

Design and Color II

Level: 3

Career Cluster: Media Arts

Program: Design and Digital Arts

Pathway: Graphic Design

Aligns with: MGD 1032 Design and Color II

Course Catalog Description

Students deepen their understanding of design theory, color systems, and professional digital workflows to create polished visual communication for screen-based and interactive media environments.

Summary

Advances students' creative problem-solving and digital design development skills through in-depth exploration of design theory, color systems, and professional digital workflows. Students apply advanced principles of composition, visual hierarchy, and color management to create sophisticated, production-ready designs for screen-based media, digital publishing, and interactive communication. The course emphasizes research-driven concept development, iterative design processes, and the integration of industry-standard digital tools and techniques. Through collaborative digital projects, critique, and portfolio development, students refine their ability to communicate visually, manage complex design tasks, and produce polished, concept-driven work that prepares them for postsecondary education and careers in graphic design.

Notes

The updated course reflects a significant evolution from a traditional advanced design and color course into a more structured, digitally focused, and industry-aligned program. The original course primarily emphasized advanced design principles and color theory within traditional and print-oriented contexts. In contrast, the revised course expands these foundations into clearly defined learning strands that emphasize digital-first workflows, including cross-media color systems, digital layout production, workflow management, and collaborative project development for screen-based applications. Additionally, the updated version integrates stronger professional and career readiness components such as portfolio development, leadership, work-based learning, and a formal final project assessment. These enhancements improve alignment with current CTE expectations by emphasizing real-world application, digital production environments, and preparation for postsecondary education and careers in graphic design and digital media, while maintaining the advanced design and color competencies of the original course.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Career Exploration and Postsecondary Opportunities

Objective: *Students will explore and analyze digitally based career pathways related to graphic design by examining professional roles, digital tools, remote and studio 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. Advanced Design History, Theory and Industry Context

Objective: *Students will analyze advanced design theory and historical trends to evaluate how digital visual communication has evolved and informs contemporary graphic design practice across screen-based platforms.*

- 5) Analyze design origins, movements, styles, and trends within digital visual communication and online media.
- 6) Evaluate how design aesthetics influence usability, accessibility, and audience perception in digital experiences.
- 7) Compare historical and contemporary design applications across digital platforms.
- 8) Apply industry-specific vocabulary correctly in critique and analysis.
- 9) Predict emerging design trends based on technology, culture, and media shifts.

3. Advanced Design Fundamentals and Digital Composition

Objective: *Students will apply advanced design principles to create sophisticated digital compositions that demonstrate visual hierarchy, balance, and continuity.*

- 10) Apply advanced design principles to complex layouts and compositions.
- 11) Analyze relationships among image elements, space, scale, and contrast.
- 12) Evaluate compositional effectiveness across digital formats.
- 13) Refine compositions iteratively based on critique and performance metrics.

14) Justify compositional decisions using design theory.

4. Creative Process, Research and Iterative Development

Objective: *Students will manage the professional design process by conducting research, developing concepts, testing solutions, and troubleshooting during digital project development.*

15) Conduct advanced visual and trend research to inform design decisions.

16) Develop multiple design concepts informed by research and user needs.

17) Apply structured ideation and refinement strategies.

18) Troubleshoot conceptual, aesthetic, and technical challenges.

19) Evaluate design iterations to select optimal solutions.

5. Digital Layout Systems and Design to Production

Objective: *Students will produce production-ready digital layouts by applying specifications, measurements, accessibility considerations, and output standards for screen-based delivery and digital publishing environments.*

20) Apply grids, guides, margins, columns, and baseline systems digitally.

21) Analyze design specifications for various delivery formats.

22) Prepare layouts for both screen and print production.

23) Evaluate layout accuracy, consistency, and production readiness.

24) Revise designs to meet technical constraints and standards.

6. Advanced Digital Tools, Media and Workflow

Objective: *Students will execute complex design projects digitally using professional tools, non-destructive workflows, and efficient production strategies.*

25) Use advanced digital design tools and features proficiently.

26) Apply non-destructive editing and version control practices.

27) Organize assets using professional file management standards.

28) Analyze how tools and media choices affect design outcomes.

29) Evaluate workflow efficiency and technical performance.

7. Color Theory Integration and Digital Color Management

Objective: *Students will apply advanced color theory and management to communicate meaning accurately and expressively in digital and print design.*

30) Analyze the science of color including light, perception, and illusion.

