

Typography and Layout

Level: 2

Career Cluster: Media Arts

Program: Design and Digital Arts

Pathway: Graphic Design

Aligns with: MGD 1015 Typography and Layout

Course Catalog Description

Introduces students to digital typographic principles, visual hierarchy, and screen-based layout systems used to create clear, effective, and professional design compositions for contemporary media.

Summary

Focuses on the creation and production of digital graphic projects through the application of typography and layout design principles. Students develop skills in visual hierarchy, type measurement, spacing, and grid-based layout systems while exploring how typography communicates meaning and supports audience engagement across websites, social media, digital branding, and other screen-based applications. The course emphasizes research, concept development, and creative problem-solving as students produce thumbnails, roughs, wireframes, and refined digital layouts for a variety of design applications. Through iterative critique, professional workflows, file organization, and presentation practices, students build technical precision and creative confidence in digital typography and layout design, preparing them for advanced coursework and careers in graphic design.

Notes

The updated course reflects a shift from a traditional typography-focused class to a more comprehensive, digitally driven design course aligned to current industry practices. The original course primarily emphasized foundational typography concepts such as type anatomy, layout basics, and print-based composition. In contrast, the revised course expands these foundations into clearly structured learning strands that integrate typography with digital layout systems, branding, audience awareness, and multi-platform design applications including web, social media, and digital marketing. Additionally, the new version strengthens the design process by emphasizing research, concept development, critique, and iterative refinement, while incorporating key CTE components such as portfolio development, leadership, work-based learning, and a final assessment project. These updates modernize the course by focusing on real-world application, digital workflows, and preparation for advanced study and careers in graphic design.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Career Exploration and Postsecondary Opportunities

Objective: *Students will explore and analyze career pathways related to production management in graphic design by examining professional roles, tools, work environments, ethical and legal expectations, certifications, professional organizations, and Colorado postsecondary education options to make informed academic and career decisions.*

- 1) Identify employment opportunities in various fields with a focus in the area of graphic design
 - a. Recognize the work typically performed, tools and technology used, and nature of work environments
 - b. Identify potential certifications within the careers
 - c. Find membership organizations associated with the careers
 - d. Understand the necessary education associated within the careers
- 2) Define professionalism within the context of graphic design
 - a. Criticism and evaluation
 - b. Presentation
 - c. Assessment
- 3) Recognize laws, regulations, and ethics significant to the fields of graphic design
- 4) Identify postsecondary opportunities offered in the state of Colorado
 - a. Technical college, community college, 4-year institutions
 - b. Certificates, associates, bachelor, and advanced degree opportunities

2. Typography Foundations and Visual Hierarchy

Objective: *Students will analyze and apply digital typography fundamentals to create clear visual hierarchy, readability, and emphasis across websites, social media graphics, app interfaces, and other screen-based layouts.*

- 5) Identify typographic anatomy, classification, and terminology used in digital design.
- 6) Apply typographic hierarchy to guide viewer attention and information flow.
- 7) Analyze how hierarchy supports accessibility and user experience in digital layouts.
- 8) Evaluate typographic choices based on legibility, audience, and platform.

3. Type Measurement, Spacing and Digital Precision

Objective: *Students will apply digital measurement and spacing techniques to control type size, leading, line length, and alignment with professional accuracy.*

- 9) Measure and adjust type size, leading, tracking, and line length using digital tools.
- 10) Interpret copy specifications to calculate space consumption for body text and headings.
- 11) Apply grids, guides, columns, margins, and baseline grids.
- 12) Evaluate typographic spacing to improve readability and visual balance.

4. Typography and Page Layout Systems

Objective: Students will design structured digital layouts by integrating typography, imagery, and layout systems appropriate for websites, digital publications, social media assets, and other screen-based media.

- 13) Create responsive and multi-screen digital layouts using design and publishing software.
- 14) Apply layout systems including modular grids, columns, and rows.
- 15) Differentiate between symmetrical and asymmetrical layouts.
- 16) Analyze layout effectiveness for hierarchy, clarity, and visual rhythm.

