



CHARLOTTE'S WEB

Intro to Visual Communication & Graphic Design

Course Overview: This year-long course is intended to introduce students in grades 7-12 to the basic principles of visual communication and graphic design. By completing short pre-class mini-lessons and exercises together during class, students will build their vocabulary and begin to develop a toolbox of skills and techniques for communicating through visual elements. We will cover Visual Communication topics like principles of design, perception and making sense of what we see, typography, color theory, imagery and meaning-making, protecting copyrights, design thinking and problem-solving, career opportunities in design, and an introduction to some of the tools of design.

Course Objectives:

- To introduce students to visual communication concepts, processes, and the field of graphic design.
- To develop a working understanding of design principles that will aid in solving visual problems.
- To gain a vocabulary with which to analyze visual communication.

Course Work: Students will engage in mini-lessons comprised of explanatory text, videos, and ungraded quizzes before attending the live weekly meetings on Zoom. The live meetings will be an opportunity for discussion and exercises that allow for experimentation with design concepts. Then students will provide constructive feedback to one another to help everyone become more fluent in analyzing design principles at work and interpreting design imagery.

Course Platform: Pre-class mini-lessons, assignments, discussion threads, and links to the live meetings will all be accessed through the free Canvas platform. Each student will need an email account to register. You can register using a parent's email account, but students will need it to access the course. If registering with more than two children there will need to be two email accounts one for each student.

Supplies needed:

- Canvas account (information sent out)
- Canva account (this is a web app for basic layout — the free version is fine, but students may access more fonts and images with a pro account)
- Notebook or sketchbook and pens/pencils for ideation
- Internet access to [Method.ac](https://www.method.ac) (free) that provides games that teach design skills

Optional: Additional design software packages if students are interested in exploring graphic design further, but **not necessary** for the course:

- Adobe Creative Cloud (with Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign) is the industry standard, and if a student wants to pursue design as a career, this is the but it is a big investment at \$59.99/mo.
- Affinity suite (Photo, Designer, and Publisher) provide many of the same capabilities as Adobe Creative Cloud at a lower rate: \$70 individually or \$165 for the universal license. This is a one-time payment, not a subscription.
- Free open-source alternatives:
 - GIMP (photo editing)
 - Inkscape (vector drawing)
 - Scribus (publication/page layout design)

Pre-requisites: Needs to be in grades 7-12

Live meetings: Weekly on Wednesdays, 1:00 pm-1:45 pm EST (I will stay online until 2 pm if students want to ask questions or receive additional feedback — or just talk all things design.)

Cost: \$250 for the year per student

Course enrollment: 5/12

Instructor: Sharie Schnell

Questions? Email at: sharie@maximdesigngroup.com