



ARTS-4388: Special Topics – Digital Cultural Narratives

A Study Abroad Course for School of Art & Design's Study Abroad Europe 2023 Trip

SYLLABUS

Minimester 2023

COURSE INFORMATION:

Meeting Dates: May 14 – June 2, 2023

Meeting Location: Traditional Face-to-Face Course in the Trip and Labs

Course Modality:

Traditional Face-to-Face Course

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Instructor Name: Prof. Ping Xu

Phone: (956) 777-1126

E-Mail: ping.xu@utrgv.edu

Office Hours: By appointment for zoom meetings

<https://utrgv.zoom.us/j/3146949266>

Meeting ID: 314 694 9266

COURSE DESCRIPTION, PREREQUISITES & MODE OF LEARNING

This course explores narrative and interactivity to create a story through digital media with the topics of European art history and design cultures. Students will create a digital travel journal via digital photographs, brochure, and videos. The topics of the course projects could be focused on one or more of the following aspects.

1. European folk arts and cultures
2. European history (people & traditions)
3. European art history
4. European travel and landscape

The course is a three credit hours studio class open to all UTRGV students without prerequisites. The lectures and demonstrations will be focused on digital designs in one or more of the above aspects.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES FOR THE COURSE

- Digital photography for creating the visual travel and cultural journal
- Photo retouching and image manipulation for the visual travel and cultural journal
- Photo compositing for the visual travel and cultural journal
- Digital publishing for designing the visual travel and cultural journal
- Vlog shooting and video editing for the visual travel and cultural journal in a video format

The academic and program goals are establishing a cultural awareness via digital media and learn the European design trends through the partner school visits and field trips in art museums, galleries, and design firms in the United Kingdom and France.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR CORE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

A Bachelor of Fine Arts with Graphic Design Concentration at UTRGV prepares students for several professional works in the field. The curriculum emphasizes concept development and application, work with clients, and professional development, including establishing a working portfolio. Students who graduate from the program are equipped with a broad range of practices in the design field, such as interactive design, art direction, publication design, including print and advertising, multimedia and web design, motion graphics, photography, and social service design in a variety of settings. UTRGV Graphic Design students follow a wide range of individual paths, including running their design studios, working for a large corporation, or specializing in web and interactive media. Some students also choose to earn a master's degree in the field, opening many possible horizons.

TEXTBOOK, TECHNOLOGY, AND RESOURCE MATERIAL

No textbooks will be required for this course as I will provide lectures and learning sources to you through the trip and lab hours.

Recommended Resources & Periodicals for the Inspiration of Interactive Design

- [Behance](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [Dribbble.com](#)
- Communication Arts – Design Annual
- [Smashing Magazine](#)
- [FastCompany Magazine](#)

Supplies & Materials

For backup/transportation purposes, please purchase one 132 GB USB drive or an external hard drive.

Recommended Prototyping Tools for the Projects

- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe InDesign
- Adobe Premiere Rush

Recommended Hardware for the Projects

- Laptop & External Drive
- Digital Photo Equipment: Camera (DSLR, Mirrorless, or Point & Shoot), Tripod, Memory Cards
- Drone for Drone Photography (Optional)

GRADING POLICY

Student works will be assessed for creativity, presentation, and content value, based on professional standards. In determining students' grades for the course, consideration is given to the following areas: Attitude, attendance, constructive participation, development of concepts, aptness of thought, originality, composition, construction, curiosity, tenacity, inventiveness, presentation, and technical proficiency in working those assigned projects. The course's final grade will be the sum of the project scores divided by the number of projects.

Grade Scale (apply to each project)

Excellence_90- 100 [A]

Presents incredibly imaginative ideas and shows excellent technical/presentation skills. The project may also go well above and beyond the parameters of the exercise. Solid class discussions and critique involvement are also involved.

Above Average_80 – 92 [B]

Completes a solid overall development with original thought through project development. It also shows good design incite and work ethic. Regular participation in class discussions and peer critiques are also maintained.

