

SOUTHEAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DIVISION OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
Graphic Design | Media Arts Program
Revision Date: 07-01-25

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Course Number: GDMA1354
Course Title: Color Theory
Prerequisite(s): Program Permission
Catalog Description: This course introduces color theory as it relates to modern design with a focus on methods of creating contrast and creating color schemes.
Credit Hours: 3.0
Class Hours: 45
Lab Hours: 0
Total Contact Hours: 45

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES: *Course will:*

- A. Introduce the additive color model and subtractive color models used to define color theory in visual design.
- B. Explore color theory relating to how colors are tied to emotions throughout history and various cultures.
- C. Introduce methods of creating color schemes including using a subtractive color model, focusing on contrast, and utilizing photography for inspiration.
- D. Introduce methods of creating color contrast within visual design.
- E. Explore warm and cool colors, as well as high and low-key colors.
- F. Introduce and demonstrate standardized color reproduction systems.
- G. Define hue, saturation, and brightness and demonstrate editing color schemes using these three factors.
- H. Explore accessibility as it relates to color in digital design.

III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- A. Student Learning Outcomes: *Student will be able to:*
 - 1. Define both subtractive color models and the additive color model, as well as their uses within visual design.
 - 2. Justify color selections based on what colors represent and communicate.
 - 3. Create color schemes that represent specific themes and tones.
 - 4. Create color schemes that utilize various methods of contrast.
 - 5. Define the purpose of and demonstrate knowledge of standardized color reproduction systems.
 - 6. Demonstrate knowledge of how color schemes and color contrast can factor into accessibility in visual design.
 - 7. Iterate and build upon color schemes by adjusting hue, saturation, and brightness values.
- B. General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs)
 - 1. GELO #3: Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
Outcome 5: Acquire and integrate knowledge and construct relationships across disciplines.

IV. CONTENT/TOPICAL OUTLINE

- A. Introduction to color theory in visual design

- B. Color and emotion
- C. Subtractive and additive color models
- D. Warm/cool colors, high/low key colors
- E. Creating color contrast
- F. Methods of creating color schemes
- G. Color and accessibility

V. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Required Text(s): none
- B. Other Resources: Handouts: worksheet, tutorial, assignment, and projects

VI. METHODS OF PRESENTATION/INSTRUCTION

- A. Methods of presentation typically include a combination of the following:
 - 1. Lecture
 - 2. Demonstrations
 - 3. Peer critiques
 - 4. In-class exercises and activities
 - 5. One-on-one teaching

VII. METHODS OF EVALUATION

- A. Methods of evaluation, although determined by the individual instructor, traditionally includes a combination of the following:
 - 1. Assignments
 - 2. Exercises
 - 3. Tests
 - 4. Critique participation
 - 5. Class conduct

VIII. SPECIFIC COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. Student must complete this course with a minimum course grade of “C” (70%).
- B. By enrolling in this course the student agrees to follow all GDMA program policies.