Texas A&M University

Core Curriculum

Initial Request for a Course Addition to the Fall 2014 Core Curriculum

Foundational Component Area: Communication

In the box below, describe how this course meets the Foundational Component Area description for Communication. Courses in this category focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively. Courses involve the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.

The proposed course must contain all elements of the Foundational Component Area. How does the proposed course specifically address the Foundational Component Area definition above?

URPN 220 Digital Communication 1 meets the Foundational Component Area description for Communication by focusing on the communication techniques and process in environmental design and planning professions, which include developing representation concepts and computing fundamental design productions in graphical formats, designing a comprehensive project poster with written descriptions, performing an oral presentation, and participating peer review and discussions.

As graphics are the language of design, it is essential to understand how they are used to communicate design ideas and plans from the initial stage of design preparation through final productions, and to acquire the visual communication ability to translate the preliminary design concept into various forms of digital representation. In addition to that, oral, aural, and written communication abilities are critical to persuade people with your designs or plans in the professions. Therefore, a series of communication skills will be emphasized by means of well-represented graphics, well-documented project posters, effective verbal presentations and interactive discussions.

Core Objectives

Describe how the proposed course develops the required core objectives below by indicating how each learning objective will be addressed, what specific strategies will be used for each objective and how student learning of each objective will be evaluated.

The proposed course is required to contain each element of the Core Objective.

Critical Thinking (to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information):

Learning objectives for the course which help achieve Critical Thinking are:

- L.O. 1. To understand the entire design work frame and how graphic software programs are used at each design stage.
- L.O. 2. To be able to refine design ideas and translate them into the technical drawings and graphical representations by means of acquired knowledge and skills.
- L.O. 3. To understand how various graphic software programs are interrelated in each of the digital work flow and in the transition by importing and exporting design data.
- L.O. 4. To identify the best practices in the field, and to develop more productive and suitable processes of your own with or in spite of the traditional drafting and graphic producing tools.

Strategies used to create/access an atmosphere of Critical Thinking are:
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- By applying Flipping Course pedagogy, students are prepared with preliminary knowledge before class.
- In-class exercises are designed to accommodate the must-know lecture contents, and demonstrations are provided to introduce the standard processes in the field.
- A series of assignments is linked to each other consecutively as following the standard design process.
- Hands-on lab sessions are offered to provide adequate time to ask specific questions on an individual basis.

Evaluations used to assess student learning of Critical Thinking are:

- Competency and creativity are the major elements of evaluation criteria in students' submissions.
- Submissions are evaluated based on understandings on techniques and expressions to generate new ideas/products using specific rubrics on each assignment.
- Each submission receives instructor's review to accompany by detailed comments on the drawing, so that students have opportunities to learn from mistakes.

Communication (to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication):

Learning objectives for the course which help achieve Communication are:

- L.O. 5. To obtain fundamental drafting, plotting, rendering, and documenting techniques using AutoCAD and other digital graphic software programs including Adobe Photoshop, SketchUp, and Adobe InDesign.
- L.O. 6. To know efficient and effective ways to share the outcomes with peers while understanding the processes of digital imagery producing, processing, and manipulating.
- L.O. 7. To develop the composition skills in written, visual, and oral communications in order to deliver the design/planning ideas clearly and effectively to audiences.

Strategies used to create/access an atmosphere of Communication are:

- Oral presentations are required to promote self-confidence and persuasive presentation skills in public speaking.
- Award winning projects and outstanding sample works are introduced to stimulate students’ inspiration in terms of effective communicational composition and layout, graphical expressions, and emerging technical trends.
- Peer Teaching pedagogy is applied to encourage an active participation in the course and to develop a positive influence in communication with classmates.
- Students' submissions are displayed to provide an opportunity to interact with peers and to know how everyone can come up with a variety of solutions to a certain subject.
- eLearning or eCampus is used actively to communicate between the instructor and students, and prompt responses/explanations are expected on questioning from students.

Evaluations used to assess student learning of Communication are:

- Delivering accurate design information and producing well-executed graphic representations are required throughout the course contents.
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- The Peer Teaching project is assessed in two main categories: oral demonstration/presentation and a written tutorial.
- Oral presentations are evaluated based upon clearly delivered ideas/messages, fully understood knowledge/content, the ability to answer the questions related to the topic, and so on.
- Writing skills are evaluated including design descriptions and tutorials in order to measure how design process and conclusions are well-addressed and persuasive to readers, and how much interesting facts and discussion are shared with classmates.
- Discussion/participation credits are provided to students who participate actively and voluntarily in class Q & A and discussion sections.
- Students are asked to communicate actively with instructor regarding their questions/concerns/suggestions on the course.

Teamwork (to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal):

Learning objectives for the course which help achieve Teamwork are:

- L.O. 6. To know efficient and effective ways to share the outcomes with peers while understanding the processes of digital imagery producing, processing, and manipulating.
- L.O. 8. To be able to work collaboratively with peers by participating a team project actively in order to obtain a positive influence among team members, to increase work efficiency through collaboration, and to have an opportunity to expand students' capabilities.
- L.O. 9. To be open-minded to receive critique from peer reviews and to adapt different points of view, and to learn from and to be inspired by other students' works on the same subject.

Strategies used to create/access an atmosphere of Teamwork are:

- A team of two or three students works together to develop the Peer Teaching materials: demonstration/presentation and a written tutorial.
- Discussion sessions are opened to share the quick-and-easy tips and good resources with peers.
- Pin-up discussions are placed to have time for a peer review and questioning/answering to stimulate each others.
- Communicating with peers is encouraged to have positive interaction to solve problems although submissions must be completed with independent effort.

Evaluations used to assess student learning of Teamwork are:

- Peer Teaching project is evaluated as a team, however, peer review is conducted and reflected on the grade in order to measure the individual's level of commitment/work ethic, contribution, workload, communication and so on.
- Discussion and participation credits are given to students who are actively engaged in activities.

Personal Responsibility (to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making):

Learning objective for the course which help achieve Personal Responsibility is:

- L.O. 10. To be able to create original works by means of well-built digital drafting and rendering skills and self-expression in visual, written, and oral communication.
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Strategies used to create/access an atmosphere of Personal Responsibility are:

- Students are encouraged to exhibit a positive attitude toward learning and discussions.
- Independent work ethic on plagiarism and originality is strongly emphasized throughout the course.
- Students are exposed to issues of personal responsibility related to uses of internet resources and school computing resources and facilities in terms of the copyright laws and fair use, and the Texas A&M University Student Rules.
- Students are expected to attend class after watching provided lecture video clips/demonstrations.
- Course logistics are explained clearly regarding late/missed works, and students are encouraged to keep the due dates for successful accomplishment in the course.

Evaluations used to assess student learning of Personal Responsibility are:

- Completeness, craftsmanship, and independent work ethic are the important criteria in evaluating students' submissions.
- Strict deadline for each assignment is set, and grading policies are applied on late/missed assignments.
- To assess students' responsibilities on watching lectures/demonstrations online (flipping course), pop-up quizzes can be conducted.
- Attendance policies are applied to every class and credits are given.

Please be aware that instructors should be prepared to submit samples/examples of student work as part of the future course recertification process.