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BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN JOURNALISM 273
AND GRADUATION, AND BEYOND

A Thesis
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the School of Journalism and New Media
The University of Mississippi

by

MACKENZIE SLATE ROSS

May 2022

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ABSTRACT

While Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking is a requirement for all undergraduate students majoring in Integrated Marketing Communications and some students majoring in Journalism, there are students who end up graduating from the University of Mississippi with a desire for more knowledge of graphic design. Feedback from current students in the School of Journalism and New Media at the University of Mississippi as well as alumni of the program was gathered in two surveys to understand better how Journalism 273 benefits them and pinpoints opportunities for improvement. One hundred nineteen students who took Journalism 273 and were enrolled in the School of Journalism and New Media for the spring 2022 semester were surveyed. An additional 119 alumni of the School of Journalism and New Media who took Journalism 273 and who graduated within the last five years were surveyed. The research asked the following questions: What projects in the class are the most favored? Based on experiences within Journalism 273, will current students take more classes related to graphic design? Did alumni take other classes besides this specific course? and after graduation, what applications are alumni using? Findings indicate that learning how to use Adobe software and mastering the applications are the most important to current and former students. Alumni indicated a need for the class to offer more about marketing and branding design as well as designing for social media.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this to my parents, Tina and Jimmy Ross, who have encouraged me non-stop throughout my college career as well as my best friend of 20 years, Jacinda Leopard, who has been my source of guidance throughout graduate school as she also works on her graduate degree at Mississippi State University.

I am also dedicating this to my friends Katie Trott, Margaret Pringle, Abbie Geveshausen, Marlee Crawford, and Lee Catherine Hodges who have listened to my struggles and provided me with the best feedback and confidence throughout the last six years at Ole Miss.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to the following people who contributed to my research. First and foremost a huge thank you to my professors Darren Sanefski, Kevin Seddon, Cynthia Joyce, and Interim Dean Deb Wenger. Thank you for your invaluable guidance, advice, and constructive criticism that aided me in the pursuit of knowledge as well as the opportunity to work with students one-on-one as a teaching assistant throughout my time in graduate school. Also, a big thank you to those teaching Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking.

My sincerest gratitude continues to the alumni and current students of the School of Journalism and New Media at the University of Mississippi who took the time to share their experiences with me in their survey responses.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The School of Journalism and New Media at the University of Mississippi is home to undergraduate Journalism and Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) programs. Journalism has been a part of the Ole Miss campus since 1947, and IMC was introduced in 2011 (*The University of Mississippi*). Since then, graduate programs have been added, allowing students to work towards a master's degree in both areas of study. A journalism major can pick an emphasis of Multimedia News Reporting, Political and Social Justice Reporting, TV and Video Storytelling, or Visual Journalism (*Undergraduate Programs: UM School of Journalism & New Media*). The school offers options for specializations for both majors, including Fashion Promotion, Health Communication, Magazine Publishing & Management, Media Sales & Management, Public Relations, Social Media, Sports Communication & Promotion, and Visual Design (*Undergraduate Programs: UM School of Journalism & New Media*).

Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking is an introduction to graphic design (*The University of Mississippi*). It explores different media and how visual elements are used to communicate while focusing on the vocabulary of effective visual presentation and the analysis of visual messages across media platforms (*The University of Mississippi*). For those studying Integrated Marketing Communications, completing this class is required to receive a degree. For those studying Journalism, this class is only required for those focusing on Visual Journalism (*Undergraduate Programs: UM School of Journalism & New Media*).

Research was conducted to examine the retention of the course and how effective this introductory class is for current students and alumni who have since entered the workforce. The School of Journalism and New Media provides students the tools to build legacies and become expert storytellers (*School of Journalism and New Media: Home Page*). The research looks to answer the following questions. Are students learning what they need for future classes and the workforce? Is there anything not being taught now that should be added to the curriculum? Is anything outdated or not helpful to students? How can the School of Journalism and New Media encourage students to retain and use the information and skills they have learned in Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking and apply them to further classes and after graduation?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research into the graphic design curriculum for the University of Mississippi's School of Journalism and New Media is localized. When searching through previous research, nothing has been done at this local level, especially within a journalism and integrated marketing communications program. However, other research has been done for other universities worldwide, digging deeper into graphic design education and practices for teaching these types of classes. Particularly in China, much research has been conducted into the best ways of restructuring graphic design classes to suit students better and make them more compatible for careers in graphic design (Du, 2015). Du was looking at Chinese post-secondary Design education that has been set for students in China. There is not a specific curriculum set within the U.S. In their research, they interviewed graphic design students and teachers in China. It compares the Chinese comprehensive universities' Graphic Design education with the U.S. 's comprehensive universities' Graphic design education and offers recommendations that will make Chinese post-secondary Graphic Design education meet the needs of the 21st century (Du, 2015).

This research for the University of Mississippi will conduct a similar methodology by surveying students. In China, they only surveyed current students at the time who were majoring in graphic design. The School of Journalism and New Media at the University of Mississippi only offers journalism and integrated marketing communications major options, but a visual communication specialization is available. In Du's research, he asked students many questions

about their choice of major and why they picked graphic design. One question he did ask was: "What has been most important in skill/knowledge you have learned in your four years? Do you think you have already mastered this skill? If so, how did you do this? If not, how would you plan to learn it?" (Du, 2015). When creating the surveys regarding Journalism 273, this researcher plans to not focus on the major of the student but on the particular projects and layout of the class.

Like the research conducted in China, in Jordan, research was completed to look at students who majored in graphic design and why some students are going into graphic design, and why a lot of them are not entering that field. That study aimed to investigate the relationship between the Yarmouk University graphic design curriculum, marketplace requirements, and graduates' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the graphic design curriculum (Alhalasa, 2017). The researcher surveyed 385 graphic design graduates from the university and found that 12 out of 13 surveyed said the curriculum did not prepare them for the workforce. Compared to China, they each picked a specific category of people to survey but for digging deeper into Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking at Ole Miss, exploring both current students and alumni is essential, especially since there are various professors teaching sections of the course and how the curriculum has changed over the last five years. It is interesting to point out the curriculum requirements in countries such as China and Jordan. The research conducted discusses a lot of that, whereas in the U.S. and at the University of Mississippi, there are no such restrictions.

In China, the researcher recommends using more graphic design software and less lecture time. At the University of Mississippi, design software is used daily throughout the class. Du also found that "students need to learn and practice diverse Design techniques to gain practical Design skills and aesthetic perspectives in order to form their mature skills and aesthetics" (Du,

2015). He also found that some students desire to find ways to incorporate their other art skills like drawing or painting (Du, 2015). Because this research was conducted in an art department at a university, there are differences between the type of students surveyed versus the kinds of students in the School of Journalism and New Media. Still, Du's research brings up the point that journalism and integrated marketing communications students might have artistic skills besides graphic design. Du also found that students have a strong desire to understand the design market trends and learn how to deal with real-life cases (Du, 2015). Maybe there are ways to incorporate similar projects into Journalism 273.

In Jordan, outside of looking at the curriculum, the researcher wanted to learn if there was a relationship between graduates' GPAs and employment status. GPAs will not be a question examined when surveying University of Mississippi students as Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking is just one class on a list of requirements. Many students taking the course do not go on to specifically work in graphic design but instead find graphic design to be an occasional project when working in other fields related to journalism, marketing, communications, and more.

