

GRAPHIC AND DIGITAL DESIGN

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE (AAS) - 60 CREDITS

About this program

The Graphic and Digital Design program prepares students for creative careers at the intersection of design, technology and marketing. This program emphasizes the integration of visual design principles with digital tools and strategic communication to produce effective materials for print, web, social media and emerging platforms. Students gain a strong foundation in design fundamentals, branding, typography and digital imaging while developing technical proficiency in industry-standard software. Through hands-on projects and real-world applications, students learn to plan, design and produce visual communication solutions that meet client needs and marketing objectives. The program also introduces students to foundational marketing and digital marketing concepts, allowing students to understand how design supports audience engagement and brand identity. With flexible elective pathways, students may choose to specialize in areas such as print design, digital media design, motion graphics, advertising design or user experience (UX) and interface design. Graduates complete the program with a professional portfolio in both print and digital formats, demonstrating the creative, technical and strategic skills necessary for entry-level employment in graphic design, visual communication and related creative industries.

Program outcomes

1. Demonstrate the ability to produce visual concepts using drawing and computer methods.
2. Interpret, speak, write and edit the language of advertising, graphic design, digital graphic technology and print production.
3. Demonstrate entry-level industry proficiency utilizing multiple methods for producing graphic output.
4. Apply theories of design, color and typography.
5. Demonstrate professionalism, i.e., participation in classroom activities, personal accountability and meeting deadlines.
6. Demonstrate understanding of print and web production.

Curriculum overview

Crds	Requirement type
51	Required courses
9	Restricted electives in courses
60	Total

Developmental courses note: A student may be required to enroll in developmental courses in reading, writing and math. A student's scores on the Accuplacer assessment will determine enrollment in developmental courses. The purpose of developmental courses is to prepare students for the demands of a college-level curriculum. *Credits may vary.*

Accreditation: Minnesota State Community and Technical College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, a regional accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The Higher Learning Commission 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500 Chicago, IL 60604-1411 <http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org> Phone: 312.263.0456 / 800.621.7440

Curriculum requirement details

Required courses

Course	Crds
ART2115 - Introduction to Digital Photography	3
DMKT2200 - Introduction to Digital Marketing	3
DMKT2310 - Digital Marketing UX Design	3
ENGL1101 - College Writing	3
GDTC1103 - Print and Production I	3
GDTC1110 - Introduction to Design and Layout	3
GDTC1111 - Foundations of Adobe Applications	3
GDTC1127 - Digital Photo / Video	3
GDTC1130 - Print and Production II	3
GDTC2120 - Adobe InDesign II	3
GDTC2205 - Adobe Photoshop II	3
GDTC2231 - Design Portfolio	3
GDTC2245 - Adobe Illustrator II	3
GDTC2249 - Dimensional Design	3
GDTC2250 - Design Campaigns	3
GDTC2252 - Graphic Design Emerging Technologies	3
GDTC2258 - Graphic Design Professional Practices	3

Other requirements or restricted electives

3 credits from one or more of these Courses:

Course title	Credits
COMM1120 - Introduction to Public Speaking...	3
COMM1130 - Small Group Communication	3
COMM1140 - Interpersonal Communication	3

6 credits from one or more of these Courses:

Course title	Credits
ART1128 - Art History: Renaissance to Contemporary	3
ART1129 - Art History: African, Asian, Islamic and Mesoamerican	3
ART1985 - Introduction to Screen Printing	3
GLST1100 - Introduction to Global Studies	3
HUM2210 - Introduction to Film	3
HUM2230 - World Cinema	3
HUM2236 - Technology in the Humanities	3
POLS2950 - Introduction to Social Research	3
PSYC1101 - Human Interaction	3
PSYC1200 - General Psychology	3
PSYC2222 - Lifespan Development	3
PSYC2224 - Social Psychology	3
PSYC2226 - Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis	3
SOC2217 - Rural Sociology	3

Course summaries

ART2115 - Introduction to Digital Photography (3 credits)

Meets MnTC Goal Areas 2 and 6F. This course introduces students to digital photographic equipment, materials, programs, processes and philosophies while examining photography and its role in historic and contemporary cultures, with a focus on artistic content. Digital photographic and presentation processes are explored, and artistic rationale and execution are examined. Students will acquire, identify and demonstrate the use of terminology, technical abilities, basic visual elements and principles of design common to digital photographic artwork.

