NM3217: Principles of Visual Communication Design
FASStrack 2026

Schedule

There are 36 hours of class time split across 3-hour classes in a seminar format that combines a lecture and a tutorial/lab element. The classes include critique sessions, discussions, computer-based learning.

Either:
Schedule: AM Session (10am-1pm, Singapore Time)
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

Or
Schedule: PM Session (2pm-5pm, Singapore Time)
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

Students must ONLY read one session exclusively.

Course Description

This course examines the principles of visual communication design. Students will tap into the various domains of visual communication theories and concepts of visual communication, and communication design and production processes. The course is designed to aid students in examining how visuals can come to influence our understanding and perspectives of communication. Students will explore how one can communication through visual media; experiment with techniques of visual communication expression and presentations; plan and manage the communication design process from initial development to the final product; and ideate, curate and critique independent and group projects to promote collaborative classroom learning.

Learning Outcome

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- LO1: Manage basic workflow and processes on the Adobe Suite, namely InDesign, Photoshop, and Illustrator
- LO2: Identify basic design principles and how they come to affect visual communication
- LO3: Garner a better understanding of design elements, colour theories, typography in synthesizing a strategy to solve communication issues creatively
- LO4: Application of design language in the conceptualization and production of visual messages
- LO5: Effective articulation of thoughts and ideas through active participation in a collaborative visual design work environment

Teaching Modes
Face-to-face physical classes at (TBC)

Preclusion/ Prerequisite
For Non-graduating students ONLY

Lecturer

Mr. TAN Kai En

Instructor
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Course Assessment

Assessments		Assessment deadlines
Participation	15%	Throughout the course
Assignment 1	25%	10 July 2026, 11:59pm*
Assignment 2	25%	17 July 2026, 11:59pm*
Final Project	35%	22 July 2026, 11:59pm*
Total for CA:	**100%**	

- Assignment 1 (25%) [with *commentaryˆ*]: Abstraction: Students will be tasked to create an abstraction series.

- Assignment 1 (25%) [with *commentaryˆ*]: Information Design: Students will be tasked to create an infographic poster.

- Final Project (35%) [with *commentaryˆ*]: Students will be tasked to develop a brand style guide:

    - **Self Identity**
        - Creation of a 6-page Brand Guide that includes 2 collaterals
            - 1) Logo - 10%
              2) Business Card (front and/or back) - 10%
            - 6-page Brand Guide – 15%
              Should include deliverables mentioned above, and also Logo Guidelines; Color Guidelines; Typography System

- Please kindly note that though assessments are individual-based, there **will be** collaborative group exercises/activities in this class.

    ˆCommentary for assignments and final project is required in order for me to contextualize your work. This will be a succinct write up and details will be listed in the respective assignment specifications.

    The due date here refers to final submission. Assignments and Final Project are only due for grading **after critique presentation; the course is designed in a way in which students will present a close to completion work during critique presentation, solicit feedback, and refine their work (if any) prior to submission for grading.*

Assessment information _may_ change, and detailed information will be provided in the seminar when the term starts.

Course Topics (Tentative – Subject to change to suit pedagogical needs)

