

SYLLABUS – SPRING 2026
MCOM 3312 Publication Design
T TH 2:00 PM – 3:20 PM

Instructor: Professor Vanessa Joyner
Office: CAS 224 Phone: 518-902-5097 Email: vjoyner@uttyler.edu
(The best way to contact me is by email.)
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM, and by appointment

Course Overview:

Publication Design will include the theory and practice of newspaper, magazine, infographic, brochure, and interactive web layout and design. There is an emphasis on publication design and its many forms, through exercises, tests, and special projects. Exercises are step-by-step instructions for building the various parts of publications, adding content to magazines, and processing images and text for multiple formats. Testing will be on the knowledge obtained from the course books and the project. Special projects will require an advanced or progressive understanding of a specific application.

Students will understand and apply concepts and theories in using and presenting images and information using tools and technologies appropriate for public relations/integrated communication or mediated journalism. Prerequisites: JOUR 2306 Media Design or instructor-approved demonstrated competency with software.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1) Awareness of the many theories that are the foundation of publication and/or graphic design.
2) Ability to redesign a non-functional or weak print visual communication tool into a well-designed functional tool using research and the design process.
3) Demonstrate a progression in knowledge of the Adobe Creative Suite applications.
4) Have learned various methods of creating visual or graphic design products that are publication design related. These products will include an array of formats such as news, magazine, infographic, ad, and brochure which will be useful for personal and/or commercial publication.
5) Students will develop career and communication skills in the area of graphic arts communication areas of research/communication, project management and collaboration, design, and professional print or digital production using graphic design tools.

6) Student will develop several projects using Adobe Creative Suite which will include Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, Illustrator and more software applications to develop graphics, build layouts and print materials. Students will use Adobe Acrobat to review and improve content, produce print-ready materials, and develop your portfolio.

7) Be familiar with industry expectations regarding the creating of a variety of publications such as newspapers, feature pages, magazine covers and editorial spreads, newsletters and more.

Required Textbooks and Readings

- No books need to be purchased.

Library – Free ebook

Designing the Editorial Experience: A Primer for Print, Web, and Mobile

Sue Apfelbaum and Juliette Cezzar

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uttyler/detail.action?docID=3399956>

The Newspaper Designer's Handbook

Book shown in Canvas.

Adobe Creative Cloud - <https://creative.adobe.com/plans> . There is an option for a month-to-month or yearly membership.

Suggestion:

\$50 – \$75: Keep additional funds for possible website access and membership in professional design organizations.

Special Course Notes: -- The listed items are required. Details for most in Canvas

- A. COURSE SCHEDULE: A course schedule is provided that lists, day by day, what will be covered in class and which assignments may be due.
- B. LECTURES/DEMONSTRATIONS – Important material from the text and outside sources will be covered in class. You should plan to take careful notes, as not all material can be found in the texts or readings. Discussion is encouraged, as is student-procured, outside material relevant to topics being covered.
- C. EXERCISES, EXAMS, PROJECTS – Exercises are step-by-step instructions on how to build the various parts of publications, add content to publications, process images and text for multiple formats. Exams will be based on the knowledge obtained from the course books and the project. Special projects will require an advanced or progressive understanding of a specific application.
- D. A PC or Macintosh computer – Capable of running graphic applications. A minimum of 8 Gb of RAM or more. The mini computers are not recommended.

- E. The computers in CAS 106 are available for your use according to the schedule posted on the door.
- F. MODULES – Work assigned in (Story, Newspaper, Newspaper Article, Magazine)
- G. CRITIQUES – Attendance and participation are required.
 - Interviewing and responding to feedback
- H. SERVICE PROJECT – When available, we will work with an actual client.
- I. FIELD TRIP – When available – To be announced (attendance required)
- J. GUEST SPEAKER – When available – To be announced (attendance required)
- K. CONSENT FORM – Photography/Video.
- L. PARTICIPATION – We will meet Face-to-Face, and when Zoom is necessary, make sure that your face is shown in class sessions.
- M. MEMBERSHIP in DSVC, or AIGA is encouraged, and attend 1 or 2 events by Zoom or in person. This is important for graphic design minors or majors.

Assignments and weights/point values

1. Field Trips/Guest Speakers	10%
2. Exercises	20%
a. Tabloid & Magazine Prep	
b. Stories	
c. Ad Design	
d. Critiques	
e. Attendance	
3. Exams or Quiz	40%
4. Projects	30%
a. Tabloid	
b. Magazine	
c. Brochure	
d. Infographic	
Total:	100%

Grading Scale

A	90% or greater
B	80 – 89%
C	70 – 79%
D	60 – 69%
F	below 59%

Late Work and Make-Up Exams: UT Tyler does have a [Class Attendance policy](#) in the catalog. For those unexpected events that occur in our lives, most of the time you will receive full credit for late work. Other situations may result in a 10 – 20 pt. grade reduction.

Graded Course Requirements Information: TEC 51.9705 (HB 2504) Detailed information will be provided in class and on Canvas.

- News Stories
- Tabloid Prep
- Magazine Prep
- Tabloid creation
- Magazine creation
- Ad Design (2)
- Exams (Newspaper Designer's Handbook and Editing by Design)
- Brochure
- Infographic
- Portfolio

Calendar of Topics, Readings, and Due Dates (REQUIRED COMPONENT)

Note the last date to drop the course is included in the calendar along with the final exam date and time. These are required. Students HIGHLY recommend that you link the assignments to the Canvas calendar. That comes up on their phones.