DMKT2200 - Introduction to Digital Marketing (3 credits)

This course provides a broad overview of the digital marketing techniques needed for successful marketing campaigns in a digital economy. Students will gain a fundamental understanding of the digital marketing core principles needed for the 21st century consumer. Topics will include webpage design, analytics, search engine optimization (SEO), pay-per-click, email marketing, social media marketing and mobile marketing. This class prepares students for more advanced digital marketing courses.

DMKT2310 - Digital Marketing UX Design (3 credits)

This course covers the key elements in creating user-friendly, functional and aesthetically pleasing web pages to improve the customer experience. Emphasis will be placed on examining both the topics of user experience design (UX) and user interface design (UI) in the development of web pages for both desktop and mobile devices. Students will apply skills learned by developing web page designs using content management software for a portfolio.

Prerequisites:

- DMKT2200

ENGL1101 - College Writing (3 credits)

Meets MnTC Goal Area 1. This is an introductory course designed to prepare students for later college and career writing through a process approach with particular emphasis on revision. Students consider purpose and audience as they read, discuss and refine their work to develop confidence in their writing and communication skills.

Prerequisites:

- ELL1085
- ENGL0097
- or placement in College Level English.

GDTC1103 - Print and Production I (3 credits)

This course introduces students to the foundational theory and practical processes of print and production in graphic design. Students learn industry terminology and gain an understanding of workflow methods and the characteristics of various production techniques.

GDTC1110 - Introduction to Design and Layout (3 credits)

In this course, students are introduced to the elements and principles of design, basic to intermediate layout techniques, industry terminology and industry best practices. Students produce a variety of design solutions to become familiar with the creative process, design theory, brand strategy and assessment of their work. Projects are produced using Adobe Creative Cloud software.

GDTC1111 - Foundations of Adobe Applications (3 credits)

This introductory course provides a hands-on overview of Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign, industry-standard software applications used in professional graphic design and digital publishing. Students learn the fundamental skills and creative techniques necessary to produce visually compelling designs for both print and digital media. Through guided projects and exercises, students explore raster and vector image creation, photo correction and compositing, typography, layout design and file preparation for production. Emphasis is placed on developing an understanding of the elements and principles of design as well as workflow integration between Adobe applications.

GDTC1127 - Digital Photo / Video (3 credits)

Students will develop basic photographic and video production skills and knowledge in this course, using a digital camera for a variety of assignments.

GDTC1130 - Print and Production II (3 credits)

This advanced course expands students' production skills with a focus on professional workflows and output methods. Students work with complex file preparation, color management, substrate selection and finishing techniques across a variety of print applications. Emphasis is placed on troubleshooting production challenges and coordinating effectively with print vendors. Students are able to plan, prepare and produce high-quality, production-ready materials that meet industry standards.

Corequisites:

- GDTC2250

GDTC2120 - Adobe InDesign II (3 credits)
 This course builds upon the skills and knowledge acquired in the Adobe InDesign I course. More advanced tools and techniques will be taught, and students will again be designing a variety of industry-related graphic design projects to demonstrate their skills and design knowledge. Assignments will include both print and interactive projects, and students will be taught how to independently construct and output these projects to industry standards.

Prerequisites:

- GDTC1120

GDTC2205 - Adobe Photoshop II (3 credits)
 This course covers digital image creation, manipulation and preparation for output using a variety of advanced functionalities of Adobe PhotoShop.

Prerequisites:

- GDTC1105

GDTC2231 - Design Portfolio (3 credits)
 This course focuses on planning, creating and assembling an industry-ready graphic design portfolio. Students will each develop a plan to work toward their individual portfolio goals. Branding oneself for the job search process will be covered, and students will be assigned self-promotional projects for this purpose. Multiple assignments will provide the opportunity for students to practice presenting their portfolios to large and small groups.

Prerequisites:

- GDTC2120
- GDTC2205
- GDTC2212

GDTC2245 - Adobe Illustrator II (3 credits)
 This course covers the use of Adobe Illustrator to create and manipulate electronic illustrations, logos and artwork.

Prerequisites:

- GDTC1135

GDTC2249 - Dimensional Design (3 credits)
 Students will develop an understanding of design scaling techniques and design dielines in this course, applying that knowledge as they create a variety of two- and three-dimensional design solutions focused on large-scale products such as signage, packaging, product merchandising and display graphics.

Prerequisites:

- GDTC1115

GDTC2250 - Design Campaigns (3 credits)
 In this course, students will apply branding, advertising and graphic design principles to build integrated campaigns. These campaigns will require students to employ a variety of media, such as print, digital, social media, wearable, out-of-home and some non-traditional applications. Students will learn preparatory research and basic marketing planning to lay the groundwork for their projects.

