

GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION (BS)

Offered at: San Luis Obispo Campus

Graphic communication is one of the largest and fastest-changing professions that serves a wide range of industries. It requires adaptable professionals with a broad skillset across creative design, digital media, manufacturing, business and marketing strategy, and emerging technologies. Graphic communication's BS program covers a diverse range of topics, including digital and conventional printing, publishing, packaging, digital imaging, computer graphics, digital design, digital photography, web and app development, user interface and user experience design, human-centered design, virtual and augmented reality, immersive interaction, brand strategy, marketing, media management, and related areas. Graduates are in high demand by leading national and international corporations in industries such as technology, packaging, consumer goods, entertainment, healthcare, education, manufacturing, and creative services, where graphic communication skills apply.

Beyond acquiring a foundation in graphic communication, students select a concentration to deepen their expertise in areas of design reproduction technology, user experience/user interface, graphic communication management, graphics for packaging, immersive experience design, and individualized study in graphic communication.

The Bachelor of Science program in Graphic Communication is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Collegiate Graphic Communications, Inc. (ACCGC), an independent body dedicated to the improvement and recognition of collegiate-level curricula in graphic communication.

Concentrations

Design Reproduction Technology

Offered at: San Luis Obispo Campus

Emphasis on design and technology for print and web publishing. Coursework includes typography, branding, color theory, and design for packaging and for the publication of books, magazines, and web sites. The Graphic Communication Department's Design Reproduction Technology concentration focuses on the technical and electronic aspects of transforming design for reproduction in print and digital media. The concentration focuses on printing, web development, publishing, packaging, digital imaging, computer graphics, and related areas of mass media preparation and production.

Graphic Communication Management

Offered at: San Luis Obispo Campus

A flexible program for students interested in management and administrative careers in the graphic communication industry. Concentration graduates enter careers focused on project management, marketing management, product development, account management, scheduling, estimating or other support roles. In addition to the major requirements in graphic communication, coursework includes multiple business management related disciplines.

Graphics for Packaging

Offered at: San Luis Obispo Campus

Designed for students who desire a career in the growing field of package graphics and printing. This program provides students with the opportunity to learn all components of graphic preparation for packaging, print reproduction and conversion, while also providing aspects of structural design and food safety. Consumer and industrial print packaging is addressed.

Immersive Experience Design

Offered at: San Luis Obispo Campus

The Immersive Experience Design concentration focuses on the intersection between physical and digital worlds, including the use of AR/VR/XR and IoT technologies. This concentration explores the emerging opportunities in the graphic communication industry, with an increasing demand for cross-media, cross-device, and cross-platform applications that require effective user experience design.

User Experience/User Interface

Offered at: San Luis Obispo Campus

Emphasis on the latest trends in interface development and the production and distribution of digital media. In addition to major requirements, coursework includes the study of user experience, visual design, and web and mobile interface design. The concentration leads to careers in user experience/user interface design, digital media production, product management, and opportunities with hardware and software manufacturers that service the graphic communication industry.

Individualized Course of Study

Offered at: San Luis Obispo Campus

An Individualized Course of Study consists of 21 units, to be selected by the student in consultation with and approved by the concentration coordinator and department head. A minimum of 12 units must be at the 3000-4000 (upper-division) level, and a minimum of 6 units must be a Graphic Communication prefix. The 12 units of upper-division coursework are not required to be the same 6 units as the GRC prefix courses. The student must provide written justification for the courses and the way they constitute a cohesive, integrated program of study. The list of courses is a contract between the student and the Department.

Program Learning Objectives

1. Integrate effective design and functionality into graphic communication products, optimizing user experience and adoption.
2. Produce professional graphic media, demonstrating competence using current tools and methods.
3. Articulate and defend graphic communication strategies using effective oral, written, visual and/or demonstration means.
4. Apply appropriate production and workflow methods for various media.
5. Evaluate business principles related to starting and/or developing a graphic communication business.
6. Analyze current and future trends, market drivers, and continuous learning opportunities in graphic communication.
7. Evaluate diversity in the graphic communication profession and identify attitudes and behaviors that affect workforce and product development.
8. Demonstrate the use of sustainability practices in various print and screen-based applications.

Degree Requirements and Curriculum

In addition to the program requirements listed on this page, students must also satisfy requirements outlined in more detail in the Minimum Requirements for Graduation (<https://catalog.calpoly.edu/academic-standards-policies/general-requirements-bachelors-degree/#generaleducationtext>) section of this catalog, including:

- 40 units of upper-division courses
- 2.0 GPA
- Graduation Writing Requirement (GWR)
- U.S. Cultural Pluralism (USCP)

Note: No Major, Support or Concentration courses may be selected as credit/no credit. In addition, no more than 12 units of cooperative or internship courses can count towards your degree requirements.