Alhalasa also mentions the use of different skills like drawing. He found that drawing skills are the second most important skill the marketplace requires from a designer (Alhalasa, 2017). In Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking, students are encouraged to sketch out ideas they might have for projects, with some professors requiring it in the beginning stages of work. Drawing is essential when brainstorming ideas, but focusing on drawing might not be necessary for students in Journalism 273. Throughout his research, Alhalsa cites market requirements in Jordan based on research done by H. A. Al Qur'an. According to Al Qur'an, design theories and methodology skills are the third most essential skills that the marketplace requires. Skills that designers should have are: (1) the ability to understand and employ the principles of graphic design, (2) the ability to understand and employ color theory in graphic design, (3) the ability to

understand and employ psychology in graphic design, and (4) the ability to understand and employ the graphic design theories and work within the framework of design methodologies (Al Qur'an, 2016). The use of color theory and psychology in graphic design is vital to examine when talking to journalism and integrated marketing communications.

Within the United States, Amanda Bridges at Gardner-Webb University sought to identify 21st-century skills, content knowledge, and tools needed in an effective university-level graphic design program. This research was completed almost ten years ago, but it can be helpful to research completed at The University of Mississippi. She surveyed university-level graphic design educators and industry professionals from North and South Carolina. There were multiple rounds of surveys shared with those with graphic design knowledge, but in the fourth round, the researcher requested participants to rank the top 20 skills, content knowledge, and tools (Bridges, 2013). She found that the top five most needed competencies included applying the basic principles of graphic design aesthetics, including composition; performing graphic design creatively; applying the concepts of typography; exhibiting interpersonal skills (problem-solving, curiosity, motivation, innovation, conceptual thinking, communication); and write, concisely, and correctly. The top five most needed tools as identified by experts included the Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, sketchbooks, Adobe Dreamweaver, and printers" (Bridges, 2013). As the previous research mentioned, sketching and drawing are frequent topics within the graphic design curriculum. Bridges found Adobe Creative Suite to be necessary. Adobe software is used throughout Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking. It is also used in advanced design courses within the School of Journalism and New Media. Dreamweaver is not used in Journalism 273, but students can utilize Microsoft Office if they choose to. Most professors teaching Journalism 273 ask students to submit projects digitally; however, printers may be necessary. Adobe software has advanced since Bridges completed her research in 2013, but the research

reflects how Adobe software can stand the test of time. Providing students the opportunity to master these applications can set them up for success in the work fields that they choose.

CURRENT GRAPHIC DESIGN CURRICULUM

In the University of Mississippi academic catalog for Spring 2021-2022, Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking is an introduction to communication design, exploring different media and how visual elements are used to communicate (*The University of Mississippi*). During the Spring 2022 semester, four different professors taught the class in 10 different sections. There were 176 students enrolled in this course based on the number of seats taken in each section of the course (*UM Course Schedule: Spring Semester 2021-2022*).

Each section is unique to the professor, but the basic curriculum is the same. Each section works on the same main projects. Outside of the main projects, minor projects are created and assigned by each professor. (Bowen-Moore, Goodwiller, Irwin, Kellum, *Creative Visual Thinking*). The major projects consist of creating a resume & adjoining wordmark, creating a poster, and a magazine project incorporating UI/UX. The software and skills learned in preparation for each project vary on the professor teaching the class. Software and applications include Adobe InDesign, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe XD, InVision, and Canva. Demonstrations of how to use the applications or software are taught in class by the professor assigned to the class section (Bowen-Moore, Goodwiller, Irwin, Kellum, *Creative Visual Thinking*). Quizzes are given throughout the semester to touch base on the skills that students should be learning (Bowen-Moore, Goodwiller, Irwin, Kellum, *Creative Visual Thinking*). The goals for the classes vary but include: to give students the vocabulary used to describe the visual presentation of effective communication and knowing the language will help them to be much more effective in their work (Kellum, *Creative Visual Thinking*); to provide a hands-on

experience with industry-standard software used by design and communication professionals in today's various media outlets (Irwin, *Creative Visual Thinking*); and to make students aware of the way they visually perceive the messages around them and the tools that shape those messages (Bowen-Moore, *Creative Visual Thinking*).

Following Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking, students may enroll in the following courses: IMC 305: Visual Communication, IMC 349: 3-D Modeling, IMC 473: Motion Graphics, IMC 524: Designing Interactivity (*The University of Mississippi*). Receiving a passing grade in Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking is a prerequisite for taking one of the other design courses offered in various semesters, including spring and fall semesters and intercessions. Taking the more advanced design courses may also fulfill degree requirements, including the Visual Design specialization (*The University of Mississippi*).

CHAPTER 3

ASSESSING CURRICULUM FEEDBACK FROM CURRENT STUDENTS

A survey was conducted between February 1, 2022 to March 1, 2022 to gather information to better understand how current students feel about Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking. To gather information, the researcher shared the survey with journalism and integrated marketing communications classes that had a course number higher than the number for Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking and sections of Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking. Sharing the survey included having professors teaching the classes and sections share the survey through email as well as the researcher visiting classes and sections in person, allowing students in these classes and sections to fill out the survey during the first five minutes of class time.

The current student survey was created without identifying information for those taking the survey. This was done so in hopes of receiving more honest feedback. Students that took this survey should be those enrolled as undergraduate students in the University of Mississippi School of Journalism and New Media and should have already completed Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking in an earlier semester or were enrolled in one of the sections offered during the Spring 2022 semester. This class is not offered for graduate students in the program as they have a separate, higher-level course that is similar to Journalism 273.

Current students were asked about their major, journalism or integrated marketing communications, and classification. They were also asked if they believe that the class has or will prepare them for future classes and graduation with simple yes, no, or maybe answer

choices. From there, questions became more specific, asking which type of skills they think they will use in the future, including resume design, print magazine design, poster design, UI/UX design, wordmark design, use of Adobe software, and use of online applications including InVision, with an option at the end if they believe they will use none of the knowledge they received in the class after graduation. Current students were also asked if they plan to pursue a career in graphic design after graduation.

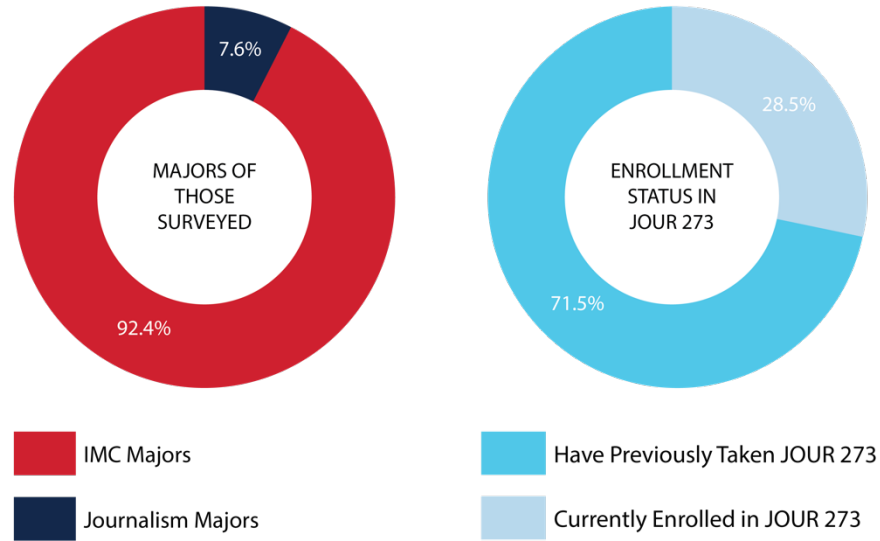
Other data gathered from the survey included whether or not students planned to take other design classes after Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking. If they did plan to participate in more, which classes did they have in mind? This included graphic design classes offered in the School of Journalism and New Media only: Visual Communication, 3-D Modeling, Motion Graphics, and Designing Interactivity. There is an option for this question on the survey to include if they plan to take classes outside of the program through the art department. If they do not plan to take any other design classes, display logic is set to ask them why they made this decision. From there, the survey asks questions about what they hoped to learn or receive from their time in the class, including specific design projects, then a section where the student can manually input any thoughts or comments regarding the class.