S/N	Topics per week	Breakdown of Class Activity (Total Hrs: 36)
Week 1 30 Jun – 3 Jul 2026	Session 1 – 30 Jul 2026 Introduction to FASStrack – NM3217 Principles of Visual Communication Design / Illustrator Tutorial Session 2 – 1 Jul 2026 Reflective Design Process / InDesign Tutorial 1 (Briefing for Assignment 1) Session 3 – 2 Jul 2026 Introduction to Computer Graphics / Photoshop Tutorial Session 4 – 3 Jul 2026 Visual Representation: Abstraction / InDesign Tutorial 2	4 x 3hr classes each week = 12h Each session, including asynchronous activities: · Lecture and discussion; and/or · Tutorials/ In-class activities/ Workshop
Week 2 7 – 10 Jul 2026	Session 5 – 7 Jul 2026 Visual Representation: Composition / **Assignment 1 due for critique presentation** Session 6 – 8 Jul 2026 Typography (Briefing for Assignment 2) Session 7 – 9 Jul 2026 Color / Informal Group Workshop - Sharing of Ideas for Assignment 2 Session 8 – 10 Jul 2026 Branding (Briefing for FP) **(Assignment 1 due for final submission)**	4 x 3hr classes each week = 12h Each session, including asynchronous activities: · Lecture and discussion; and/or · Tutorials/ In-class activities/ Workshop
Week 3 14 – 17 Jul 2026	Session 9 – 14 Jul 2026 Elements of Art/Design / **Assignment 2 due for critique presentation** Session 10 – 15 Jul 2026 Principles of Art/Design / Initial Consultation for FP Session 11 – 16 Jul 2026 Gestalt Principles / Workshop / Group Critique for FP Session 12 – 17 Jul 2026 **Final Project due for critique presentation (Assignment 2 due for final submission)**	4 x 3hr classes each week = 12h Each session including asynchronous, activities: · Lecture and discussion; and/or · Tutorials/ In-class activities/ Workshop/ Forum posting

Reading List (Tentative)

ART, D. (2011). *Artistic Criticism*. Retrieved from
    https://diversifiedarts.wordpress.com/2011/03/01/artistic-criticism- how-to-critique-art/

Chandler, D. (1994). *Introduction.* Semiotics for Beginners by Daniel Chandler. Retrieved from
    http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/S4B/

- (1994). *Signs.* Semiotics for Beginners by Daniel Chandler. Retrieved from
    http://visualmemory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/S4B/

Cook, A., Jarvis, J. and Lee, J. (2015). [online] Storage.googleapis.com. Available at:
    https://storage.googleapis.com/g-design/static/product-sans-specimen.pdf [Accessed 14 Dec.
    2025].

Cousins, C. (2018). Vector vs. Raster: What Do I Use?. Retrieved 10 Dec. 2025, from
    https://designshack.net/articles/layouts/vector-vs-raster-what-do-i-use/

Dorst, K. & Lawson, B. (2009) *Design expertise.* Oxford: Architectural Press.

Elimeliah, C. (2006). *art Vs. design.* [online] AIGA | the professional association for design. Available at:
    https://www.aiga.org/art-vs-design [Accessed 10 Dec. 2025].

Ghose, T. (2018). What Is the Fibonacci Sequence?. Retrieved 10 Dec. 2025, from
    https://www.livescience.com/37470-fibonacci-sequence.html

Horn, R. E. (2002). Visual language and converging technologies in the next 10-15 years (and beyond).
    Converging Technologies for Improving Human Performance, 52(7), 124.

Lester, P. M. (2006). Syntactic theory of visual communication. Retrieved December, 10, 2025.

- (2013). *Visual Communication* (6th ed., pp. 43-48). Cengage Learning.

Lindstrom, M., & Kotler, P. (2014) *Brand sense*. Free Press

McCloud, Scott, 1960-. (1994). *Understanding comics: the invisible art*. New York: HarperPerennial.

Moles, A., 1966. *Information theory and aesthetic perception.* Translated from French by J. E. Cohen.
    Urbana, London: University of Illinois Press.

Nudd, T. (2018). Netflix Created a Clean, Custom Font That Could Save the Company Millions. [online]
    Adweek.com. Available at: https://www.adweek.com/creativity/netflix-created-a-clean-
    customfont-that-could-save-the- company-millions/ [Accessed 10 Dec. 2025].

Print Power. (2019). Thanks to haptics, print is credible. [online] Available at:
    https://www.printpower.eu/experts/olaf-hartmann/ [Accessed 10 Dec. 2025].

