

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 communicate 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

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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 *commentary*^]: Abstraction: Students will be tasked to create an abstraction series.
- Assignment 1 (25%) [with *commentary*^]: Information Design: Students will be tasked to create an infographic poster.
- Final Project (35%) [with *commentary*^]: 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.

^Commentary 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	<p><u>Session 1 – 30 Jul 2026</u> Introduction to FASStrack – NM3217 Principles of Visual Communication Design / Illustrator Tutorial</p> <p><u>Session 2 – 1 Jul 2026</u> Reflective Design Process / InDesign Tutorial 1 (Briefing for Assignment 1)</p> <p><u>Session 3 – 2 Jul 2026</u> Introduction to Computer Graphics / Photoshop Tutorial</p> <p><u>Session 4 – 3 Jul 2026</u> Visual Representation: Abstraction / InDesign Tutorial 2</p>	<p>4 x 3hr classes each week = 12h</p> <p>Each session, including asynchronous activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Lecture and discussion; <p>and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Tutorials/ In-class activities/ Workshop
Week 2 7 – 10 Jul 2026	<p><u>Session 5 – 7 Jul 2026</u> Visual Representation: Composition / Assignment 1 due for critique presentation</p> <p><u>Session 6 – 8 Jul 2026</u> Typography (Briefing for Assignment 2)</p> <p><u>Session 7 – 9 Jul 2026</u> Color / Informal Group Workshop - Sharing of Ideas for Assignment 2</p> <p><u>Session 8 – 10 Jul 2026</u> Branding (Briefing for FP) (Assignment 1 due for final submission)</p>	<p>4 x 3hr classes each week = 12h</p> <p>Each session, including asynchronous activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Lecture and discussion; <p>and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Tutorials/ In-class activities/ Workshop
Week 3 14 – 17 Jul 2026	<p><u>Session 9 – 14 Jul 2026</u> Elements of Art/Design / Assignment 2 due for critique presentation</p> <p><u>Session 10 – 15 Jul 2026</u> Principles of Art/Design / Initial Consultation for FP</p> <p><u>Session 11 – 16 Jul 2026</u> Gestalt Principles / Workshop / Group Critique for FP</p> <p><u>Session 12 – 17 Jul 2026</u> Final Project due for critique presentation (Assignment 2 due for final submission)</p>	<p>4 x 3hr classes each week = 12h</p> <p>Each session including asynchronous, activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Lecture and discussion; <p>and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 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.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Laptop & Software Requirements for NM3217 (FASStrack 2026):

Students must have a functioning laptop (not a tablet) for the duration of the course. **It is your responsibility to verify on your end that your hardware meets the minimum specifications to install and run the Adobe Creative Cloud suite.**

Adobe Update:

As of 12 Feb 2026, students enrolled in FASStrack 2026 NM3217 will be granted Adobe access. You must have Adobe Acrobat Pro, InDesign, Photoshop, and Illustrator installed and working on your laptop prior to the first class. Instructions to download these applications will be provided shortly before the term begins, once your NUS ID has been activated and subsequently added onto the server. **However, please ensure your laptop is compatible with these applications before enrolling.**