Some questions created for this survey were based off of feedback from instructors. This included asking opinions on current projects as well as what types of projects students wished to learn more about. One of the limitations of this survey is the testing of validity of the questions. Future advancements of research similar to this could sample smaller groups as well as further discussions with Journalism 273 instructors.

CURRENT STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

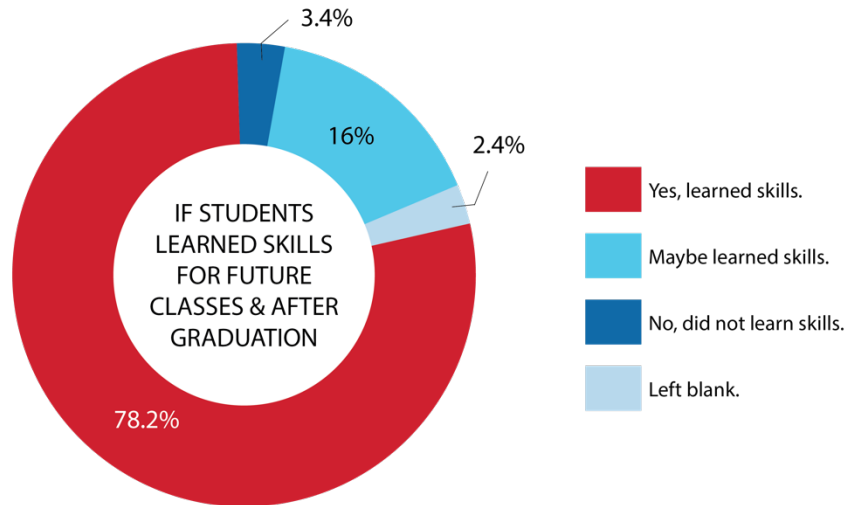
In total, 411 students enrolled in the School of Journalism & New Media were asked to complete the current student survey through email as well as the researcher visiting journalism and integrated marketing communications classes with a course number higher than Journalism 273. Email information was gathered from current Journalism 273 professors. This was done in hopes of reaching more students who would have already completed the design course or those who might be enrolled at the time of the survey. After sharing the survey, 146 students completed it for a response rate of 35.5%. After consolidating information, 27 responses were omitted the data because they selected “no” when asked if they had taken the course or were currently enrolled. When they selected that answer choice, the survey ended and they did not have access to any of the following questions. From that, 119 current undergraduate students who have taken or are currently taking Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking completed the survey. Only nine were students majoring in journalism, and 110 of those majoring in integrated marketing communications. This is reflected in the information that those students majoring in integrated marketing communications are required to take Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking for their degree requirements, whereas students majoring in journalism are only required to take the class if they have a visual journalism emphasis. Of the 119 students surveyed, 34 of those students are currently enrolled in one of the sections of Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking. Eighty-five of those students surveyed have taken the class before the Spring 2022 semester.

Figure 1.1 Currently enrolled students surveyed based on major and placement in Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking



Those taking the survey were asked, “Did you learn skills that you think you will use in future classes or after graduation?” Ninety-three of the surveyed students selected ‘yes,’ four of those surveyed selected ‘no,’ and 19 selected ‘maybe.’ Of the four selected ‘no,’ two of them are currently enrolled in the class during the Spring 2022 semester. The other two have taken the class in an earlier semester. All four are integrated marketing communications majors, and all are under senior classification except for one who is a sophomore. That student is one of those currently enrolled in the class. Three students left the selection for this question blank. All three are integrated marketing communications majors, and all are currently enrolled in the class.

Figure 1.2 Currently enrolled students surveyed based on if they think the skills that they learned will be used in future classes or after graduation



Those taking the survey were then asked, "What skills do you think you will use in the future? Select all that apply." Students were given the following options: 'Resume design,' 'Print magazine design,' 'UI/UX magazine design,' 'Poster design,' 'Wordmark design,' 'Use of Adobe software,' 'Use of InVision/Adobe xD,' 'None of these skills', then an option to input anything else. Of the 119 surveys, only two selected 'None of these skills' when asked which ones they think they will use in the future. One is a journalism major, and the other is an integrated marketing communications major. Both students are identified as seniors.

One senior integrated marketing communications major student selected only 'Resume design' as their answer choice. Three students selected "Other," and nine students selected no provided options for this question, leaving it blank. The rest of the 119 surveyed selected multiple options. Overall, 95 students selected 'Resume design,' 47 students selected 'Print magazine design,' 43 students selected 'UI/UX magazine design,' 70 students selected 'Poster

design,' 73 students selected 'Wordmark design,' 98 students selected 'Use of Adobe software,' and 66 students selected 'Use of InVision/Adobe xD.' Two students selected 'None' when asked about the skills they think they will use in the future.

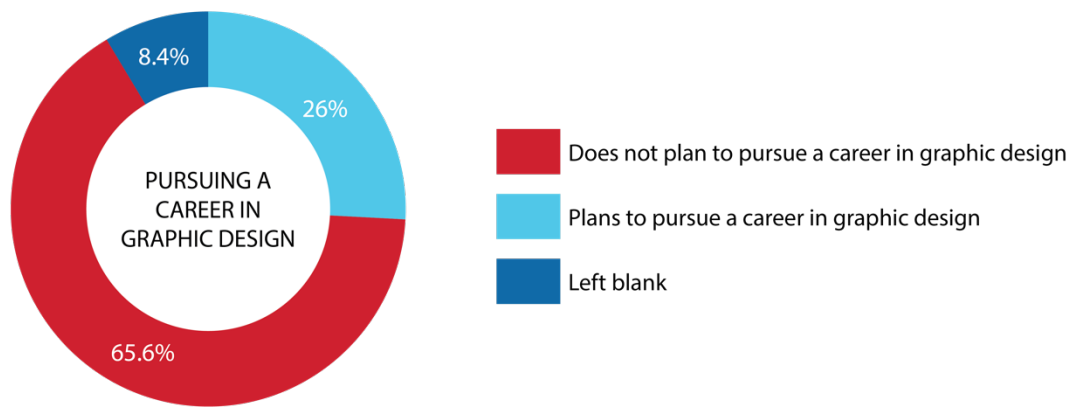
'Use of Adobe software' was the most popular choice, with only nine students not selecting that option. This number does not include those that selected 'None' or left this question blank. The second most popular choice was 'Resume design.' Only 13 students did not select this option. This number does not include those that selected 'None' or left this question blank. In Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking, the resume design, and wordmark design projects are created together. Twenty-six students surveyed selected 'Resume design' but not 'Wordmark design.' Three students chose 'Wordmark design' but not 'Resume design.' Nine students did not select 'Use of Adobe software' when choosing other selection choices. This number does not include those that selected 'None' or left this question blank.

Table 1.1 Currently enrolled students surveyed selections for the question, “What skills do you think you will use in the future? Select all that apply.”

Skills	Number of Students
Use of Adobe software	98
Resume design	95
Wordmark design	73
Poster design	70
Use of InVision/Adobe xD	66
Print magazine design	47
UI/UX magazine design	43
None of these skills	2

Thirty-one of the 119 surveyed selected ‘yes’ when asked, “Do you plan to pursue a career in graphic design after graduation?” Seventy-eight selected ‘no,’ and 10 left this question blank when completing the survey.