5. Concept Development, Research and Audience Awareness

Objective: Students will develop layout concepts by researching audiences, analyzing content, and aligning typographic decisions with communication goals.

- 17) Analyze target audiences, demographics, and communication goals.
- 18) Research existing layouts and typographic solutions for similar products.
- 19) Develop typographic concepts aligned to message and audience.
- 20) Justify layout decisions using research and design intent.

6. Typographic Copywriting and Message Design

Objective: Students will apply typography to written content by crafting headlines and copy that support layout concepts and communication goals.

- 21) Write headlines and taglines that align with concept and tone.
- 22) Edit and refine copy for clarity, emphasis, and hierarchy.
- 23) Apply typographic emphasis to strengthen message communication.
- 24) Evaluate how type and copy work together to influence audience understanding.

7. Poster Design and Limited-Color Layouts

Objective: Students will design digital posters and layouts by applying hierarchy, typography, and color systems within formal design constraints.

- 25) Produce digital poster designs using typographic hierarchy and layout principles.
- 26) Apply two-color design strategies to emphasize contrast and clarity.
- 27) Analyze visual impact using limited color palettes.
- 28) Refine poster layouts through iterative critique and revision.

8. Logo Design and Typographic Identity

Objective: Students will create typographic logo systems by applying branding principles and visual consistency.

- 29) Research and define branding needs for a fictitious organization.
- 30) Create typographic logo concepts in black and white.
- 31) Refine logos through iteration and feedback.
- 32) Evaluate logo effectiveness based on scalability and readability.

9. Logo Implementation and Color Applications

Objective: Students will apply color and typography consistently to extend logos into cohesive brand elements.

- 33) Apply color schemes to typographic logos.
- 34) Develop supporting copy such as taglines.
- 35) Implement logos within consistent digital brand systems.
- 36) Evaluate consistency and brand alignment across applications.

10. Systems, Identity and Digital Brand Assets

Objective: Students will design integrated visual identity systems using typography, layout, and branding elements across websites, social media, email graphics, presentations, and other digital brand assets.

- 37) Design digital brand assets such as social media graphics, web banners, presentation templates, and email headers.
- 38) Apply typography consistently across brand materials.
- 39) Analyze how layout systems support brand recognition.
- 40) Organize digital brand files using professional file-management practices.

11. Promotional and Marketing Layout Design

Objective: Students will design promotional materials that align typography, layout, and messaging with marketing goals and audiences.

- 41) Differentiate among types of promotional design for digital platforms such as social media, web advertising, email campaigns, and online marketing.
- 42) Design promotional layouts aligned to marketing intent.
- 43) Evaluate audience engagement and visual effectiveness.
- 44) Present final promotional designs professionally.

12. Critique, Presentation and Professional Practice

Objective: Students will evaluate and present typographic layouts using critique protocols and professional communication practices.

- 45) Prepare digital projects for presentation using mockups, screen previews, portfolios, or other professional digital display methods.
- 46) Analyze layout effectiveness using critique frameworks.
- 47) Evaluate peer and personal work constructively.
- 48) Use discipline-specific vocabulary in written and verbal critiques.
- 49) Reflect on feedback to improve future typographic work.

13. Portfolio Development

Objective: Students will curate and present a portfolio of typography and layout work that demonstrates growth, technical skill, creative decision-making, and readiness for advanced study or industry opportunities.

- 50) Select typography and layout projects that demonstrate technical skill, process, and growth.
- 51) Refine selected work based on critique, revision, and presentation standards.
- 52) Organize portfolio content to communicate design intent, audience, and process clearly.
- 53) Present a portfolio using professional formatting, captions, and reflective commentary.

