized the file size of your final project file

## Grading

The grading scale used in this course is the official George Mason University scale for graduate-level courses. Decimal percentage values  $\geq .5$  will be rounded up (e.g., 92.5% will be rounded up to 93%); decimal percentage values  $< .5$  will be rounded down (e.g., 92.4% will be rounded down to 92%).

**Please note that the highest grade possible to earn in this course is an A.**

Letter Grade	Total Points Earned
A	94%-100%
A-	90%-93%
B+	87%-89%
B	83%-86%
B-	80%-82%
C	70%-79%
F	<70%

## Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>

## Class Schedule

### Overview of Weekly Topics, Learning Objectives, and Assignments

Week	Week of	Topics / Assignments
1	August 24	<p><b>Topic:</b> The Basics</p> <p><b>Learning Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognize strategies for file/photo organization</li><li>• Navigate the basic structure of Adobe Photoshop</li><li>• Recognize non-destructive editing strategies<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Use layers to maintain original image integrity</li></ul></li><li>• Crop and resize an image</li><li>• Import an image to Photoshop</li><li>• Crop images using rule of thirds as guideline</li><li>• Identify sources for Creative Commons images</li></ul> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Technical Assignment #1 “Introductions” by <b>Thursday</b></li><li>• Responses to peers on Technical Assignment #1 by <b>Saturday</b></li><li>• Learning Reflection #1 by <b>Saturday</b></li></ul>
2	August 31	<p><b>Topic:</b> Image Combination and Layer Masks</p> <p><b>Learning Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use lasso tool to isolate a selection on an image</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delete specific selected portions of an image</li> <li>• Combine two or more images in Photoshop</li> <li>• Describe the differences between gif, jpg, png and raw image formats</li> <li>• Identify common aspect ratios for images such as 4:3 and 16:9</li> <li>• Demonstrate use of layers and layer masks to manage edits</li> </ul> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post Technical Assignment #2 Photo Collage by <b>Thursday</b></li> <li>• Peer Review Due by <b>Saturday</b></li> <li>• Final Project Proposal due by <b>Saturday</b></li> <li>• Group Synthesizer Posts <i>Weekly Tips &amp; Tricks Blog</i> by <b>Saturday</b></li> </ul>
3	Sept 7	<p><b>Topic:</b> Photo Retouching</p> <p><b>Learning Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjust exposure and/or contrast in an image</li> <li>• Use selection and magic wand tool</li> <li>• Perform basic photo retouching including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ red eye correction</li> <li>○ using healing brush</li> <li>○ correcting subtle portrait elements</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post Technical Assignment #3 Photo Retouching by <b>Thursday</b></li> <li>• Peer Review Due by <b>Saturday</b></li> <li>• Final Project Update to Instructor by <b>Saturday</b></li> <li>• Group Synthesizer Posts to <i>Weekly Tips &amp; Tricks Blog</i> by <b>Saturday</b></li> </ul>
4	Sept 14	<p><b>Topic:</b> Conveying Meaning with Text</p> <p><b>Learning Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add text to an image</li> <li>• Identify basic characteristics of various fonts in messaging</li> <li>• Combine text with an image</li> <li>• Apply principles of <b>contrast, alignment, repetition, and proximity</b> to composition</li> <li>• Craft an image as part of a microlearning strategy</li> </ul> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post Technical Assignment #4 Microlearning by <b>Thursday</b></li> <li>• Peer Review Due by <b>Saturday</b></li> <li>• Group Synthesizer Posts to <i>Weekly Tips &amp; Tricks Blog</i> by <b>Saturday</b></li> </ul>
5	Sept 21	<p><b>Topic:</b> Telling a Story with Images – Final Project Peer Review</p> <p><b>Learning Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a visual story combining multiple images and visual components</li> <li>• Design a webpage wireframe to mock up a potential user interface</li> <li>• Create a visual storyboard to illustrate an instructional sequence or narrative arc</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply principles of <b>contrast, alignment, repetition, and proximity</b> to composition</li> </ul> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical Assignment #5 (Final Project Draft) Option 1 <b>or</b> Option 2 Post Draft by <b>Thursday</b></li> <li>• Peer Review Due by <b>Saturday</b></li> </ul>
6	Sept 28	<p><b>Topic:</b> Color and Contrast</p> <p><b>Learning Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply tone and color correction strategies to enhance a photo</li> <li>• Identify location of foreground and background colors on toolbar</li> <li>• Create a color palette to inform your final project and adjust images to match that color scheme</li> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of rule of thirds to impact composition</li> </ul> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post Technical Assignment #6 Color Schemes by <b>Thursday</b></li> <li>• Peer Review Due by <b>Saturday</b></li> <li>• Group Synthesizer Posts to <i>Weekly Tips &amp; Tricks Blog</i> by <b>Saturday</b></li> <li>• Quiz by <b>Saturday</b></li> </ul>
7	Oct 5	<p><b>Final Project Independent Work</b></p> <p><b>Learning Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthesize technical skills gained throughout the course</li> <li>• Apply feedback from peers and instructor to modify final project</li> <li>• Demonstrate factual knowledge related to visual design and photo editing</li> </ul> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Reflection #2 Due by <b>Thursday</b></li> <li>• Submit Final Project by <b>Saturday, October 10</b></li> </ul>