Figure 1.3 Currently enrolled students surveyed based on if they plan to pursue a career in graphic design



Of the 31 that said they plan to pursue a career in graphic design after graduation, 17 of those students plan to take more graphic design classes after this semester. Six of those surveyed said they do not plan to take more design classes, and the other eight students plan to graduate during the Spring 2022 semester.

Of the 88 students surveyed that said they do not plan to pursue a career in graphic design or left this question blank when completing the survey, 17 students plan to take more graphic design classes after this semester. Thirty-six of those surveyed said they do not plan to take more design classes, 34 students are planning to graduate during the Spring 2022 semester, and one left this question blank.

Of the 119 students surveyed, only 34 plan to take another graphic design class after the Spring 2022 semester. That is 28.6% of the total number of students surveyed. Students that planned to take more graphic design classes were given the option to select which classes they were interested in. When asked, “Which classes do you plan to take? Select all that apply.” the following selection choices were offered: ‘Visual Communication (IMC 305)’; ‘3-D Modeling (IMC 349)’; ‘Motion Graphics (IMC 473)’; ‘Designing Interactivity (IMC 524)’; or ‘Design classes in the art department.’

Twenty-seven students selected ‘Visual Communication (IMC 305)’. Nine students selected ‘3-D Modeling (IMC 349)’. Fifteen students selected ‘Motion Graphics (IMC 473)’. Eleven students selected ‘Designing Interactivity (IMC 524)’. 4 students selected ‘Design classes in the art department.’ Forty-three students selected that they plan to graduate in the Spring 2022 semester or left this question blank.

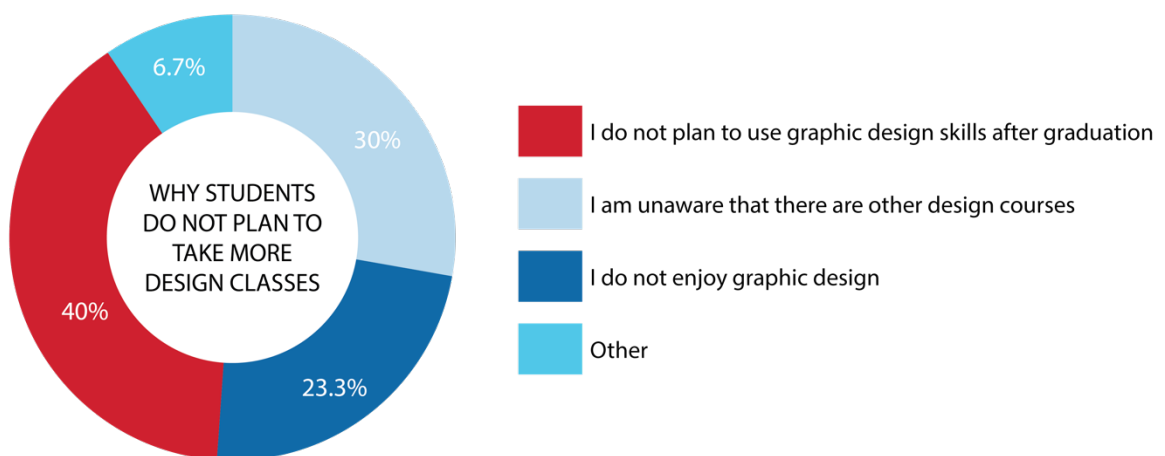
Table 1.2 Currently enrolled students who plan to take other graphic design courses and which courses they plan to take

Class	Number of Students
Visual Communication (IMC 305)	27
Motion Graphics (IMC 473)	15
Designing Interactivity (IMC 524)	11
3-D Modeling (IMC 349)	9
Design classes in the art department	4

Those 43 students that selected ‘no’ when asked if they plan to take other graphic design courses were directed to a separate question asking why that selection was made. The answer choices included: ‘I do not plan to use graphic design skills after graduation’; ‘I am unaware that there are other design courses’; ‘I do not enjoy graphic design’; or ‘Other’ where students could input other information. Students were encouraged to select all that apply to them.

Seventeen students chose ‘I do not plan to use graphic design skills after graduation,’ 12 students chose ‘I am unaware that there are other design courses,’ and ten students chose ‘I do not enjoy graphic design.’ Four students chose ‘Other.’ Those choosing ‘Other’ stated information like “I want to pursue other things,” “I have planned out the rest of classes before graduation, and more design classes do not fit,” “I have already declared two other specializations,” and “Graduating.”

Figure 1.4 Currently enrolled students who selected that they do not plan to take future design courses and why they made this decision



All students surveyed were asked, “What projects and/or have you enjoyed working on while enrolled in Journalism 273? Select all that apply.” They were given selection options that include: ‘Resume design,’ ‘Wordmark design,’ ‘Magazine design,’ ‘Digital design,’ ‘UI/UX design,’ ‘Learning graphic design vocabulary,’ ‘Learning about other graphic designers,’ ‘Learning how to use graphic design software,’ and ‘Other’ allowing students to input information.

The most popular selection was ‘Resume design,’ with 93 selecting this option. Eighty-two students selected ‘Wordmark design.’ Fifty-nine students selected ‘Magazine design.’ Fifty-three students selected ‘Digital design.’ Fifty-six students selected ‘UI/UX design.’ Forty students selected ‘Learning graphic design vocabulary.’ Seventy-seven students selected ‘Learning how to use graphic design software.’ The least popular choice was ‘Learning about other graphic designers’ with only 29 students selecting this. Two students left this question blank, and six students selected “Other” adding “Learning skills that directly translated into the internship I was working on,” “Poster design,” and “None.”

Of the 119 students surveyed, only one student selected all of the choices available for the question. This does not include selecting ‘Other.’ This particular student, who identifies as a sophomore integrated marketing communications major, selected that they do not plan to pursue a career in graphic design but do plan to take future graphic design courses. Eleven students selected only one selection from the options provided, and this included one selecting ‘Learning how to use graphic design software,’ one selecting ‘Magazine design,’ four selecting ‘Resume design,’ two selecting ‘UI/UX design,’ and three selecting ‘Wordmark design.’ This does not include selecting ‘Other.’

Table 1.3 Currently enrolled students and what projects they enjoyed working on in Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking

Skills	Number of Students
Resume design	93
Wordmark design	82
Learning how to use software	77
Magazine design	59
UI/UX design	56
Digital design	53
Learning graphic design vocabulary	40
Learning about other graphic designers	20

Students were then asked, “What kind of design projects/skills do you want to learn about?” No limitations were put on this question, so these could be opinions based on what they desire based on what they had learned so far when completing the survey or what they are hoping to learn in future classes or after graduation. This question was given a list of options to select from that included: ‘Magazine design,’ ‘Newspaper design,’ ‘Digital design,’ ‘Marketing design,’ ‘Branding design,’ ‘UI/UX design,’ ‘Product design,’ ‘Typography,’ ‘Color theory,’ ‘I do not care to learn more about graphic design,’ and “Other” where they can input other information.

Of the 119 students surveyed, 51 students selected ‘Magazine design,’ 18 students selected ‘Newspaper design,’ 73 students selected ‘Digital design,’ 90 students selected ‘Marketing design,’ 84 students selected ‘Branding design,’ 45 students selected ‘UI/UX design,’ 53 students selected ‘Product design,’ 39 students selected ‘Typography,’ 49 students selected

‘Color theory,’ 8 students selected ‘I do not care to learn more about graphic design.’ No one selected ‘Other’ to add more information to this question. Four students left this question blank. Also, it is important to note that of the selection options, newspaper design is the only design curriculum that is not covered in any of the graphic design courses offered during the Spring 2022 semester for the University of Mississippi School of Journalism and New Media based on the course schedule offered to students. This includes Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking and advances graphic design curriculum under Integrated Marketing Communications (Bowen-Moore, Goodwiller, Irwin, Kellum, *Creative Visual Thinking*).

