

**RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
ACADEMIC COURSE OUTLINE**

**ARTS 255- Portfolio Development: Graphic Design**

**I. Basic Course Information**

A. Course Number and Title: Arts 255 Portfolio Development: Graphic Design

B. New or Modified Course: Modified

C. Date of Proposal: Semester: Fall Year: 2025

**D. Effective Term: Fall 2026**

E. Sponsoring Department: Arts & Design

F. Semester Credit Hours: **3**

G. Weekly Contact Hours: 4

Lecture: 2

Laboratory: 2

Out of class student work per week: 5

H.  Prerequisite (s):

ARTS105 Two-Dimensional Design

ARTS108 Three-Dimensional Design

ARTS 110 Basic Drawing 1

ARTS 111 Basic Drawing II

ARTS132 Color Theory

ARTS 246 Visual Design I

ARTS 247 Visual Design II

ARTS 274 Visual Design for the Web

Corequisite (s): None

I. Additional Fees: None

## II. Catalog Description

**Prerequisites:** ARTS 105 Two-Dimensional Design, ARTS 108 Three-Dimensional Design, ARTS 110 Basic Drawing I, ARTS 111 Basic Drawing II, ARTS132 Color Theory, ARTS 246 Visual Design I, ARTS 247 Visual Design II, ARTS 274 Visual Design for the Web

This course is designed to help prepare students majoring in Graphic Design to successfully transfer to a B.F.A. or B.A. program or to help students prepare a portfolio of professional work suitable for pursuing employment in the creative marketplace. The course will cover topics such as designing web and print portfolios; properly archiving and preparing work samples for documentation; writing a designer's statement; developing a professional resume; and understanding transfer and career options. Students will need to purchase some art supplies.

## III. Statement of Course Need

- A. This is a required course for the Associate of Fine Arts Degree in Graphic Design. It is a vital course in helping students to successfully transfer to a four-year Bachelors of Fine Arts program in Graphic Design / Visual Communications and/or to prepare them for entering the creative workforce. Assembling a portfolio of design work is one of the most important components of a transfer application for a student majoring in Graphic Design and for those wishing to enter the design job market. This course is required in many A.F.A. programs in New Jersey community colleges.
- B. This course has a lab component since it is primarily a Graphic Design studio course - both a portfolio book and online website will be created.
- C. Please describe the transferability of this course.
  - 1. This course generally transfers as a Graphic Design program requirement.
  - 2. This course generally transfers as a Graphic Design program elective.

## IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

- A. Free Elective
- B. This course meets a program requirement for the Associate of Fine Arts Degree in Graphic Design.
- C. To see course transferability: a) for New Jersey schools, go to the NJ Transfer website, [www.njtransfer.org](http://www.njtransfer.org); b) for all other colleges and universities, go to the individual websites.

## V. Outline of Course Content

- A. Discussions about transfer and career options in class, with visits from one or more of the following resources:
  - 1. RVCC staff from the Office of Career Success & Experiential Learning

2. Department or enrollment representatives from 4-year college or university programs such as: Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers Newark, Kean University, Maine College of Art & Design, The Arts Institute of Chicago, The Hartford Art School, and The School of Visual Arts
3. Professionals actively employed from various sectors of the contemporary design field

B. Portfolio Preparation: In class discussions and hands-on demonstrations and projects:

1. Archiving and documentation of fine art and graphic design work
2. Editing and saving digital documentation of fine art and graphic design work
3. Designing and producing a cohesive printed portfolio book
4. Designing a comprehensive website to serve as an online portfolio
5. Writing assignments based on reflections of personal work, that of other artists, and select historical and contemporary readings
6. Development of a designer's statement and resume

C. Professional/Exhibition Practicum

1. Discussion of professional development:
  - a. Understanding design job market
  - b. Managing yourself as a freelance or contract designer (contracts and fees)
  - c. Self-branding and promotion – designer identity management
2. Students will organize and display work in a group exhibition:
  - a. Decide on exhibition theme and title
  - b. Organize committees to:
    - i. Design and manage production of poster, postcard, signage and social media
    - ii. Collect data, format and produce individual work labels
    - iii. Prepare exhibition venue and install all work for exhibition
    - iv. Procure and setup refreshments for exhibition opening reception
    - v. Collection of materials and assembly of exhibition binder

D. Portfolio Reviews:

1. Individual review of each student's work by instructor
  - a. Student will bring in work from all their visual art and design courses
  - b. Student and instructor will discuss and choose 20-30 pieces for the student's transfer or job portfolio and to

be used in both the portfolio book and website required for the course

- c. Instructor will discuss career possibilities with each student during the individual portfolio review
2. Individual review of each student's work by at least one representative from a visiting four-year school
  - a. Student will present 15-20 work samples to at least one visiting representative for feedback on their visual art and design work

## **VI. A. Course Learning Outcomes:**

### **A. At the completion of the course, students will be able to:**

1. Research the requirements and procedures for transfer to a four-year design program. (GE-IL, 4)
2. Assess and critique work. (GE-1, 6\*)
3. Prepare a portfolio of work that includes a written resume and designer's statement (GE-1, \*)
4. Identify career options and personal career goals in the design world.  
\*embedded critical thinking

### **B. Assessment Instruments**

1. Printed, bound hardcover portfolio book
2. Personal website (online portfolio)
3. Writing assignments, resume and designer's statement
4. Class discussions and critiques
5. Work created for and participation in the development of the class exhibition
6. Participation in at least one portfolio review with a representative from a visiting four-year school

## **VII. Grade Determinants**

- A. Writing assignments, resume and designer's statement
- B. Participation in class discussions and critiques
- C. Participation in class exhibition
- D. Printed, bound hardcover portfolio book
- E. Personal website (online portfolio)
- F. Participation in portfolio reviews with representatives from visiting four-year schools

Primary formats, modes, and methods for teaching and learning that may be used in the course:

- A. Lecture/discussion
- B. Hands-on activities
- C. Assigned readings
- D. Attendance of visits by four-year schools and visiting designers
- E. Portfolio book and portfolio website presentation

### **VIII. Texts and Materials**

- A. Suggested textbook as determined by instructor – for example:  
*Oh Sh\*t... What Now?* by Craig Oldham, LaurenceKing Publishing, ISBN13-978-1780679631
- B. Printed handouts, discipline related web readings, and electronic lectures.
- C. Students will be responsible for the production/printing of a physical, hardcover, bound portfolio book.
- D. Computer and software necessary for designing the portfolio book and portfolio website
- E. Any art supplies required for the creation of the work to be included in the class exhibition.

(Please Note: The course outline is intended only as a guide to course content and resources. Do not purchase textbooks based on this outline. The RVCC Bookstore is the sole resource for the most up-to-date information about textbooks.)

### **IX. Resources**

- A. Physical workspace - a classroom or open workspace
- B. Use of A22/A24 MAC studio lab for computers and discipline related software
- C. Use of photography equipment (backdrops, lights, camera, tripod)
- D. Use of mini-gallery space in Arts Building for class exhibition

**X. Check One:**  Honors Course  N/A