Average_70 – 79 [C]

It meets the parameters of the problem but does not exhibit originality or may be presented in a condition or manner that does not effectively communicate the goals of the exercise or, in essence, lacks proper execution.

Weak_60 – 69 [D]

Unacceptable_0 – 59 [F]

BLACKBOARD SUPPORT

Please get in touch with the Center for Online Learning and Teaching Technology (COLTT) if you need assistance with course technology at any time.

Campus:	Brownsville	Edinburg
Location:	Casa Bella (BCASA) 613	Education Complex (EEDUC) 2.202
Phone:	956-882-6792	956-665-5327

Toll-Free: 1-866-654-4555

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Support Tickets Submit a Support Case via our [Ask COLTT Portal](#)

24/7 Blackboard Support

Need Blackboard assistance after hours? You can call our main office numbers, 956-882-6792 or 956-665-5327, to speak with a support representative.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings. Students should contact the instructor before the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.

Tardiness Policy:

A tardy means you are late over 10 minutes when you clock in. Tardiness is not tolerated in this class. Three tardies will be counted as an absence. A tardy or a lack on a critique/presentation day will result in a grade reduction for the project.

Effort Policy:

Students are expected to keep track of their performance throughout the rest of the semester and seek guidance from available sources (including the instructor) if a student's performance drops below satisfactory levels. Unprepared, late or absent to the zoom meetings, and non-participating in group projects, the student will receive a reduced project grade when applicable.

Back-up Policy:

Please back up your essential files and project folder at two different places/disks to prevent unexpected file damage or disk errors. If a late project is occurred due to fire damage, a grade deduction will still be conducted.

ABSENCE/SICK POLICY

A two-point deduction will be received for the project grade for each unexcused absence during the period of the project.

One letter will be deducted from the project grade if the student absents a class on a critique day/presentation day or delays a project.

COVID-19 RESOURCES:

Please visit the [Commitment Website](#) for the most up-to-date COVID-19 campus information and resources. The [Commitment FAQ page](#) offers additional guidance to specific questions. To submit a question for the FAQ, please email WelcomeBack@utrgv.edu.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Members of the UTRGV community uphold the [Vaquero Honor Code](#)'s shared values of honesty, integrity, and mutual respect in our interactions and relationships. In this regard, academic integrity is fundamental in our actions, as any act of dishonesty conflicts as much with academic achievement as with the values of honesty and integrity. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to: cheating, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give an unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations, STU 02-100, and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All violations of Academic Integrity will be reported to Student Rights and Responsibilities through [Vaqueros Report It](#).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive reasonable academic accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) for additional information. For accommodation requests to be approved, the student must apply using the [SAS](#) and is responsible for providing sufficient documentation of the disability to SAS. Students must participate in an interactive discussion or an intake appointment with SAS staff. Accommodations may be requested at any time but are not retroactive, meaning they are valid once SAS approves. Please get in touch with SAS early in the semester/module for guidance. Students who experience a broken bone, severe injury, or undergo surgery may also be eligible for temporary accommodations.

Pregnancy, Pregnancy-related, and Parenting Accommodations

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination, which includes discrimination based on pregnancy, marital status, or parental status. Students seeking accommodations for pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, or parenting (reasonably immediate postpartum period) should submit the request using the form found at [Pregnancy and Parenting I UTRGV](#).

Student Accessibility Services staff can be contacted at either campus:
Brownsville Campus:

Music and Learning Center building (BMSLC, 1.107), phone (956) 882-7374, email ability@utrgv.edu.

Edinburg Campus:

University Center (EUCTR, 108), phone (956) 665-7005, email ability@utrgv.edu.

MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD

Students are encouraged to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (<http://my.utrgv.edu>); you will be contacted through email with further instructions.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT and MANDATORY REPORTING

By UT System regulations, your instructor is a “Responsible Employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report to the Office of Institutional Equity & Diversity (OIED@utrgv.edu) any instance occurring during a student’s time in college of sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, and sexual harassment, about which they become aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct, discrimination, and violence. If students, faculty, or staff would like confidential assistance or have questions, they can contact OVAVP (Office for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention) at (956) 665-8287, (956) 882-8282, or OVAVP@utrgv.edu.