Table 1.4 Currently enrolled students and what graphic design topics they want to learn more about

Graphic Design Topic	Number of Students
Marketing design	90
Branding design	84
Digital design	73
Product design	53
Magazine design	51
Color theory	49
UI/UX design	45
Typography	39
Newspaper design	18
I do not care to learn more	8

The final question on the undergraduate current student survey asks, "Is there anything else regarding graphic design that you wish you were taught while taking Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking?" This question does not have answer choices but allows those taking the survey to input any information. This question was optional. Twenty-one of the 119 students that filled out the survey provided feedback on this question. Some of the responses included the following statements:

- "Wish I would've learned Premiere and Illustrator"
- "Teacher is not too friendly or helpful"
- "Social media post/story design"
- "Maybe a day on how to come up with catchy taglines / study successful taglines"
- "No! I had Professor Emily Bowen-Moore and she was awesome"
- "Logo design and more emphasis on typography"
- "It was one of my favorite classes at Ole Miss. I liked every project that we did"
- "I wish we had spent more time on photoshop!"
- "I wish there was a mandatory follow up class that dove deeper into the creative visual design realm. Where you were given a brand and had to make marketing materials for them."
- "I wish that we would have had more hands-on instruction with Professor Emily Bowen."
- "I wish I learned more about illustrator / I wish I had taken 273 when I was older"
- "I loved Jour 273, and I took it with Dennis Irwin who was an amazing teacher. I learned a lot in that class. But when trying to advance to IMC 305, I didn't have the Illustrator background needed to succeed that the professor thought we all got in 273. It didn't seem

like 305 was what I expected it to be as a follow up to 273. I think 273 would be helpful as an entry level class with follow up design classes so that we can produce great content by the time we're seniors."

CHAPTER 4

ASSESSING CURRICULUM FEEDBACK FROM FORMER STUDENTS

A survey was conducted February 1, 2022 to March 1, 2022 for alumni and former students of the School of Journalism and New Media to gather information about those who have already graduated from the university and have entered the work field. They must be a graduate of the University of Mississippi with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism or a Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications. There is also an option to include if they received a Master of Arts in Journalism or Master of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications. This survey is for those who have graduated in the last five years, from May 2016 to the most recent graduates in May of 2021. Degree and graduation date information is requested for those taking the survey. To continue with the survey, these former students must have taken Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking. To gather information, the researcher shared the survey with alumni and former students through email and LinkedIn, targeting graduates from May 2016 through May 2021.

The survey asks if a textbook was required for their section of the course and, if so, did they use the textbook in class. Then, the types of projects and activities are examined. The survey asks former students to select which they enjoyed completing. This is a list of projects from the curriculum, including but not limited to learning how to use Adobe software, designing a resume, designing a magazine spread, designing for web, UI/UX design, and learning about other designers. There is also an option for former students to include any other specific projects or activities. Another question included is whether or not the former student has used any of the

skills or software they learned about since graduation, with yes or no answer options. Then, the survey asks if it is for work or personal projects and which type of Adobe software they have used along with online applications InVision and Canva. The survey asks if they think the class prepared them for where they are now with yes or no answer options and asks why they select ‘no.’ Similar to the survey for current students, it asks if the former student took other design classes besides Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking. At the end of the survey, those taking it had the option to input any information or details regarding the class that they wanted to share.

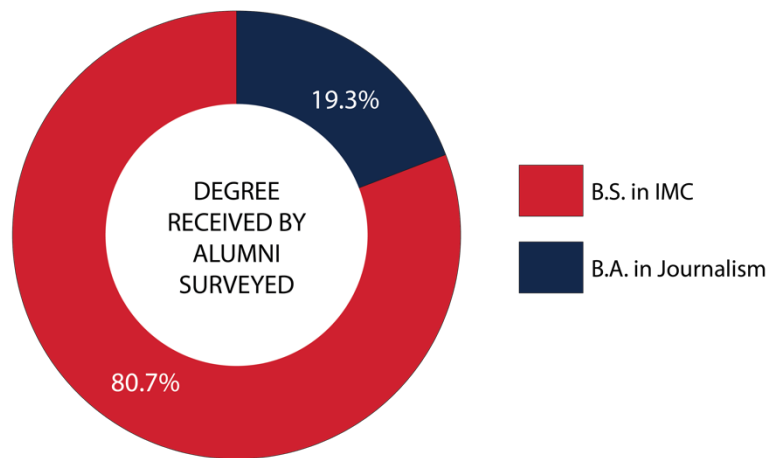
Questions were formed based on feedback from Journalism 273 instructors. This included questions about preferred projects within the class as well as design projects that have been completed since graduation. Other questions were created solely by the researcher. This can be seen as a limitation to the survey and research. Future research could have more discussions with instructors as well as industry professionals, as conducted in previous research (Bridges, 2013).

FORMER STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

In total, 303 former students enrolled in the School of Journalism & New Media were asked to complete the former student survey through email as well as the researcher reaching out to alumni through social media, including Instagram and LinkedIn. After sharing the survey, 140 former students completed it for a response rate of 46.2%. After consolidating information, 21 responses were omitted the data because they selected “no” when asked if they had taken the course. When they selected that answer choice, the survey ended and they did not have access to any of the following questions. In total, 119 University of Mississippi School of Journalism and New Media alumni who have taken Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking were surveyed. Twenty-three of those received a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism, and 96 received a Bachelor of

Science in Integrated Marketing Communications. This is reflected in the information that those students majoring in integrated marketing communications are required to take Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking for their degree requirements, whereas students majoring in journalism are only required to take the class if they have a visual journalism emphasis. Five of those with undergraduate degrees from the University of Mississippi also received graduate degrees from the program. Four of those that received a Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications also received a Master of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications. One that received a Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications went on to get a Master of Arts in Journalism.

Figure 1.5 Alumni surveyed based on the undergraduate degree they received



Those surveyed graduated between 2016 & 2021. The survey asks, "What year(s) did you graduate from the University of Mississippi School of Journalism and New Media? Please include month and year. (For example, "May 2019")." Alumni were given the option to input this information. Two graduated in 2016, 11 graduated in 2017, 18 graduated in 2018, 20 graduated

in 2019, 30 in 2020, and 38 in 2021. This information is based on when those taking the survey received their bachelor's degree. Not every survey response included the month of graduation. The survey was limited to this five-year span due to the changes in Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking curriculum over the last few years.

The next question was to determine how often textbooks have been required for classes and if the students use the assigned books. Alumni taking the survey were asked, "When taking Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking, do you remember being required to rent or purchase a textbook?" and could select 'yes' or 'no' when answering this question. 41 selected 'yes' that they remember being required, and 78 selected 'no' they did not remember being required to have access to a textbook through purchasing or renting it. Of those 41 that said they remember being required to rent or purchase textbooks, 17 said they used it in the following question on the survey. Twenty-four of those said they did not use the required textbook. Those that selected 'no' to being asked, "When taking Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking, do you remember being required to rent or purchase a textbook?" were not directed to the question asking about if they used the required textbook or not.