31) Apply psychological and emotional color strategies intentionally.

32) Differentiate and use RGB, CMYK, PMS, process, and spot color systems.

33) Evaluate color accuracy and consistency across digital outputs.

34) Correct color to meet branding and production specifications.

8. Design to Print and Cross-Media Color Systems

Objective: Students will produce color-accurate digital designs by managing screen-based workflows and maintaining cross-media color consistency for digital-first communication.

- 35) Apply “design to print” color theory in digital layouts.
- 36) Match and adjust colors using PMS and CMYK standards.
- 37) Compare electronic and print color reproduction challenges.
- 38) Evaluate finished color outputs for fidelity and intent.

9. Project Management, Professional Workflow and Collaboration

Objective: Students will manage professional digital design projects by balancing task analysis, deadlines, responsibilities, file organization, and online collaboration.

- 39) Develop project plans aligned to scope and timelines.
- 40) Analyze task dependencies and production stages.
- 41) Collaborate effectively within a digital studio environment.
- 42) Evaluate personal and team productivity.
- 43) Adjust workflows to meet project constraints.

10. Critique, Analysis and Design Refinement

Objective: Students will evaluate and refine design work through structured critique and professional feedback processes.

- 44) Analyze design content and execution using critique frameworks.
- 45) Evaluate peer and professional feedback constructively.
- 46) Refine designs based on critique and performance goals.
- 47) Defend design decisions using theory-based reasoning.

11. Professional Conduct, Studio Practice and Ethics

Objective: Students will demonstrate professional studio behavior by applying industry standards for communication, preparation, ethics, and responsibility.

- 48) Demonstrate professional communication and collaboration.
- 49) Apply ethical decision-making in design execution.
- 50) Analyze studio safety, workflow, and troubleshooting procedures.
- 51) Evaluate professional readiness for advanced coursework or entry-level work.

12. Portfolio Development and Career Preparation

Objective: Students will curate and evaluate a professional digital design portfolio to support career development, online presentation, and postsecondary opportunities.

- 52) Evaluate completed projects for portfolio inclusion.
- 53) Curate refined digital design artifacts demonstrating growth.
- 54) Analyze portfolio effectiveness for career and interview use.
- 55) Refine selected work for clarity, consistency, and impact.

56) Present digital portfolio work professionally in online, classroom, and interview settings.

13. Leadership

Objective: *Students will demonstrate leadership in graphic design contexts by managing responsibilities, communicating professionally, supporting collaborative work, and applying initiative in classroom, studio, and project-based settings.*

57) Demonstrate leadership skills through initiative, responsibility, and accountability in design projects.

58) Apply effective communication and decision-making strategies in team-based design environments.

59) Evaluate leadership approaches for organizing tasks, motivating peers, and resolving conflicts.

60) Reflect on personal leadership growth and professional readiness within creative and technical settings.

14. Work-Based Learning

Objective: *Students will connect classroom learning to workplace expectations by applying technical, employability, and professional skills through authentic design experiences, industry-informed practices, and reflection on career development.*

61) Apply graphic design skills in authentic workplace tasks and project scenarios.

62) Demonstrate employability skills such as time management, collaboration, adaptability, and professionalism.

63) Analyze workplace expectations, client needs, and quality standards relevant to design production.

64) Evaluate work-based learning experiences to identify strengths, challenges, and next steps for career growth.

15. Final Project Assessment

Objective: *Students will synthesize advanced design and color knowledge by planning, producing, presenting, and evaluating a final project that demonstrates technical proficiency, conceptual development, and professional-quality execution.*

65) Plan and develop a final design project aligned to a clear purpose, audience, and set of requirements.

66) Apply advanced design, color, workflow, and production skills to create a polished final product.

67) Present and justify final project decisions using appropriate design vocabulary and critique frameworks.

68) Evaluate final project outcomes against criteria for creativity, technical quality, communication, and professional readiness.