14. Leadership

Objective: *Students will demonstrate leadership skills by collaborating with peers, managing responsibilities, communicating professionally, and contributing to design projects and classroom initiatives.*

- 54) Demonstrate collaboration, accountability, and initiative in individual and team design tasks.
- 55) Apply professional communication skills in critiques, presentations, and project planning.
- 56) Manage time, roles, and responsibilities to support successful project outcomes.
- 57) Reflect on leadership growth and contributions to shared design goals.

15. Work-Based Learning

Objective: *Students will connect classroom learning to workplace expectations by exploring industry practices, engaging with authentic design scenarios, and applying professional behaviors in real work-based experiences.*

- 58) Identify workplace expectations related to typography, layout, deadlines, and client communication.
- 59) Apply professional behaviors and workflow practices in authentic design experiences.
- 60) Analyze feedback from mentors, clients, or stakeholders to improve design outcomes.
- 61) Evaluate how classroom typography and layout skills transfer to college, internship, and career settings.

16. Final Assessment Project

Objective: *Students will synthesize course knowledge and skills by completing a final typography and layout project that demonstrates research, concept development, technical execution, revision, and presentation.*

- 62) Develop a final design brief, concept, and plan for a culminating typography and layout project.
- 63) Create a polished final product that applies hierarchy, spacing, layout systems, and audience awareness.
- 64) Revise the final project using critique, testing, and reflection to strengthen design effectiveness.
- 65) Present the final project with a rationale that explains design choices, process, and outcomes.

17. Career and Technical Student Organizations

Objective: *Using the CTSO Resource Document, chapter activities will provide some of the best opportunities CTSO members will have to learn by doing. A successful program of work creates a positive learning atmosphere in the classroom. CTSO members learn how to accept responsibility, work as a team, manage a budget, and handle success and failure. Per the CTE Admin Handbook, CTSOs are embedded into curriculum.*

Professional Development

Prepare each member for entry into the workforce and provide a foundation for success in a career. Becoming a professional does not stop with acquiring a skill, but involves an increased awareness of the meaning of good citizenship and the importance of labor and management in the world of work.

Community Service

Promote and improve goodwill and understanding among all segments of the community through services donated by CTSO chapters, and to instill in its members a lifetime commitment to community service.

Business & Industry Connections

Increase awareness of quality job practices and attitudes, and increase the opportunities for employer engagement and eventual employment.

Financial Leadership

Plan and participate in activities to allow all members to carry out the chapter's projects. Educate members on their own personal finance for current and future success.

Public Relations

Make the general public aware of the good work that students in career and technical education are doing to better themselves and their community, state, nation, and world.

Social Activities

To increase cooperation in the school and community through activities that allow CTSO members to get to know each other in something other than a business or classroom setting.

Academic Standards Alignment

Colorado CTE courses are required to integrate academic and essential skills into course content. The following academic standards have been identified as aligned to this course and should be integrated throughout instruction.

[CO CTE Academic Standards Resources](#) (Rubrics, integration strategies, etc)

[CDE Colorado Academic Standards Online](#) (Online standards lookup tool)

Note: Mathematics and Science standards will be added in the future. Visit the [Colorado Academic Standards](#) page for the most current version.

Reading, Writing and Communicating Crosswalk

Course: Typography and Layout

Colorado Academic Standards – Reading, Writing, and Communicating

Standard	Prepared Graduate Competency	Description	Course Evidence / Alignment
Standard 1: Oral Expression and Listening	Prepared Graduate 1 – Collaboration	Collaborate effectively as group members or leaders who listen actively and respectfully; pose thoughtful questions, acknowledge the ideas of others; and contribute ideas to further the group's attainment of an objective.	Students participate in critiques and collaborative design activities, listening to feedback and contributing ideas to improve typographic and layout solutions.
Standard 1: Oral Expression and Listening	Prepared Graduate 2 – Oral Presentations	Deliver effective oral presentations for varied audiences and varied purposes.	Students present layout concepts and justify typographic choices for purpose, audience, and medium.
Standard 2: Reading for All Purposes	Prepared Graduate 4 – Informational Texts	Read a wide range of informational texts to build knowledge and to better understand the human experience.	Students read and interpret style guides, typographic standards, design briefs, and professional layout examples.
Standard 2:	Prepared	Understand how language	Students apply