Next, those taking the alumni survey were asked, "What projects or activities did you enjoy completing while taking the class? Select all that apply." They were given the following selection options to choose from: 'Learning how to use Adobe Creative Cloud software,' 'Designing a resume,' 'Designing a magazine spread,' 'Learning about other designers,' 'UI/UX design,' 'Designing for web,' or 'Other' to input information not included in the provided selection options. Of the total number of alumni surveyed, 99 selected 'Learning how to use Adobe Creative Cloud software,' 87 selected 'Designing a resume,' 86 selected 'Designing a magazine spread,' 22 selected 'Learning about other designers,' 54 selected 'UI/UX design,' 44 selected

'Designing for web,' and two left this question blank. Seven alumni selected 'Other' including the following comments:

- "Science behind design"
- "Function based magazine is becoming out of date the more practical the better"
- "Didn't learn UI/UX & designing for web but would've liked to"
- "Did not enjoy"
- "Creating a personal logo"
- "Basic typography - leading, kerning, typefaces, etc."

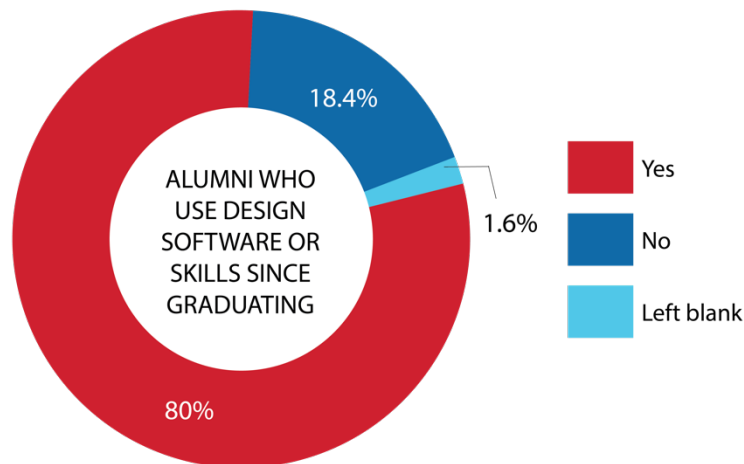
Table 1.5 Alumni and the graphic design projects or activities they enjoyed completing while being enrolled in Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking

Project or Activity	Number of Students
Learning how to use Adobe Creative Cloud software	99
Designing a resume	87
Designing a magazine spread	86
UI/UX design	54
Designing for web	44
Learning about other designers	22

Alumni were asked about their Adobe Creative Cloud software uses since graduating from the University of Mississippi. This can include Adobe InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, and other applications that might have been used during their time with the School of Journalism and

New Media. Of the 119 surveyed, 95 selected 'yes' when asked, "Since graduating from the School of Journalism and New Media, have you used Adobe Creative Cloud software or any of the design skills you learned while a student?" Twenty-two selected 'no' when asked the question. Two left this question blank.

Figure 1.6 Alumni who use Adobe Creative Cloud applications or use graphic design since graduating from the University of Mississippi



Those that selected 'yes,' were directed to the next question, asking which kinds of software or applications they have used. Of the 95 that said they had used the software since graduating, 84 said they use Adobe InDesign, 62 use Adobe Illustrator, 70 use Adobe Photoshop, 19 use Adobe After Effects, and 71 use Canva. Four use InVision, and 4 use Cinema 4D.

Table 1.6 The number of alumni who use graphic design software or applications in their career and which software or application they use

Software or application	Number of Students
Adobe InDesign	84
Canva	71
Adobe Photoshop	70
Adobe Illustrator	62
Adobe After Effects	19
InVision	4
Cinema 4D	4

All alumni who completed the survey were asked if they have used graphic design software and skills for personal projects or work projects since graduating. Twenty-six said personal projects, 27 said work projects, and 59 said personal and work projects. Seven of those surveyed left this question blank. They were then directed to different questions based on their selections to provide feedback on what kind of personal and work projects they had completed. Those who have completed personal projects using graphic design software and skills were provided with the following options: 'Social media graphics,' 'Holiday cards,' 'Resumes,' and 'Other' to input other information. Of the 86 that selected personal projects, 59 selected 'Social media graphics,' 30 selected 'Holiday cards,' 76 selected 'Resumes,' and 28 selected 'Other,' which included:

- "Portfolio website"

- "Personal cards, signs, gifts"
- "T-shirts"
- "Videos"
- "Wedding Stationery"
- "Invitations"
- "Game designs for tabletop games"

Those who have completed personal projects using graphic design software and skills were provided with the following options: 'Social media graphics,' 'Programs & flyers,' 'Packaging design,' and 'Other' to input other information. Of the 86 that selected work projects, 72 selected 'Social media graphics,' 64 selected 'Programs & flyers,' 25 selected 'Packaging design,' and 20 selected 'Other,' which included:

- "Print materials, signage, event signage, infographics, invitations, billboards"
- "Direct mail"
- "Branding clients, Digital Ads, Experiential brand events"
- "Websites"
- "Web graphics for articles"
- "Case studies, professional presentations, annual reports for clients, logos for events and clients, tshirt designs, client campaign booklets similar to those from 455, and a board game"
- "Service menus for MedSpas & massage therapists, Oxford restaurants, wedding invites/programs"

- "Investment pitches"

All alumni who completed the survey were asked, "Do you think that taking Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking prepared you for entering the workforce after graduation?" They were given two selection options, 'yes' and 'no.' Eighty-four selected 'yes,' 31 selected 'no,' and four left this question blank. Those that selected 'no,' were directed to the next question, "Why do you think Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking did NOT prepare you? Select all that apply." The selection options were 'I did not learn anything from the class,' 'I did not learn specific skills in the class,' 'I do not remember the things I learned in the class,' and 'Other' to add additional information. Six selected 'I did not learn anything from the class,' 15 selected 'I did not learn specific skills in the class,' 12 selected 'I do not remember the things I learned in the class,' and 17 selected "Other" which included the following responses:

- "We only had one graphic design course, and I don't think it was enough experience with all the software to adequately prepare me to use it full time."
- "Please make this practical resume work is good but make work more 2022."
- "I learned most of my skills prior in an internship and 273 was a very basic review. I didn't feel as though I learned more or grew my skills. I think it needs to dive deeper and/or have two courses in it."
- "Had a terrible professor which did not help the experience"
- "I don't particularly use these skills in my field. The resume was the least helpful because they didn't allow different types of resumes for people going into different fields."

- "It taught me many basics that I developed beyond the class. It laid the groundwork but at a very rudimentary level."
- "I feel that it was rushed, I really didn't gain skills until grad school where I could focus on specific programs at a time"
- "I failed this class 3 times"
- "There was a lot that I didn't learn that I felt like I should've, ie. which Adobe programs to use for different needs based on vector or pixel based art."
- "I was able to learn those skills elsewhere, so may not have needed the class as much as others."
- "Had a bad teacher"
- "I do not apply the skills learned in my corporate job"
- "The skills learned are not core to my role in agency, however they are a solid differentiator for being able to make mock-ups; in my agency, we have dedicated creatives whose siloed responsibility is to use Adobe CC. I am not in a creative agency, but if I were pursuing creative in an agency, the bare-bones skills learned in 273 would not be adequate to get a job as a creative in my agency."
- "It was a great introductory course, but more courses were needed to instill design skills that could be used in the real world."
- "I don't use it. It's just a bullshit class to add shiz to your resume portfolio but in reality no one cares what your art project looks like"
- "Only requiring one course in graphic design wasn't enough to be able to recall everything learned in Adobe unless I continued using it every day."

The next question on the survey asked, “Did you take any other design classes in the School of Journalism and New Media?” and those completing the survey were given the following selection options: ‘Visual Communication (IMC 305)’, ‘3-D Modeling (IMC 349)’, ‘Motion Graphics (IMC 473)’, ‘Designing Interactivity (IMC 524)’, and ‘Other’ allowing alumni to input new information. It is important to note that not all of the provided selections listed may have been offered during specific semesters and years, allowing all of the alumni surveyed to take them during their undergraduate years of study.

