

# Intro to Graphic Design

## Course Syllabus 2026-27

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Torah High School

### Instructor

Ms. Phan

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### Class Time

Tuesday/ Thursday 8:00-8:45 AM

**Computer Lab**

## Course Description

This hands-on elective introduces students to the fundamentals of graphic design and visual communication through project-based learning. Throughout the year, students will explore core design elements and principles, typography, layout, color theory, branding, commonly used digital tools, and how to put together a portfolio.

Students will learn how designers communicate messages visually, evoke emotion, and design for specific audiences. **By the end of the year, students will apply their skills to create cohesive visual work and develop case studies for a graphic design portfolio!**

## Major Units of Study

- Unit 1 – Introduction to Graphic Design
  - ◆ Define graphic design and visual communication
  - ◆ Identify effective vs. ineffective design
  - ◆ Learn basic design elements (shape, form, color, space)
- Unit 2 – Composition & Layout
  - ◆ Use spacing, alignment, and visual hierarchy
  - ◆ Organize information using grids and layout techniques

- Unit 3 – Typography
  - ◆ Learn typography basics (typefaces, hierarchy, readability)
  - ◆ Explore different typeface classifications
  - ◆ Use typography to communicate ideas and express tone
- Unit 4 – Digital Design Tools
  - ◆ Learn core workflows in tools such as Photopea and Canva
  - ◆ Work with images, text, and layers
  - ◆ Export designs for print and digital use
- Unit 5 – Color Theory
  - ◆ Apply color theory and color harmony principles
  - ◆ Use color to communicate mood and meaning
- Unit 6 – Branding
  - ◆ Combine typography, color, and layout to create visual brand identity
  - ◆ Design for a target audience and real-world purpose
- Unit 7 – Portfolio
  - ◆ Learn how to put together a graphic design portfolio!
  - ◆ Defend design choices beyond just “looking good”

## Grading Policies & Expectations

### Late Work

Work-in-progress submissions are always better than nothing and can still receive valuable feedback. Assignments may be submitted up to one week late with a **5% reduction per day**. After one week, work may earn up to **50% credit** until the end of the semester.

Each semester, students receive 1 late-work freebie, allowing a submission up to one week late with no deduction. If unused, it converts to **1% extra credit**.

### Grade Weights

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Projects & Activities | 60% |
| Progress Checks       | 20% |
| Critiques             | 10% |
| Discussions           | 10% |



## Projects & Activities

- **Activities:** Practice new skills through experimentation. Typically graded on completion.
- **Projects:** Apply techniques through creative problem-solving, iteration, and refinement.

## Progress Checks

In-class check-ins on brainstorming and progress for feedback. May include sketches, verbal explanation, or rapid designing using a chosen design tool.

## Critiques

Structured feedback on visual work and creative decisions. May be verbal or written/ annotated, individually or as a class. Students should give specific, constructive feedback using course concepts and design vocabulary.

## Discussions

Written prompts that explore design examples, creative processes, and course concepts. Students must also respond to at least one classmate.

## Required Materials

- Laptop

### Optional but helpful:

- Computer mouse: more precise than a trackpad
- Personal USB drive: to save digital work

## Tips for Success

Be willing to experiment and iterate. Strong design rarely happens on the first try – revision is part of the creative process. Ask for feedback, test new ideas, and don't be afraid to adjust your work. The more you practice and refine your designs, the stronger your skills will become!