16. 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 and 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: Design and Color II

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 collaborate during advanced digital design and color critiques, actively listen to feedback, and contribute ideas to refine complex screen-based visual solutions.
Standard 1: Oral Expression and Listening	Prepared Graduate 2 – Oral Presentations	Deliver effective oral presentations for varied audiences and varied purposes.	Students present and justify digital color, layout, and design decisions for specific audiences, purposes, platforms, and branding contexts.
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 advanced informational texts related to digital color systems, design theory, branding

			standards, interface conventions, and visual communication principles.
Standard 2: Reading for All Purposes	Prepared Graduate 5 – Language in Context	Understand how language functions in different contexts.	Students apply precise color and design terminology and adapt communication appropriately for technical, creative, and client-facing situations.
Standard 3: Writing and Composition	Prepared Graduate 7 – Informational Writing	Craft informational/explanatory texts using techniques specific to the genre.	Students write detailed design rationales, critiques, reflections, and documentation explaining digital color theory applications, workflow decisions, and visual choices.
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 explanations and digital design work to produce professional-quality screen-based media products.
Standard 4: Research Inquiry and Design	Prepared Graduate 10 – Research and Ethics	Gather information from a variety of sources; analyze and evaluate its quality and relevance.	Students research digital color trends, design systems, interface references, and visual communication resources.

Free Resource Links

1. Career Exploration and Postsecondary Opportunities

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

2. Advanced Design History, Theory and Industry Context

- AIGA Eye on Design (design history, trends, industry context)
<https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/>
- Smashing Magazine (design theory, UX/UI, industry insights)
<https://www.smashingmagazine.com/>
- Creative Bloq (design movements, contemporary trends)
<https://www.creativebloq.com/>
- Interaction Design Foundation (design theory, history, terminology)
<https://www.interaction-design.org/>

3. Advanced Design Fundamentals and Digital Composition

- Canva Design School (composition, hierarchy, layout design)
<https://www.canva.com/learn/design/>
- Envato Tuts+ (composition, balance, visual hierarchy)
<https://design.tutsplus.com/>
- Adobe Creative Cloud Tutorials (design composition, layout)
<https://creativecloud.adobe.com/learn>
- Interaction Design Foundation (visual design principles, composition)
<https://www.interaction-design.org/literature>

4. Creative Process, Research and Iterative Development

- IDEO Design Thinking (creative process, ideation, iteration)
<https://designthinking.ideo.com/>
- Milanote (concept development, research boards, planning)
<https://milanote.com/>
- Pinterest (visual research, ideation, inspiration)
<https://www.pinterest.com/>
- Behance (case studies, process examples, design exploration)
<https://www.behance.net/>

5. Digital Layout Systems and Design to Production

- Adobe InDesign Tutorials (layout systems, print preparation)
<https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/tutorials.html>

- Canva Layout Design (grids, structure, layout development)
<https://www.canva.com/learn/layout-design/>
- Interaction Design Foundation (grid systems, layout principles)
<https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/layout>
- Adobe Print Design Guide (bleeds, margins, production specs)
<https://helpx.adobe.com/>

6. Advanced Digital Tools, Media and Workflow

- Adobe Creative Cloud Learn (advanced tools, workflows)
<https://creativecloud.adobe.com/learn>
- Figma (design workflows, collaboration, prototyping)
<https://www.figma.com/>
- Canva (design tools, workflow, layout creation)
<https://www.canva.com/>
- Envato Tuts+ (advanced digital tools, professional techniques)
<https://design.tutsplus.com/>

7. Color Theory Integration and Digital Color Management

- Adobe Color (color theory, palette creation, harmony)
<https://color.adobe.com/>
- Canva Color Wheel (color relationships, schemes, theory)
<https://www.canva.com/colors/color-wheel/>
- Color Matters (color psychology, perception, symbolism)
<https://www.colormatters.com/>
- Sessions College Color Calculator (color harmonies, relationships)
<https://www.sessions.edu/color-calculator/>

8. Design to Print and Cross-Media Color Systems

- Pantone (color systems, PMS matching, color accuracy)
<https://www.pantone.com/>
- Adobe Print Workflow Guides (color modes, print standards)
<https://helpx.adobe.com/>
- Canva Print Design (print formats, color accuracy)
<https://www.canva.com/learn/print-design/>
- Blurb Printing Guide (color reproduction, print workflow)
<https://www.blurb.com/>

9. Project Management, Professional Workflow and Collaboration

- Asana (project management, workflow tracking)
<https://asana.com/>
- Trello (task organization, collaborative workflow)
<https://trello.com/>
- Milanote (project planning, creative workflow)
<https://milanote.com/>