Of the 119 surveyed, 22 selected ‘Visual Communication (IMC 305)’, two selected ‘3-D Modeling (IMC 349)’, four selected ‘Motion Graphics (IMC 473)’, three selected ‘Designing Interactivity (IMC 524)’, and 15 selected ‘Other’ with only one inputting additional information, which included “Python Coding.” In total, only 40 of the total 119 surveyed said they took another design class besides the introductory Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking course.

Table 1.7 Number of alumni who took more design classes besides Journalism 273

Class	Number of Students
Visual Communication (IMC 305)	22
Other	15
Motion Graphics (IMC 473)	4
Designing Interactivity (IMC 524)	3
3-D Modeling (IMC 349)	2

Alumni were asked, “What specific skills/topics do you wish you had learned about? Or learned more about? Select all that apply.” They could pick from the following selection choices: ‘Typography,’ ‘Branding,’ ‘Problem solving,’ ‘Designing for newspapers,’ ‘Designing for magazines,’ ‘Digital design,’ ‘UI/UX design,’ and ‘Other’ allowing alumni to input their feedback. Of the 119 surveyed, 39 selected ‘Typography,’ 77 selected ‘Branding,’ 27 selected ‘Problem solving,’ 12 selected ‘Designing for newspapers,’ 17 selected ‘Designing for magazines,’ 55 selected ‘Digital design,’ 40 selected ‘UI/UX design,’ six selected ‘Other,’ adding: “More direct mail,” “Motion graphics,” “More photoshop,” “Designing to cross post to different mediums/platforms, motion graphics,” “I’ve since taught myself web development/design, would have loved to learn in school,” and “Design for Equity.” It is important to note that not all of the provided selections listed may have been offered during specific sections taken by each person surveyed, allowing for different topics to be taught.

The final question of the survey asked alumni, “Is there anything else in regards to graphic design that you wish you were taught while a student at the School of Journalism & New Media?” This question allowed those taking the survey to input any additional information or knowledge that they wanted to share about Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking or their experiences with graphic design while enrolled at the University of Mississippi or after graduating. The following responses were recorded from 42 individuals who chose to disclose more information.

- “I think we just need another course to learn the software more than in one semester. The projects were great as an introduction.”
- “Photoshop more in depth, especially for IMC students I think it would help a lot”

- “I wish there were more advanced graphic design courses. It’s a marketable skill personally and professionally.”
- “A more in-depth dive into photoshop”
- “Be better at graphic design so I am not relying on others”
- “Wish I had taken motion graphics, but ran out of time”
- “Much more. I wish we had more options to take design classes or even a design minor instead of business”
- “I wish that there were classes that let you master one specific Adobe program at a time rather than mashing them all together”
- “Maybe a bit of more graphic design freedom”
- “We were barely taught Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. Mainly InDesign. I wish we learned more of the other two as well.”
- “I think having more real world examples that are beneficial to students in the future are infinitely more useful than creating an arbitrary magazine spread.”
- “Social Media specific strategies; the strategies and critical thinking behind designs (what does this font accomplish and why should we use it)”
- “Gone more in depth in the adobe programs”
- “Responsive design (for web/software)— in line with UX/UI”
- “I appreciated the requirement to make a resume. I wish all the projects would have been as useful.”
- “After Effects”

- “I wish I had taken more design classes while I was in school. As a marketing manager, design is almost a daily part of my job. I’m able to learn things quickly but having a solid design foundation would have given me a great start in my career.”
- “How to use Photoshop and then Adobe Cloud things better”
- “I wish we learned more about photoshop and after effects.”
- “More in-depth Adobe suite”
- “More of a focus on web design, because it would have come in handy career-wise”
- “I think Jour 273 was a great introduction to Adobe Creative Cloud, and I still remember things I learned from that class, five and a half years later. That being said, it BARELY scratched the surface of graphic design, and I feel like it needs to be in more of the curriculum, with professors not assuming you remember every single detail from 273”
- “Web design would have been helpful, even if it was using pre made websites like square to create a personalized website”
- “I wish video and animation had at least been touched on at a high level. I feel like multimedia could make a good specialization where students can go more in depth with particular tools, typography and advanced creative skills. 273. Needs primary emphasis on what makes a design good and how cohesion psychologically builds the brand in the mind of a consumer.”
- “Learning Adobe After Effects”
- “I think software usage should be integrated throughout the curriculum outside of just design questions. As an IMC professional, we should know how to use adobe software because design is a form of communication.”
- “How better to highlight graphic design skills on my resume”

- “Entering the job market after graduation is difficult for everyone but showing your certifications and work in adobe and creative cloud software sets you apart. I really don't think I would have a job without those skills.”
- “More on Photoshop. We spent most of our time on InDesign”
- “I think that graphic design is a hard concept to teach someone. I have learned it really is a talent to have such a creative eye that someone is born with. So, classes should be longer or they should offer more classes about it since not everyone can pick up on it in a semester or 2.”
- “I wish there was more focus on long term usage of Adobe rather than just completing projects for one semester.”
- “Definitely wished more was required. Really enjoyed it!”
- “Textures and layering”
- “I wish that graphic design had been more than one course. I learned my skills and still use them periodically, but they are very specific skills that need to be refreshed outside of just one course.”
- “I wish there was a textbook or folder that could be a takeaway as a guide to Adobe platforms. I have found that this course prepared me well, however I wish I remembered more.”
- “When I took the class the professor essentially just told us what the deliverable assignment was and gave us time in class to work on it and ask some questions but there was never any specific instruction or lessons on how to use the Adobe Creative Suite. As someone who had no prior knowledge of the programs this made doing my assignments well and earning an A/B very difficult.”

- “Wish I had been encouraged to take more graphic design / video editing classes! They’re required more than you’d think!”
- “I would have LOVED to have a graphic design specialty while I was there!! Extremely practical!!”
- “Yes, I wish I would've learned more about that design effects appeal more to consumers.”
- “I wish I was taught in a way I could remember how to use the software.”

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Looking at the data gathered from the current undergraduate student survey and the alumni survey, there are multiple opportunities for growth and change for the program. One significant connection between the two is the desire for students to have the chance to learn more and take more classes. There are 43 undergraduate students who are in Journalism 273 or have taken the class that do not plan to take another class. Twelve of those are unaware of the other options available to them. Looking at the alumni survey, many of the 42 responses in regards to the last question, asking for any more information in regards to their education, discussed desires to have taken other classes, a desire to have learned about other software not mentioned in Journalism 273, or desire for the opportunity for a more in-depth look at specific applications. Taking this response from alumni to aid in the growth of future students and their design skills, a marketing campaign can be created, encouraging future students from their first year to plan ahead and see what classes are available. Depending on their degree maps, it may not always be possible to fit in extra classes, but encouraging and showing possibilities for graphic design education can grow class numbers and better prepare students for graduation, no matter the career and field they enter. The descriptions of classes online can often be broad, so creating better visuals can grab students' attention. At the end of their survey responses, one surveyed alumnus included the following: "Wish I had been encouraged to take more graphic design / video editing classes! They're required more than you'd think."