Code	Title	Units
MAJOR COURSES		
GRC 1000	Introduction to Graphic Communication	3
GRC 1020	Introduction to Digital Applications	3
GRC 1030	Graphic Communication Management, Manufacturing, and Strategy	3
GRC 1040	Materials for Graphic Communication Applications	3
GRC 1090	Web Development and Design Principles	3
GRC 1100	Visual Literacy and Communication (3A) ¹	3
GRC 2000	Applied Graphic Communication Practices	1
GRC 2020	Digital File Preparation and Workflow	3
GRC 2040	Print and Production Technology	3
GRC 2050	Digital Typography	3
GRC 2070	Consumer Packaging	3
GRC 3000	Experience Design	3
GRC 3020	Digital Photography and Motion Graphics	3
GRC 3030	Marketing and Sales Management for Graphic Communication	3
GRC 3035	Operations and Project Management for Graphic Communication	3
GRC 3060	Data-Driven Graphics	3
GRC 3100	Introduction to Applied Social Media in Graphic Communication	1
GRC 3200	Color Management (Upper-Division 2/5)	3
GRC 3280	Specialty Graphics and Printing	3
GRC 4060	Human Resource Management for Graphic Communication	3
Senior Project		
Select from the following:		3
GRC 4461	Senior Project - Independent Study	
GRC 4462	Senior Project	
GRC 4463	Senior Project - Applied Practices	

Concentration or Individualized Course of Study

(See list of Concentrations and Individualized Course of Study below)	21	
SUPPORT COURSES		
PHYS 1121	College Physics I (5A & 5C) ¹	4
STAT 1110	Applied Statistical Concepts and Methods (2) ¹	3
GENERAL EDUCATION (GE)		
(See GE Program requirements below)	30	
FREE ELECTIVES		
Free Electives ²	3	
Total Units	120	

¹ Required in Major or Support; also satisfies General Education (GE) requirement.

² If a General Education (GE) course is used to satisfy a Major or Support requirement, additional units of Free Electives may be needed to complete the total units required for the degree.

Concentrations

Design Reproduction Technology

Code	Title	Units
REQUIRED COURSES		
ART 1101	Fundamentals of Drawing	3
ART 1102	2D Design	3
GRC 3270	Packaging Graphics Technology and Design	3
GRC 4500	Visual Communication Systems	3
Select from the following: ¹		9
ART 1103	3D Design	
ART 2201	Visual Culture and Society: Analysis and Practice	
ART 2263	Black and White Photography	
ART 3351	Illustration I: Tools and Techniques	
ART 4433	The Art of Mixed Reality	
BUS/ENGR 2234	Introduction to Design Thinking	
GRC 4400	Special Problems for Advanced Undergraduates	
GRC 4451	Management Topics in Graphic Communication	
GRC 4452	Emerging Technologies in Graphic Communication	
GRC 4453	Design Reproduction Topics in Graphic Communication	
GRC 4485	Cooperative Education Experience	
GRC 4495	Cooperative Education Experience	
GRC 4550	Book Design Technology	
ISLA 2240	Introduction to Media Arts and Technologies	
Total Units		21

¹ May be substituted with an advisor approved course.

Graphic Communication Management

Code	Title	Units
REQUIRED COURSES		
BUS 2207	Legal Responsibilities of Business	3
BUS 2212	Financial Accounting for Nonbusiness Majors	3
COMS 2213	Organizational Communication	3
GRC 4600	Graphic Communication in Integrated Marketing Communications	3
Select from the following: ¹		9
BUS 3310	Introduction to Entrepreneurship	
BUS 3382	Leadership and Organizations	

BUS/COMS 4458	Solving Big World Challenges
ENGL 3310	Corporate Communication
GRC 3270	Packaging Graphics Technology and Design
GRC 4400	Special Problems for Advanced Undergraduates
GRC 4451	Management Topics in Graphic Communication
GRC 4452	Emerging Technologies in Graphic Communication
GRC 4453	Design Reproduction Topics in Graphic Communication
GRC 4485	Cooperative Education Experience
GRC 4495	Cooperative Education Experience
JOUR 3385	Media Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Total Units **21**

¹ May be substituted with an advisor approved course.