COURSE LEGEND (for Students)

- **LEC** – Lecture
- **DIS** – Discussion
- **CRIT** – Critique
- **ASSIGN** – Assignment
- **QUIZ / EXAM** – Assessment
- **NDH** – *Newspaper Designer's Handbook*
- **EPD** – *Exploring Publication Design*
- **TAB** – Tabloid Project

UNIT 1: COURSE INTRODUCTION & FOUNDATIONS

Weeks 1–2 | January 13–22

Week 1

Tuesday (1/13)

- Course Introduction
- Syllabus overview

- Getting Started Quiz
- Intro Activity
- Copyright overview
- Overview of special projects

Due:

- Intro Activity and Getting Started Quiz (Due 1/22)

Thursday (1/15)

- Continue Getting Started
- Publication Design Overview

Assign:

- **3 Stories** (2 must be strong) / Show websites with stories

Reading for Next Week:

- NDH Chapters 1–4

Due: 1/29

- 3 Stories / Choose one of these stories for Tabloid

Week 2

Tuesday (1/20)

- GUEST SPEAKER - Tentative
- LEC: NDH Chapters 1–4

Thursday (1/22)

- LEC: NDH Finish Chapters 1–4
- Story progress check
- **ASSIGN:** Tabloid Project & Prep
 - Tabloid Prep, Due 1/27
 - Cover thumbnail sketches, pick the best 2
 - Newseum Exercises (in class) or next class session
 - Choose one of your stories to be the main story
 - Research photos to match stories
 - Ad basics

Reading for Next Class:

- NDH Chapters 5–8

Due:

- Intro Activity
- Getting Started Quiz
- NDH Chapters 1–4, Quiz: (30 questions) on 1/29/2026

UNIT 2: TABLOID PROJECT

Weeks 3–7 | January 27 – February 24

Week 3

Tuesday (1/27)

- **CRITIQUE:** Tabloid Prep, present all content required for prep.
 - Discuss Construction / Layout / InDesign / Discuss Tabloid Inside (Chapter 8) / Adding pages.
- **LEC:** NDH Chapters 5–8
 - **Quiz:** NDH Chapters 5–8 on 2/12/2026

Thursday (1/29)

- In-class work on Tabloid Prep
- **DISCUSS:** 3 Stories
- **NDH** Chapters 1–4, Quiz: (30 questions)

Week 4

Tuesday (2/3)

- **CRITIQUE 1:** Tabloid Cover Only

Thursday (2/5)

- **DISCUSS:** Tabloid Inside
 - Adding pages

Week 5

Tuesday (2/10)

- **CRITIQUE:** Tabloid Inside / Cover Updates from last critique

Thursday (2/12) – No Class / Quiz

- Work on Tabloid

Due:

- **Quiz:** NDH Chapters 5–8
- **Critique:** Tabloid All 2/17

Week 6

Tuesday (2/17)

- **CRITIQUE:** Tabloid All / Cover Updates & Inside Pages & Ad
- **Reading Assigned:**
 - *Exploring Publication Design* Chapters 1–3 (Pt 1)
 - *Exploring Publication Design* Chapters 4, 5, 6, 8 (Pt 2)

Thursday (2/19)

- **LEC:** *Exploring Publication Design* Chapters 1–3 (Pt 1), Quiz: March 5, 2026

UNIT 3: MAGAZINE PROJECT

Weeks 7–13 | February 24 – April 9

Week 7

Tuesday (2/24)

- **LEC:** *Exploring Publication Design* Chapters 4, 5, 6, 8 (Pt 2), Quiz: March 5, 2026.

Thursday (2/26)

- **ASSIGN:** Magazine Project (**Due 3/23**)
- Magazine Prep Includes:
 - Choose a Cover Story (from the remaining 2)
 - Choose more stories
 - Research photos
 - Cover thumbnails
 - Logo/banner concepts
 - Ad design

Prep Due: 3/17

Week 8

Thursday (3/3)

- Work in the classroom or from home.
- **EXAM:** *Exploring Publication Design* Chapters 1–8

Thursday (3/5)

- **CRITIQUE 1:** Magazine Prep / Pick best logo or banner / best cover solution / best inside spread solutions
 - Begin magazine creation

Week 9

Spring Break (3/10 & 3/12)

Week 10

Tuesday (3/17)

- Work on the Magazine

Thursday (3/19)

- **CRITIQUE 1: Magazine Cover/Logo**
 - Magazine Cover

Week 11

Tuesday (3/24)

- Work on the Magazine

Thursday (3/26)

- **CRITIQUE 2: Magazine T of C/ Spread / Ad Design**
 - Magazine Cover
 - Logo/Banner
 - Table of Contents
 - Ad Design
 - Creative Brief
 - Journal

Week 12

Tuesday (3/31)

- **ASSIGN:** Book Cover
 - Thumbnails Due 4/2
 - Final Book Cover, Due **4/21 and 4/23**
 - Spine
 - Side Panels

- Back Cover

Thursday (4/2)

- **CRITIQUE:** Book Cover Thumbnails, Include side panels, Spine

Week 13

Tuesday (4/7)

- **CRITIQUE 3:** Full Magazine

Thursday (4/9)

- **CRITIQUE 4:** Final Magazine Revisions

UNIT 4: BOOK COVER & PORTFOLIO

Weeks 14–15 | April 14 – April 23

Week 14

Tuesday (4/14)

- Work on Book Cover

Thursday (4/16)

- **ASSIGN:** Portfolio (Due 4/23)
- Work on Book Cover

Week 15

Tuesday (4/21)

- **CRITIQUE 1:** Book Cover

Thursday (4/23)

- **CRITIQUE:** Portfolio
- **CRITIQUE 2:** Book Cover

FINALS WEEK

April 27 – April 30