COURSE DROPS

According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty, earning a grade of DR (drop) until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the course should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule to recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop government refers to Texas law that dictates undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.

STUDENT SERVICES

Students who demonstrate financial need have various options for paying for college costs, such as scholarships, grants, loans, and work-study. Students should visit the Student Services Center (U Central) for additional information. U Central is located in BMAIN 1.100 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 1.145 (Edinburg) or can be reached by email (ucentral@utrgv.edu) or telephone: (956) 882-4026. In addition to financial aid, U Central can assist students with registration and admissions.

Students seeking academic help in their studies can use university resources in addition to an instructor’s office hours. University Resources include the Advising Center, Career Center, Counseling Center, Learning Center, and Writing Center. The centers provide tutoring, writing help, counseling services, critical thinking, study skills, degree planning, and student employment. In addition, services such as the Food Pantry are also provided. Locations are listed below.

Center Name	Brownsville Campus	Edinburg Campus
Advising Center AcademicAdvising@utrgv.edu	BMAIN 1.400 (956) 665-7120	EITTB 1.000 (956) 665-7120
Career Center CareerCenter@utrgv.edu	BINAB 1.105 (956) 882-5627	ESTAC 2.101 (956) 665-2243
Counseling Center Counseling@utrgv.edu Mental Health Counseling and Related Services List	BSTUN 2.10 (956) 882-3897	EUCTR 109 (956) 665-2574

Center Name	Brownsville Campus	Edinburg Campus
Food Pantry FoodPantry@utrgv.edu	BCAVL 101 & 102 (956) 882-7126	EUCTR 114 (956) 665-3663
Learning Center LearningCenter@utrgv.edu	BMSLC 2.118 (956) 882-8208	ELCTR 100 (956) 665-2585
University Library circulation@utrgv.edu www.utrgv.edu/library	BLIBR (956) 882-8221	ELIBR (956) 665-2005
Writing Center WC@utrgv.edu	BLIBR 3.206 (956) 882-7065	ESTAC 3.119 (956) 665-2538

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

Date	Topic	Assignments
May 14, 2023	Europe Trip Begins	Project Brief Review
May 15 – 30, 2023 Travel Time in Europe	Brainstorming for the Topic of Travel Journal and Idea Generation for the Project	Material Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape Photography • Vlog Shooting • Museum Visit & Field Trips • Materials (Photos and Articles) • Essay Drafting
May 18 – 30, 2023	Design Execution for Travel Journal	Travel Journal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Photography for the Trip • Digital Travel Journal • Travel Journal Videos • Materials (Images and Text)
May 31 – June 2, 2023 Lab Hours	Design Execution for the Journal Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Brochure • Journal Video • Essay & Testimony

MINIMESTER 2023

May 14	First day of class and the departure day from Dallas to London
May 30	Returning day from Europe
May 31 – June 2	Lab hours for design execution
June 2	Final Exam (Term Ends)

DEAN OF STUDENTS

The Dean of Students office assists students when they experience a challenge with an administrative process, an unexpected situation such as an illness, accident, or family situation, and aids in resolving complaints. Additionally, the office facilitates student academic-related requests for religious accommodations, supports students formerly in foster care, helps to advocate on behalf of students and inform them about their rights and responsibilities, and serves as a resource and support for faculty and campus departments.

[Vaqueros Report It](#) allows students, staff, and faculty to report a concern about a student's well-being, seek assistance in resolving a complaint, or report allegations of behaviors contrary to community standards or campus policies.

The Dean of Students can be reached by email (dos@utrgv.edu), phone (956-665-2260), or by visiting one of the following office locations: Cavalry (BCAVL) 204 or University Center (EUCTR 323).