

# Visual COMMUNICATION



## POSITION PAPERS

Short Essays | Assignment Description

**Due:** May 13, May 20, May 29, June 17

**Deliverables:** Two hardcopy essays in class

**Value:** 25 points (5 points each), 25% of overall grade

**Description and Rationale**—When learning about a topic as broad as visual communication, it is good to review and survey many perspectives, then reflect and analyze those readings in relation to the world around you. As such, you will be reading many different perspectives on visual communication and you will write short essays in which you make logical and persuasive arguments by synthesizing the assigned reading.

**Assignment**—For this assignment, you will synthesize the assigned readings (usually over a one-week period) by pulling out important nuggets (arguments, quotes, examples, controversies, etc.) and making your own argument. You will write a short (300 – 500 word) essay that effectively makes an argument about an aspect of visual communication in the world **beyond** what is in the readings, but uses the readings for support. You are expected to cite sources in APA or MLA format. **You are NOT to simply write a summary** or reflection of readings; doing so will reduce your score to a 3 out of 5.

### POSITION PAPER STARTING POINTS

**Position Paper #1:** Use the four articles by Medina, Pink, Isaacson, and Jacobson and the book by Molly Bang. As you construct an argument, think about the following questions: Why does visual communication matter? Have you had a bad experience with poor visual communication? What aspects of visual communication do you find helpful, confusing, or emotionally-charged?

**Position Paper #2:** Use Scott McCloud's book *Understanding Comics* and his concepts about sequential art, magnification through simplification, closure, time, icons, and so forth. As you construct an argument, think about the following questions: How does ambiguity (and closure) enhance viewer experience? How is the passage of time communicated in visuals? What images in our society are iconic and culturally recognizable? Why?

**Position Paper #3:** Use the eight articles from May 20 and May 22. As you construct an argument, consider the following questions: What is the relationship between image and text? How does text influence the communication of images and vice versa? How are metaphors used in visual communication? How is scientific and technical communication affected by visuals and metaphors, despite being thought of as clear and accurate?

**Position Paper #4:** Use *Universal Principles of Design* and *Infographics*. As you construct an argument, consider the following questions: What makes for strong information design? Poor? How does following design principles affect perception and understanding? What makes infographics so compelling?

**Position Paper #5:** Use *Envisioning Information* and the two articles by Cooley and Gasperini. As you construct an argument, consider the following questions: Are design principles really universal? Why or why not? What makes information design ethical? Humanistic? What should be avoided?