Graphic Communication

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Academic Programs

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The Graphic Communication Department offers a curriculum leading to the Bachelor of Science degree, yet the discipline is both an art and a science. It appeals to students having an interest in creativity, science, technology, and management.

The Graphic Communication Department occupies approximately 33,000 square feet of laboratories in the Graphic Arts Building and in the adjacent web press building. Theory and practice are taught in modern classrooms incorporating the latest in teaching techniques. Fourteen well-equipped laboratories provide students with diverse experiences in the practical aspects of graphic media development and functional printing. The department also houses the Graphic Communication Institute at Cal Poly, providing students with the opportunity to participate in industry research and testing while interacting with industry professionals.

The Graphic Communication Department receives support from an advisory board comprised of industry leaders representing major graphic communication companies.

Undergraduate Programs

BS Graphic Communication

The graphic communication discipline is both an art and a science. It appeals to students having an interest in creativity, science, technology, and management.

The field of graphic communication represents a large profession, one of the largest in the world. The profession embraces change, requiring those pursuing graphic communication careers to learn new and diverse skills. Graphic communication includes digital and conventional printing, publishing, packaging, digital imaging, computer graphics, web development, digital photography, printable electronics, and related areas. The discipline includes media and mass communication involving the creation, production, management, and distribution of advertising, marketing, websites, books, magazines, newspapers, catalogs, packages, novel printed electronics, and other media in printed and digital form. Graduates are in high demand by leading national and international corporations in the graphic communication field.

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.

Beyond acquiring a foundation in graphic communication, students select a specialization among the department's concentrations of design reproduction technology, web and digital media, graphic communication management, packaging graphics, and individualized study in graphic communication.

Concentrations

BS Majors select one of the following concentrations based upon their interests and career goals.

Design Reproduction Technology

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 websites.

1 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. The Art and Design Department's Graphic Design concentration focuses on creative problem-solving and development of design and layout skills. The concentration leads to positions such as graphic designer, web designer, art director and creative director for advertising agencies, design studios and corporate design departments.

Graphic Communication Management

A flexible program for students interested in management careers in the graphic communication industry. In addition to the major requirements in graphic communication, coursework includes multiple business management related disciplines. Graduates are in high demand throughout the country from publishing, design, printing, packaging, and web-based commerce firms, including their customers and suppliers.

Graphics for Packaging

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.

Web and Digital Media

Emphasis on the latest trends in web development and the production and distribution of digital media. In addition to major requirements, course-work includes the study of web technology and design, digital audio, animation, photography, interactive entertainment, and video. The concentration leads to careers in web development, digital media production and management, and opportunities with hardware and software manufacturers that service the graphic communication industry.

Individualized Course of Study

An opportunity to pursue a course of study that meets a student's individual needs and interests.
Graphic Communication Minor

A minor in Graphic Communication benefits students interested in pursuing careers in graphic communication or who anticipate using graphic communication in another career. Students in the minor have a competitive edge when applying for many jobs by understanding concepts, and gaining knowledge and skills in web and print media. Additionally, students develop an understanding of the interface between design and technology, web site and document preparation, typography, and specifying the processes and materials for a broad range of printing, web, digital media, and publishing applications. Information and application forms for this minor are available in the Graphic Communication Department office.

Graduate Program

MBA, Graphic Communication Document Systems Management Specialization

In cooperation with the Orfalea College of Business, a student can earn an MBA with a graphic communication emphasis in document systems management. This program is designed to prepare professionals having diverse backgrounds with a strong and advanced business orientation along with a grounding in graphic communication.

MS Printed Electronics and Functional Imaging

General Characteristics

Master of Science Degree in Printed Electronics and Functional Imaging – Solution-based printing and coating applications for printed electronics, active and intelligent packaging, and security printing. Advanced research related to design, market and technology development, integration, and applications for mass-scale printing and coating technologies used in functional and novel electronics, anti-counterfeiting, and packaging.

Printed Electronics and Functional Imaging encompasses academic coursework related to three emerging graphic communication applications: Printed Electronics, which Das and Harrop (2011) project to grow from a $2.2 billion today into a $44.25 billion industry over the next decade; Active and Intelligent Packaging, projected by Research and Markets (2011) to grow to $23 billion per year over the next decade; and Security Printing. The European research institute PIRA predicts the global market for brand protection to reach a value of more than $11.4 billion by 2014 (Mc Loone, 2010).

These fields involve the application of specialty inks to produce functional and optical devices including a number of high-tech new printing applications. Active packaging focuses on printed packaging that improves shelf life or enhances supply chain tracking. Anti-counterfeit is critical for brand protection. Using both conductive and insulating inks, printed electronics and functional imaging offers low-cost production of displays, lighting and energy harvesting devices on flexible substrates. This degree is offered as a self-support program under CSU Executive Order No. 1047.

Program Goals

The goals of the Master of Science Degree in Printed Electronics and Functional Imaging are to:

• Educate students in commercialization strategies and technologies used in functional printing and manufacturing businesses.

• Educate students in funding models, business strategies, printing and coating technologies, imaging systems, material development, electronic fundamentals, novel applications, design integration, and product development.

• Prepare students for employment in private and public companies, research labs, and government agencies involved in three disciplines: Printed Electronics, Active and Intelligent Packaging, and Security Printing.

Admission Requirements

• Completed application

• GRE

• Two letters of recommendation.

• For admission as a classified graduate student, an applicant must hold a bachelor’s degree or diploma in a related field to graphic communication, science, or engineering from a regionally accredited institution, college or university.

• An undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 is required in the last 60 semester or 90 quarter units of their undergraduate degree. On occasion, where other credentials are exceptionally strong, a GPA of 2.5-2.99 or alternate Bachelor degree with relevant work experience may be considered for admission.

• Completion of an undergraduate or graduate statistics course with a “C” or better.

Prerequisites

Completed coursework or equivalent experience to GRC courses.

GRC 201 Digital Publishing Systems

GRC 316 Flexographic Printing Technology

GRC 329 Web Offset and Gravure Printing Technologies

GRC 357 Specialty Printing Technologies

All graduate applicants, regardless of citizenship, whose native language is not English and whose preparatory education was principally in a language other than English must demonstrate competence in English. Those who do not possess a bachelor’s degree from a postsecondary institution where English is the principal language of instruction must take either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing system (IELTS) exam.

• The TOEFL must have been taken within the last two years with a minimum score of 550 (paper version), 213 (computerized version) or 80 (internet based). The minimum score for the IELTS is 6.0, although individual programs may require higher scores. Applicants are advised to review program-specific information.

• The TOEFL or IELTS requirement is waived for applicants whose native language is English. Applicants from countries listed on the following website will be considered native English speakers. http://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/international/toefl_ielts.html

Culminating Experience Requirements

A comprehensive culminating experience is required. The experience will be comprised of successful completion of GRC 560 (https://currentcatalog-admin.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofliberalarts/graphiccommunication), GRC 596 (https://currentcatalog-admin.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofliberalarts/graphiccommunication), and both written and oral comprehensive exams. The culminating experience will synthesize
many of the program learning outcomes through a written and presented research project.