Graphics for Packaging

Code	Title	Units
REQUIRED COURSES		
GRC 3080	Product Development for Cross-Device Interaction	3
GRC 4700	Advanced Consumer Packaging	3
ITP 2234	Packaging Design Fundamentals	3
ITP 3330	Packaging Fundamentals	3
Select from the following: ¹		9
BUS/ENGR 2234	Introduction to Design Thinking	
ENGR 3334	Needfinding in New Product Design	
GRC 3270	Packaging Graphics Technology and Design	
GRC 4400	Special Problems for Advanced Undergraduates	
GRC 4451	Management Topics in Graphic Communication	
GRC 4452	Emerging Technologies in Graphic Communication	
GRC 4453	Design Reproduction Topics in Graphic Communication	
GRC 4485	Cooperative Education Experience	
GRC 4495	Cooperative Education Experience	
ITP 3334	Structural Packaging Design	
ITP 4408	Fiber-Based Packaging	
Total Units		21

¹ May be substituted with an advisor approved course.

Immersive Experience Design

Code	Title	Units
REQUIRED COURSES		
ART 4433	The Art of Mixed Reality	3
GRC 3080	Product Development for Cross-Device Interaction	3
GRC 4290	User Experience Research Methods	3
GRC 4800	Immersive Computer Graphics Studio	3
Select from the following: ¹		9
BUS/ENGR 2234	Introduction to Design Thinking	
COMS 3384	Media Effects	
GRC 3990	Front-end Web Development	
GRC 4400	Special Problems for Advanced Undergraduates	
GRC 4451	Management Topics in Graphic Communication	
GRC 4452	Emerging Technologies in Graphic Communication	
GRC 4453	Design Reproduction Topics in Graphic Communication	

GRC 4485	Cooperative Education Experience
GRC 4495	Cooperative Education Experience
GRC 4900	User Interface Innovations
IME 3320	Human Factors and Technology
LAES 4301	Liberal Arts and Engineering Studies Capstone I
PSY 2201	Introductory Psychology
STAT 3520	Statistics II

Total Units **21**

¹ May be substituted with an advisor approved course.

User Experience/User Interface

Code	Title	Units
REQUIRED COURSES		
CSC/CPE 1024	Introduction to Computing	2
GRC 3990	Front-end Web Development	3
GRC 4900	User Interface Innovations	3
PHIL 3323	Ethics, Science, and Technology	3
Select from the following: ¹		10
BUS/ENGR 2234	Introduction to Design Thinking	
BUS/COMS 4458	Solving Big World Challenges	
COMS 3317	Technology and Human Communication	
COMS 4404	Video Games and Society	
GRC 4290	User Experience Research Methods	
GRC 4400	Special Problems for Advanced Undergraduates	
GRC 4451	Management Topics in Graphic Communication	
GRC 4452	Emerging Technologies in Graphic Communication	
GRC 4453	Design Reproduction Topics in Graphic Communication	
GRC 4485	Cooperative Education Experience	
GRC 4495	Cooperative Education Experience	
ISLA 3303	Values and Technology	
ISLA/LAES 4411	Community and Meaning-Filled Design	
PSY 2252	Social Psychology	
Total Units		21

¹ May be substituted with an advisor approved course.

Individualized Course of Study

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General Education (GE) Requirements

- 43 units required, 13 of which are specified in Major and/or Support.
- If any of the remaining 30 Units is used to satisfy a Major or Support requirement, additional units of Free Electives may be needed to complete the total units required for the degree.
- See the complete GE course listing (<https://catalog.calpoly.edu/academic-standards-policies/general-requirements-bachelors-degree/#generaleducationtext>).

- A grade of C- or better is required in one course in each of the following GE Areas: 1A (English Composition), 1B (Critical Thinking), 1C (Oral Communication), and 2 (Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning).

Lower-Division General Education

Area 1	English Communication and Critical Thinking	
1A	Written Communication	3
1B	Critical Thinking	3
1C	Oral Communication	3
Area 2	Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning	
2	Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning (3 units in Support) ¹	0
Area 3	Arts and Humanities	
3A	Arts (3 units in Major) ¹	0
3B	Humanities: Literature, Philosophy, Languages other than English	3
Area 4	Social and Behavioral Sciences (Area 4 courses must come from at least two different course prefixes.)	
4A	American Institutions (Title 5, Section 40404 Requirement)	3
4B	Social and Behavioral Sciences	3
Area 5	Physical and Life Sciences	
5A	Physical Sciences (3 units in Support) ¹	0
5B	Life Sciences	3
5C	Laboratory (may be embedded in a 5A or 5B course) (1 units in Support) ¹	0
Area 6	Ethnic Studies	
6	Ethnic Studies	3
Upper-Division General Education		
Upper-Division 2/5	Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning or Physical and Life Sciences (3 units in Major) ¹	0
Upper-Division 3	Arts and Humanities	3
Upper-Division 4	Social and Behavioral Sciences (Area 4 courses must come from at least two different course prefixes.)	3
Total Units		30

¹ Required in Major or Support; also satisfies General Education (GE) requirement.

Coming soon