Strizver, I. (2019). Points & Picas. Retrieved 10 December 2025, from
    https://cdncms.fonts.net/documents/5dbc3d8964e0b52e/Fontology_PointsAndPicas.pdf

Wells, D. (2019). The Lifespan of a Social Media Post - MtoM Consulting. [online] MtoM Consulting. Available at: https://mtomconsulting.com/lifespan-social-media-post/ [Accessed 11 Dec. 2025].

Wheeler, A. (2013). *Designing brand identity*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley.

Please kindly note that this course has been designed specifically to fit the demands and timeline of the FASStrack term. As such, learning activities and assignments are calibrated in accordance to the above. Specific details in relation to detailed course structure, reading list, additional readings, learning activities, assignments etc. will be provided in the seminar when the term starts. While I strive to provide the most up-to-date syllabus so that it best informs your decision in taking up the course, kindly note that detailed information regarding the course may change for pedagogical calibration if necessary.
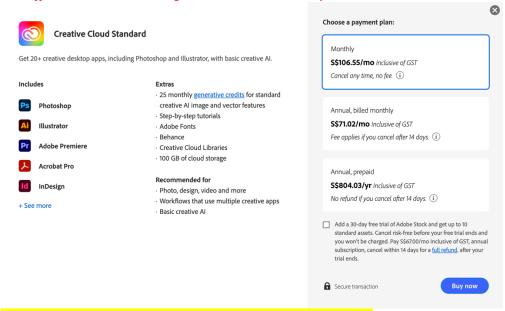
Students enrolled in the FASStrack 2026 term for NM3217 **must have access to a functioning laptop** throughout the course (for avoidance of doubt, not a tablet) with **Adobe Acrobat Pro, InDesign, Photoshop, and Illustrator** desktop applications installed prior to the first class.

At present, students interested in enrolling in FASStrack 2026 should plan to bring their own laptop and independently obtain and install the required Adobe applications, as institutional licensing arrangements are still under discussion. Confirmation on whether any centrally provided licenses will be available will be communicated closer to the registration period. **In the event that these arrangements are not finalised, students will be expected to rely on their own devices and software throughout the course. Your laptop must therefore be fully set up and ready for use from the outset.** Any version of the software is acceptable as long as it is functional, and all associated costs are to be borne by the student.

If you are considering subscribing to any official Adobe annual plans, whether billed annually or billed monthly, **please review the cancellation terms carefully**. These **contractual** plans offer a full refund only if cancelled within 14 days. After this period, **early termination fees typically apply,** even for annual plans that are billed monthly, as these remain as plans under a contract in order to avail the discount. If you cancel after the 14-day window, the service will remain active until the end of the current billing period and a termination fee may be charged. If continuing the subscription beyond the course aligns with your own usage needs, that is entirely your choice; this note is provided to ensure you are aware of the conditions.

If you only need access for the duration of the course, **the "Monthly" plan (with the note: Cancel any time, no fee.) is recommended since it can be cancelled at any time without penalties.** The Creative Cloud Standard package contains all the required applications in one subscription, which may be more cost-effective than subscribing to each tool individually.

Creative Cloud Standard

Get 20+ creative desktop apps, including Photoshop and Illustrator, with basic creative AI.

Includes

- Ps Photoshop
- Ai Illustrator
- Pr Adobe Premiere
- Acrobat Pro
- Id InDesign

+ See more

Extras
· 25 monthly generative credits for standard creative AI image and vector features
· Step-by-step tutorials
· Adobe Fonts
· Behance
· Creative Cloud Libraries
· 100 GB of cloud storage

Recommended for
· Photo, design, video and more
· Workflows that use multiple creative apps
· Basic creative AI

Choose a payment plan:

Monthly
S$106.55/mo Inclusive of GST
Cancel any time, no fee. ⓘ

Annual, billed monthly
S$71.02/mo Inclusive of GST
Fee applies if you cancel after 14 days. ⓘ

Annual, prepaid
S$804.03/yr Inclusive of GST
No refund if you cancel after 14 days. ⓘ

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