Reading for All Purposes	Graduate 5 – Language in Context	functions in different contexts, command a variety of word-learning strategies to assist comprehension, and make effective choices for meaning or style when writing and speaking.	appropriate typography and design vocabulary and adapt communication for visual, technical, and client-focused contexts.
Standard 3: Writing and Composition	Prepared Graduate 7 – Informational Writing	Craft informational/explanatory texts using techniques specific to the genre.	Students write design rationales, layout explanations, critiques, and reflective documentation describing typographic decisions.
Standard 3: Writing and Composition	Prepared Graduate 9 – Writing Process	Demonstrate mastery of their own writing process with clear, coherent, and error-free polished products.	Students revise and refine written and visual work to produce polished, professional-quality typographic and layout products.
Standard 4: Research Inquiry and Design	Prepared Graduate 10 – Research & Ethics	Gather information from a variety of sources; analyze and evaluate its quality and relevance; and use it ethically to answer complex questions.	Students research typographic history, layout conventions, and design references; evaluate sources; and apply ethical practices including copyright and attribution.

Free Resource Links

1. Career Exploration and Postsecondary Opportunities

- ONET Online (career profiles, typography and layout skills, job outlook)
<https://www.onetonline.org/>
- My Next Move (career exploration, graphic design pathways)
<https://www.mynextmove.org/>
- College Board BigFuture (postsecondary programs, design majors, careers)
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>

2. Typography Foundations and Visual Hierarchy

- Canva Design School (typography basics, hierarchy, readability)
<https://www.canva.com/learn/typography/>
- Google Fonts Knowledge (type anatomy, classification, pairing)
<https://fonts.google.com/knowledge>
- Adobe Typography Guides (type hierarchy, readability, layout)
<https://helpx.adobe.com/fonts.html>
- Interaction Design Foundation (visual hierarchy, UX typography)
<https://www.interaction-design.org/>

3. Type Measurement, Spacing and Digital Precision

- Butterick's Practical Typography (spacing, alignment, measurement)
<https://practicaltypography.com/>
- Adobe InDesign Tutorials (leading, tracking, layout precision)
<https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/tutorials.html>
- TypeWolf Guides (type spacing, font pairing, layout tips)
<https://www.typewolf.com/>
- Envato Tuts+ Typography (spacing, measurement, alignment)
<https://design.tutsplus.com/>

4. Typography and Page Layout Systems

- Canva Layout Design (grid systems, layout structure)
<https://www.canva.com/learn/layout-design/>
- Interaction Design Foundation (grid systems, layout principles)
<https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/layout>
- Adobe InDesign Learn (layout grids, columns, publishing)
<https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign.html>
- Smashing Magazine (layout systems, design structure)
<https://www.smashingmagazine.com/>

5. Concept Development, Research and Audience Awareness

- Milanote (research boards, design planning, ideation)
<https://milanote.com/>
- Pinterest (visual research, typography inspiration)
<https://www.pinterest.com/>

- Behance (case studies, typographic concepts, inspiration)
<https://www.behance.net/>
- Google Trends (audience insights, design direction)
<https://trends.google.com/>

6. Typographic Copywriting and Message Design

- Copyblogger (copywriting, headlines, messaging)
<https://copyblogger.com/>
- HubSpot Marketing Resources (content writing, messaging strategies)
<https://www.hubspot.com/resources>
- Grammarly Writing Resources (clarity, editing, communication)
<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/>
- Purdue OWL (professional writing, clarity, structure)
<https://owl.purdue.edu/>