**Note:** Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.



## Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles:

<http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

## GMU Policies and Resources for Students

### *Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/> ).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

### *Campus Resources*

- Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

## **Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:**

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/> .**

## Assessment Rubrics

### Technical Assignment Rubric

5 points	Assignment addressed <b>all</b> of the criteria stated in the assignment description. Assignment was submitted on time. File is named with student's last name and the technical assignment #. A detailed summary of the steps taken to create the technical assignment is included. Jpg (png or gif) file is included along with attached or linked psd file. If applicable, original images are also attached.
3 -4 points	Assignment addressed all of the criteria stated in the assignment description, except for one. Assignment was submitted on time. Summary of the steps taken to create the technical assignment is included, but lacks significant details. Jpg (png or gif) file is included along with attached / linked psd file.
2 points	Assignment addressed most, but not all of the criteria stated in the assignment description, lacking at least two of the criteria. Assignment was not more than one day late. Only a brief description of steps taken to complete project is included. Only an attached compressed file (jpg, gif, png) is included.
1 points	Assignment missed several of the criteria stated in the assignment description. Assignment was submitted more than one day late. Only a brief description of steps taken to complete project is included. Only an attached compressed file (jpg, gif, png) is included.
0 points	No technical assignment was completed.

**Peer Review Rubric – 5-point rubric**

5 points	<p>Draft of technical assignment was posted <b>on time</b> for others to review.</p> <p>Embedded JPG was included in discussion for easy viewing, along with attached psd file in case additional detail is needed.</p> <p>All assigned peer reviews are completed on time.</p> <p>All questions on peer review form are addressed in detail.</p> <p>Substantive and constructive comments are made that can help guide the designers' work forward.</p> <p>Concrete examples and suggestions are provided.</p> <p>Feedback demonstrates thorough understanding of the concepts for that weeks' assignment.</p>
3 -4 points	<p>Draft of technical assignment was posted on time for others to review.</p> <p>Image was attached to the discussion forum, but not embedded.</p> <p>All assigned peer reviews are completed on time.</p> <p>All questions on peer review form are addressed with detail, though some more thoroughly than others.</p> <p>Substantive and constructive comments are made.</p> <p>Concrete examples and suggestions are provided.</p> <p>Feedback demonstrates a good understanding of the concepts for that weeks' assignment.</p>
2 points	<p>Either draft of assignment or peer reviews are late.</p> <p>Substantive and constructive comments are made that can help guide the designers' work forward, but not all feedback items addressed.</p> <p>Feedback demonstrates some understanding of the concepts for that weeks' assignment.</p>
1 points	<p>Both draft of the assignment or peer review materials are late.</p> <p>Not all questions on peer review form are addressed in detail.</p> <p>Comments are evaluative but don't provide enough detail to be helpful in moving the work forward.</p> <p>Feedback demonstrates major gaps in understanding the concepts for that weeks' assignment.</p>
0 points	<p>No peer review was completed.</p>

## Learning Reflection Rubric

4- 5 points	Synthesis of course concepts and application to personal experience is demonstrated. Description and assessment of progress based on personal goals is described. Grammar and spelling are without significant errors. Reflection is submitted on time.
2-3 points	Synthesis of course concepts and application to personal experience is demonstrated, but only briefly. Description and assessment of progress based on personal goals is described. There are minor grammar and spelling errors. Reflection is submitted late.
1-2 points	Synthesis of course concepts and application to personal experience is minimal. Description and assessment of progress based on personal goals is not well-described. There are significant grammar and spelling errors. Reflection is submitted more than one day late.
0 points	No reflection was submitted.

## Final Project Rubric

	<b>0- 1 point</b>	<b>2 points</b>	<b>3 points</b>
<b>Photo Editing</b>	Photo editing has significant “rough” edits that distract from the overall visual message.	Photo editing has one or two “rough” edits that distract from the overall visual message.	Examples of photo editing and modification are appropriate and professional in appearance.
<b>Information Architecture</b>	Principles of contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity are not consistently used to reinforce important information and guide the viewer through information.	Principles of contrast, repetition, alignment and proximity are somewhat evident in reinforcing important information and guiding the viewer through information.	Principles of contrast, alignment, repetition, and proximity are used to reinforce important information and guide the viewer through information.
<b>Organization and Telling the Story</b>	There is no clear focal point in selected images. Design of visual information does not demonstrate an understanding of how viewers will process the information. The presentation of the information does not convey a cohesive story.	Most images have a clear focal point and/or an appropriate design has been selected that demonstrates some understanding of how viewers will process the information, but with 1 or 2 confusing aspects. The story conveyed by the visuals is fairly clear.	There is a clear focal point in selected images and/or an appropriate design has been selected that demonstrates a thorough understanding of how viewers will process the information. The visual presentation of the information tells a cohesive story.
<b>Use of text</b>	The use of text undermines the overall visual message.	Use of text overall contributes to the overall design, but there are 1 or 2 instances where there should be less text.	Text used in the project enhances and contributes to the overall design.
<b>Consistency</b>	Significant consistency issues are evident.	Minor consistency issues exist.	Font size, style and colors are consistent. Spacing and alignments are consistent.