Prerequisites:

- GDTC1124
- GDTC2212

GDTC2252 - Graphic Design Emerging Technologies (3 credits)
 This course examines current and evolving technologies influencing contemporary graphic design practice. Students explore emerging trends in printing processes, artificial intelligence (AI), production workflows, digital fabrication and design software/hardware. Emphasis is placed on evaluating how technological shifts impact visual communication, industry standards and project workflows.

Prerequisites:

- GDTC2250

GDTC2258 - Graphic Design Professional Practices (3 credits)
 This course addresses the professional practice of graphic design technology and covers interviewing skills, presentation techniques, freelance business operation, proposals and management, resume and cover letter writing, job research/job offer and portfolio preparation.

Prerequisites:

- GDTC2212

COMM1120 - Introduction to Public Speaking (3 credits)
 Meets MnTC Goal Area 1. This course clarifies the process of oral communication, clarifies the basic principles of public speaking and allows the student to increase the application of these principles while both speaking and listening.

COMM1130 - Small Group Communication (3 credits)
 Meets MnTC Goal Areas 1 and 2. This course focuses on communication issues in small groups and the importance of small group work in business today. An emphasis will be placed on improving communication skills for successful teamwork, group cohesiveness and the responsibility to group goals and tasks. Students will be provided with opportunities to build their group communication skills through practice.

COMM1140 - Interpersonal Communication (3 credits)
 Meets MnTC Goal Area 1. This course will focus on improving students' abilities to communicate effectively in one-to-one dyadic encounters by providing experience-based instruction. Extensive in-class and out-of-class analyses allow the student to examine his/her own and others' informal social interactions. The long-term goal is for the student to apply interpersonal communication theories to daily interactions and draw his/her own conclusions about the effectiveness of interpersonal communication.

ART1128 - Art History: Renaissance to Contemporary (3 credits)
 Meets MnTC Goal Areas 2, 6 and 8. This introductory course gives students a deeper appreciation and knowledge of Western art and the cultures that created it. The course focuses on the fascinating changes that occurred in the Italian Renaissance and continues through to modern artists and influences of the 20th century.

ART1129 - Art History: African, Asian, Islamic and Mesoamerican (3 credits)
 Meets MnTC Goal Areas 2, 6 and 8. Students will explore the influences and philosophies that have impacted art in regions outside of the Western world. Topics vary but will include the origins and historic development of art in African, Asian, Islamic and Mesoamerican cultures.

ART1985 - Introduction to Screen Printing (3 credits)
 Meets MnTC Goal Areas 2 and 6. Students will explore screen printing processes, techniques and materials, including image-making, stencil production, editioning and mixing ink.

GLST1100 - Introduction to Global Studies (3 credits)
 Meets MnTC Goal Areas 6 and 8. This course will consider political, economic, cultural, environmental and social issues influencing Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania and the relationship among these regions. Students will explore the institutions that impact these relationships. Students also will consider how world views are altered when one's point of view shifts from national and regional perspectives to a global perspective. The course also examines the impact of world affairs on our understanding of human relationships, lifestyles and our political and personal philosophies.

HUM2210 - Introduction to Film (3 credits)
 Meets MnTC Goal Areas 2 and 6. This course offers students an overview of the elements that comprise "telling stories on film." Students will study shot, angle, lighting, mise en scene, movement, editing, sound, etc. The course will also consider how film elements work to present various ideologies. Students will become familiar with open and closed forms and the distinctions between realism, classicism and formalism. Students will participate in film analysis using the concepts above.

HUM2230 - World Cinema (3 credits)
 Meets MnTC Goal Areas 6 and 8. This course will introduce students to films from non-English speaking countries around the globe. The course will study stories and societies through cinema, readings and lecture. Students will consider their own worldview while they screen films and analyze multiple themes and ideas as a means of enriching their global perspective.

HUM2236 - Technology in the Humanities (3 credits)
 Meets MnTC Goal Areas 2, 6 and 8. Developments in the arts, architecture, science, philosophy and education and studies in human interaction are often provoked by changes in technology. Early changes in military technology made it possible for civilizations to take charge of various places on the world's stage. However, over time, changes in how the world was understood, motivated by general advances in global exploration, astronomy and other sciences as well as specific inventions such as movable type, proved even more instrumental in driving people to new and different understandings of what it means to be human. This course explores how technology impacts developments in a culture's world view and tries to anticipate how future changes in technology might alter the course of otherwise established ways of life.