7. Poster Design and Limited Color Layouts

- Canva Poster Design (poster layouts, limited color design)
<https://www.canva.com/posters/>
- Envato Tuts+ Poster Design (composition, color contrast)
<https://design.tutsplus.com/>
- Adobe Express Poster Maker (design tools, layout creation)
<https://www.adobe.com/express/create/poster>
- Creative Bloq (poster inspiration, layout techniques)
<https://www.creativebloq.com/>

8. Logo Design and Typographic Identity

- Canva Logo Maker (logo design, typography identity)
<https://www.canva.com/create/logos/>
- Looka Branding Blog (logo design, typography branding)
<https://looka.com/blog/>
- 99designs Logo Guide (logo concepts, branding systems)
<https://99designs.com/blog/logo-branding/>
- Adobe Logo Design Tutorials (typographic logos, branding)
<https://helpx.adobe.com/illustrator/tutorials.html>

9. Logo Implementation and Color Applications

- Adobe Color (color schemes, brand palettes)
<https://color.adobe.com/>
- Coolers (palette generator, color relationships)
<https://coolers.co/>
- Canva Color Theory (color usage, applications)
<https://www.canva.com/colors/color-wheel/>
- Pantone (color systems, brand consistency)
<https://www.pantone.com/>

10. Systems, Identity and Digital Brand Assets

- Canva Brand Kit (brand systems, identity assets)
<https://www.canva.com/brand/>
- Adobe Creative Cloud (branding workflows, identity systems)
<https://creativecloud.adobe.com/>
- Figma (design systems, layout consistency, branding)
<https://www.figma.com/>
- Envato Elements (branding templates, identity assets)
<https://elements.envato.com/>

11. Promotional and Marketing Layout Design

- HubSpot Marketing Resources (marketing design, layout strategy)
<https://www.hubspot.com/resources>
- Canva Marketing Templates (ads, social media layouts)
<https://www.canva.com/templates/marketing/>
- Hootsuite Blog (social media design, engagement)
<https://blog.hootsuite.com/>
- Mailchimp Marketing Library (design for marketing, communication)
<https://mailchimp.com/resources/>

12. Critique, Presentation and Professional Practice

- AIGA Resources (design critique, professional practice)
<https://www.aiga.org/resources>
- Behance (feedback, portfolio presentation, critique)
<https://www.behance.net/>
- Dribbble (design sharing, critique, professional feedback)
<https://dribbble.com/>
- Interaction Design Foundation (evaluation, usability, critique methods)
<https://www.interaction-design.org/>

13. Portfolio Development

- Adobe Portfolio (professional portfolios, showcasing typography and layout work)
<https://portfolio.adobe.com/>
- Behance (creative portfolios, layout and typography projects)
<https://www.behance.net/>
- Dribbble (design portfolios, branding and layout inspiration) <https://dribbble.com/>
- Canva Presentation Templates (portfolio presentation, visual organization)
<https://www.canva.com/presentations/templates/>

14. Leadership

- MindTools – Leadership Skills (communication, teamwork, decision-making)
https://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_LDR.htm
- SkillsYouNeed – Leadership (collaboration, conflict resolution, professionalism)
<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/lead/>

- TED Talks – Leadership (communication, influence, creative leadership)
<https://www.ted.com/topics/leadership>
- Indeed Career Guide – Leadership Skills (teamwork, initiative, workplace readiness)
<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/leadership-skills>

15. Work-Based Learning

- CareerOneStop – Work-Based Learning (internships, apprenticeships, career exploration)
<https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/learn/work-based-learning.aspx>
- Colorado Work-Based Learning (state guidance, employer connections)
<https://cdle.colorado.gov/work-based-learning>
- ACTE Work-Based Learning Resources (career readiness, employability skills)
<https://www.acteonline.org/professional-development/work-based-learning/>
- AIGA Resources (design careers, professional expectations, networking)
<https://www.aiga.org/resources>

16. Final Assessment Project

- PBS LearningMedia – Media Production Projects (project ideas, assessment, rubrics)
<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/>
- Adobe InDesign Tutorials (layout projects, typography workflows)
<https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/tutorials.html>
- Canva Design School (layout projects, typography, presentation)
<https://www.canva.com/designschool/>
- Rubistar (project rubrics, assessment tools)
<https://www.rcampus.com/rubistar/>