- Google Workspace (collaboration, file sharing, workflow)
<https://workspace.google.com/>

10. Critique, Analysis and Design Refinement

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

11. Professional Conduct, Studio Practice and Ethics

- Creative Commons (copyright, attribution, ethical use)
<https://creativecommons.org/>
- Freelancers Union (professional practices, ethics, business skills)
<https://www.freelancersunion.org/resources/>
- Nolo Legal Encyclopedia (copyright, contracts, legal issues)
<https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia>
- AIGA Professional Practice (design ethics, standards)
<https://www.aiga.org/resources>

12. Portfolio Development and Career Preparation

- Adobe Portfolio (portfolio creation, showcasing work)
<https://portfolio.adobe.com/>
- Behance (portfolio hosting, professional presentation)
<https://www.behance.net/>
- Wix Portfolio Builder (portfolio websites, customization)
<https://www.wix.com/portfolio/website>
- Squarespace Portfolio (creative portfolio platforms)
<https://www.squarespace.com/>

13. Leadership

- Lead4Change (student leadership, teamwork, communication, problem-solving)
<https://lead4change.org/>
- Barclays LifeSkills Leadership Lesson (leadership qualities, collaboration, workplace readiness)
<https://barclayslifeskills.com/help-others/lessons/leadership/>
- Alison Leadership Skills Courses (leadership development, conflict management, communication)
<https://alison.com/tag/leadership-skills>
- University of Colorado Boulder Group Work Resources (teamwork, collaboration, project roles)

<https://www.colorado.edu/center/teaching-learning/teaching-resources/course-design-development/teaching-style-content-delivery/group-work>

14. 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>

15. Final Project Assessment

- PBS LearningMedia – Media Production Projects (project ideas, assessment, rubrics)
<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/>
- Adobe Creative Cloud Tutorials (design projects, workflows, execution)
<https://creativecloud.adobe.com/learn>
- Canva Design School (design projects, layout, 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 promotional concept using design theory, color psychology, layout, typography, imagery, and visual hierarchy.
- Create required promotional items that demonstrate advertising continuity, message clarity, and audience awareness.
- Apply design-to-print concepts such as PMS, CMYK, process color, spot color, color correction, and production specifications.
- Revise designs through critique, analysis, troubleshooting, and refinement to improve visual impact and communication.
- Document the design process through sketches, drafts, revisions, production notes, references, and required portfolio materials.
- Present the final promotional package and explain design decisions, audience connection, color choices, and response to the annual theme.

Resources

- Technology Student Association – Promotional Design competition guidelines
<https://tsaweb.org/competitions-programs/tsa/themes-problems>
- Adobe Illustrator – Vector design and production graphics
<https://www.adobe.com/products/illustrator.html>
- Adobe InDesign – Page layout and publishing tools
<https://www.adobe.com/products/indesign.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.
- Analyze the intended audience, theme, visual style, component needs, and design constraints.
- Design the game board, cards, tokens, packaging, instructions, and printed components using consistent layout and color systems.
- Apply color theory, composition, balance, contrast, harmony, rhythm, hierarchy, and visual continuity to the game components.
- Create a playable prototype that demonstrates the game concept, components, and theme connection.
- Test the game with users and revise the visual design, instructions, components, and gameplay based on critique and feedback.
- Present the board game to judges and explain the visual design, gameplay decisions, color choices, 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 Illustrator – Vector artwork, layout, and game component design
<https://www.adobe.com/products/illustrator.html>
- Adobe InDesign – Rulebooks, cards, packaging, and print layout
<https://www.adobe.com/products/indesign.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 original illustrations using design theory, color psychology, composition, hierarchy, and visual continuity.
- Lay out story pages so that text, images, color, rhythm, and pacing support readability and engagement.
- Revise the storybook through critique and feedback focused on clarity, age appropriateness, design quality, and theme connection.
- Document the writing, illustration, design, revision, and production process.
- Present the story to judges and explain the theme connection, design choices, color decisions, audience decisions, and educational purpose.

Resources

- Technology Student Association – Children's Stories competition guidelines
<https://tsaweb.org/competitions-programs/tsa/themes-problems>
- Adobe Illustrator – Illustration, page layout, and vector artwork
<https://www.adobe.com/products/illustrator.html>
- 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/>