POLS2950 - Introduction to Social Research (3 credits)

Meets MnTC Goals 2 and 5. This course introduces methods and concepts used in the research process in the social sciences and related fields. Topics covered include the application of the scientific method to social and behavioral research, definitions and measurements of variables, research design, experiential methods and survey techniques. The use of literature reviews and the importance of critically evaluating research will be emphasized. Common descriptive and inferential statistics used in social science disciplines also will be introduced. This course is identical to SOC 2950 and PSYC 2950 and is cross-listed with both of those courses. Students may choose to enroll in the course with the prefix most appropriate to their transfer and career goals.

PSYC1101 - Human Interaction (3 credits)

Meets MnTC Goal Areas 2 and 5. This is an introductory course emphasizing practical applications of psycho-social concepts, with specific emphasis on personality development, human relations and motivation. This course is applicable for students in occupational and health-related fields or general education.

PSYC1200 - General Psychology (3 credits)

Meets MnTC Goal Areas 5 and 9. This is a comprehensive introductory overview of psychology that studies human behavior and mental processes. Topics include (but are not limited to) research methods, the history of psychology, neuroscience and behavior, developmental psychology, sensation and perception, motivation and emotion, health psychology, learning and memory, personality, social psychology, psychopathology and treatments, and states of consciousness such as sleep and dreams.

PSYC2222 - Lifespan Development (3 credits)

Meets MnTC Goal Areas 5 and 9. This course is a study of human development from the lifespan perspective, including theories, stages and influences of development. The course views the individual from conception to death through physical, cognitive, social and emotional development.

PSYC2224 - Social Psychology (3 credits)

Meets MnTC Goal Areas 5 and 7. This course is designed to cover the issues and themes current in the field of social psychology. Examples of such issues include relational and physical aggression; the role of technology in group relations; stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination; and how group identification influences thinking and behavior. A range of psychological theories and concepts will be examined and compared historically as well as across multiple social contexts.

PSYC2226 - Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis (3 credits)

Meets MnTC Goal Areas 2, 5 and 10. This course is an exploration of the scientific study of human behavior and its interrelatedness with the environment. This course describes and explains the acquisition, maintenance and change of behavior with an emphasis on human application within a variety of environmental contexts. This course uses critical thinking on the principles and procedures used to understand and change the environment and human behavior.

SOC2217 - Rural Sociology (3 credits)

Meets MnTC Goal Areas 5 and 7a/b. This course is a sociological study of the forces that have transformed rural settings and impacted future trends in rural America. The course also focuses on the diverse cultural heritages contributing to the rich cultural mosaic found in rural scenarios.

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Program Plan — "Associate of Applied Science, AAS"

Locations: Moorhead

1st Fall Term (15 credits)

Courses

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ART2115 - Introduction to Digital Photography	3
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GDTC1103 - Print and Production I	3
GDTC1110 - Introduction to Design and Layout	3
GDTC1111 - Foundations of Adobe Applications	3

1st Spring Term (15 credits)

Courses

Course	Crds
GDTC1127 - Digital Photo / Video	3
GDTC2120 - Adobe InDesign II	3
GDTC2205 - Adobe Photoshop II	3
GDTC2245 - Adobe Illustrator II	3
GDTC2252 - Graphic Design Emerging Technologies	3

2nd Fall Term (15 credits)

Courses

Course	Crds
DMKT2310 - Digital Marketing UX Design	3
ENGL1101 - College Writing	3
GDTC1130 - Print and Production II	3
GDTC2249 - Dimensional Design	3
GDTC2250 - Design Campaigns	3

2nd Spring Term (15 credits)

Courses

Course	Crds
GDTC2231 - Design Portfolio	3
GDTC2258 - Graphic Design Professional Practices	3

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ART1985 - Introduction to Screen Printing	3
GLST1100 - Introduction to Global Studies	3
HUM2210 - Introduction to Film	3

HUM2230 - World Cinema 3
HUM2236 - Technology in the Humanities 3
POLS2950 - Introduction to Social Research 3
PSYC1101 - Human Interaction 3
PSYC1200 - General Psychology 3
PSYC2222 - Lifespan Development 3
PSYC2224 - Social Psychology 3
PSYC2226 - Introduction to Applied Behavior
Analysis 3
SOC2217 - Rural Sociology 3