Technology Student Association – National Competitive Events

Promotional Design

Objective: *Students will design, produce, document, and present promotional materials that meet TSA Promotional Design requirements for branding, visual communication, production quality, and portfolio documentation.*

- Research the annual TSA Promotional Design theme, target audience, required products, and branding expectations.
- Develop a consistent visual identity using typography, layout, color, hierarchy, imagery, and design principles.
- Create thumbnails, roughs, and digital layouts to explore multiple promotional design directions.
- Write and refine headlines, taglines, and supporting copy that communicate the promotional message clearly.
- Create required promotional items that demonstrate audience awareness, consistency, and professional production quality.
- Document the design process through sketches, drafts, revisions, production notes, references, and required portfolio materials.
- Evaluate the final entry using TSA criteria for creativity, consistency, production quality, communication, and theme alignment.

Resources

- Technology Student Association – Promotional Design competition guidelines
<https://tsaweb.org/competitions-programs/tsa/themes-problems>
- Adobe InDesign – Page layout and publishing tools
<https://www.adobe.com/products/indesign.html>
- Adobe Illustrator – Vector design and production graphics
<https://www.adobe.com/products/illustrator.html>
- Canva – Branding, layouts, and promotional design templates
<https://www.canva.com/>



Technology Student Association – National Competitive Events

Board Game Design

Objective: *Students will design, prototype, document, and present an original board game that meets TSA Board Game Design requirements for theme, gameplay, visual design, rules, prototype quality, and presentation.*

- Research the annual TSA Board Game Design theme and develop an original game concept.
- Design the game board, cards, instructions, packaging, player aids, and printed components using consistent layout and typography.
- Develop game rules, objectives, player actions, scoring, and win conditions that support clear gameplay.
- Create thumbnails, rough layouts, and digital design iterations for major game components.
- Create a playable prototype that demonstrates the game concept, components, and theme connection.
- Test the game with users and revise the visual layout, instructions, components, and gameplay based on feedback.
- Present the board game to judges and explain the visual design, gameplay decisions, design process, and response to the annual theme.

Resources

- Technology Student Association – Board Game Design competition guidelines
<https://tsaweb.org/competitions-programs/tsa/themes-problems>
- Adobe InDesign – Rulebooks, cards, packaging, and print layout
<https://www.adobe.com/products/indesign.html>
- Adobe Illustrator – Vector artwork, layout, and game component design
<https://www.adobe.com/products/illustrator.html>
- The Game Crafter – Board game prototyping resources
<https://www.thegamecrafter.com/>



Technology Student Association – National Competitive Events

Children's Stories

Objective: *Students will write, illustrate, design, document, and present an original children's story that communicates a STEM concept in alignment with TSA Children's Stories competition requirements.*

- Research the annual TSA Children's Stories theme and identify an age-appropriate STEM concept for the story.
- Develop a story concept with characters, setting, plot, vocabulary, and message appropriate for the target audience.
- Create page layouts that use typography, spacing, hierarchy, rhythm, and visual balance to support readability.
- Combine text and illustrations into a finished storybook or digital story product that follows TSA submission requirements.
- Revise the storybook based on feedback related to clarity, age appropriateness, layout, typography, and theme connection.
- Document the writing, illustration, design, revision, and production process.
- Present the story to judges and explain the theme connection, design choices, audience decisions, and educational purpose.

Resources

- Technology Student Association – Children's Stories competition guidelines
<https://tsaweb.org/competitions-programs/tsa/themes-problems>
- Adobe InDesign – Book layout and page design tools
<https://www.adobe.com/products/indesign.html>
- ReadWriteThink – Story mapping and writing resources
<https://www.readwritethink.org/>
- Canva – Storybook layout and presentation tools
<https://www.canva.com/>