Another area that can see change is using specific applications in all sections of the introductory class. On top of Adobe software, the use of Canva could be encouraged in certain projects. Based on the syllabi for the class, only one professor utilizes Canva in their sections (Bowen-Moore, Goodwiller, Irwin, Kellum, *Creative Visual Thinking*). It is a popular option for alumni, with 60% of the surveyed selecting this option as an application they have used since graduation. Learning how to use Adobe software is essential, but showing students the correct way to utilize Canva could empower them to feel more comfortable with both options. In the end, the curriculum could be examined based on the survey data gathered. Because Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking is only required for all integrated marketing communications majors and a portion of journalism majors, the course could be examined for reclassification, changing to an integrated marketing communications class, and changing projects to better support this major. A change to the curriculum could include print marketing materials, web graphics, and more branding opportunities based on alumni's suggestions. A separate graphic design class catered to journalism majors could be created, focusing on magazine design and newspaper design. Twelve alumni selected designing for newspapers when asked what topics or skills they wished they had learned about. Though a small number, this could have resulted in 12 students finding a passion for newspaper design.

Another resource that could be provided to students upon completion of Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking is a small booklet with graphic design basics. The booklet could discuss common vocabulary, typography, color theory, and other complex skills students should remember when leaving the class. This could be beneficial not only in future graphic design courses but also in other classes within the program and the workforce. One alum's response included: "I wish there was a textbook or folder that could be a takeaway as a guide to Adobe

platforms. I have found that this course prepared me well, however, I wish I remembered more." Like a textbook, this small booklet could be print or digital and an accessible resource for students to flip through.

Future research could dive deeper into feedback from alumni. More alumni could be surveyed, especially those who majored in journalism. One neglected target audience were those who graduated with a degree in Broadcast Journalism before the emphasis options changed for the School of Journalism and New Media. Could a graphic design class better support those in broadcast, especially those producing graphics for video? What about those with these degrees that did not end up in broadcast journalism. Could an introductory graphic design class benefit all journalism majors? Though it may not be used in their daily work, could having the skills and knowledge of software on resumes help students stand out in a job interview? There is a desire for graphic design and visual communication within the School of Journalism and New Media. Growth is imminent, and the data reflects opportunities for that.

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APPENDIX

CURRENT STUDENT DESIGN SURVEY

The purpose of this research project is to determine if the required graphic design course within the School of Journalism & New Media is providing enough for students as they enter the workforce. We would like to ask you a few questions about your time when enrolled in the class and how you have used your skills since moving on from the course. You will not be asked for your name or any other identifying information.

It will take you approximately five minutes to complete this survey.

You may have trouble remembering some details about your time while taking Journalism 273, Creative Visual Thinking, including some of the projects you may have completed in the class. We do not think that there are any other risks. A lot of people enjoy taking questionnaires.

No identifiable information will be recorded therefore we do not think you can be identified from this study.

You do not have to take part in this study and you may stop participation at any time. If you start the study and decide that you do not want to finish, all you have to do is to tell Ms. MacKenzie Ross or Prof. Darren Sanefski in person, by letter, or by telephone. You may skip any questions you prefer not to answer.

Mackenzie Ross

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Darren Sanefski

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This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482 or irb@olemiss.edu.

I have read and understand the above information. By completing the survey/interview I consent to participate in the study.

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 Are you currently a student in the University of Mississippi School of Journalism & New Media?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Are you currently a student in the University of Mississippi School of Journalism & New Media? = No

Q2 What is your classification?

- Freshman (1)
- Sophomore (2)
- Junior (3)
- Senior (4)

Q3 What degree are you pursuing?

- B.A. in Journalism (1)
- B.S. in Integrated Marketing Communications (2)

Q4 Have you taken Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking?

- Yes (1)
- I am currently taking the class (2)
- No (3)

Skip To: End of Survey If Have you taken Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking? = No

Page Break

*Display This Question:
If Have you taken Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking? = Yes*

Q5 Did you learn skills that you think you will use in future class or after graduation?

- Yes (1)
- Maybe (2)
- No (3)

Display This Question:

If Did you learn skills that you think you will use in future class or after graduation? = Yes

And Did you learn skills that you think you will use in future class or after graduation? = Maybe

Q6 What skills do you think you will use in the future? Select all that apply.

Resume design (1)

Print magazine design (2)

UI/UX magazine design (3)

Poster design (4)

Wordmark design (5)

Use of Adobe software (6)

Use of InVision/Adobe xD (7)

None of these skills (8)

Other (9) _____

Display This Question:

If Have you taken Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking? = Yes

And Have you taken Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking? = I am currently taking the class

Q7 Do you plan to pursue a career in graphic design after graduation?

Yes (1)

No (2)

41

Q8 Do you plan to take any other design classes after this semester?

I graduate this semester (1)

Yes (2)

No (3)

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Do you plan to take any other design classes after this semester? = Yes

Q9 Which classes do you plan to take? Select all that apply.

Visual Communication (IMC 305) (1)

3-D Modeling (IMC 349) (2)

Motion Graphics (IMC 473) (3)

Designing Interactivity (IMC 524) (4)

Design classes in the art department (5)

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Do you plan to take any other design classes after this semester? = No

Q10 Why do you not plan to take any other design classes?

I do not plan to use graphic design skills after graduation (1)

I am unaware that there are other design courses (2)

I do not enjoy graphic design (3)

Other (4) _____

Page Break

Q11 What projects and/or have you enjoyed working on while enrolled in Journalism 273?
Select all that apply.

Resume design (1)

Wordmark design (2)

Magazine design (3)

Digital design (4)

UI/UX design (5)

Learning graphic design vocabulary (6)

Learning about other graphic designers (7)

Learning how to use graphic design software (8)

Other (9) _____

Q12 What kind of design projects/skills do you want to learn about?

- Magazine design (1)
- Newspaper design (2)
- Digital design (3)
- Marketing design (4)
- Branding design (5)
- UI/UX design (6)
- Product design (7)
- Typography (8)
- Color theory (9)
- I do not care to learn more about graphic design (10)
- Other (11) _____

Q13 Is there anything else in regards to graphic design that you wish you were taught while taking Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking?

End of Block: Default Question Block

FORMER STUDENT DESIGN SURVEY

The purpose of this research project is to determine if the required graphic design course within the School of Journalism & New Media is providing enough for students as they enter the workforce. We would like to ask you a few questions about your time when enrolled in the class and how you have used your skills since moving on from the course. You will not be asked for your name or any other identifying information.

It will take you approximately five minutes to complete this survey.

You may have trouble remembering some details about your time while taking Journalism 273, Creative Visual Thinking, including some of the projects you may have completed in the class. We do not think that there are any other risks. A lot of people enjoy taking questionnaires.

No identifiable information will be recorded therefore we do not think you can be identified from this study.

You do not have to take part in this study and you may stop participation at any time. If you start the study and decide that you do not want to finish, all you have to do is to tell Ms. MacKenzie Ross or Prof. Darren Sanefski in person, by letter, or by telephone. You may skip any questions you prefer not to answer.

Mackenzie Ross

School of Journalism & New Media

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The University of Mississippi

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This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482 or irb@olemiss.edu.

I have read and understand the above information. By completing the survey/interview I consent to participate in the study.

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 Are you a graduate of the University of Mississippi School of Journalism and New Media?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Are you a graduate of the University of Mississippi School of Journalism and New Media? = No

Page Break

Q2 What degree did you receive from the University of Mississippi School of Journalism and New Media? Select all that apply.

B.A. in Journalism (1)

B.S. in Integrated Marketing Communications (2)

M.A. in Journalism (3)

M.S. in Integrated Marketing Communication (4)

Page Break

Q3 What year(s) did you graduate from the University of Mississippi School of Journalism and New Media? Please include month and year. (For example, "May 2019")

Q4 As a student in the School of Journalism and New Media, did you take Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking? (This class is an introductory class to graphic design)

Yes (1)

No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If As a student in the School of Journalism and New Media, did you take Journalism 273: Creative Vis... = No

Page Break

Q5 When taking Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking, do you remember being required to rent or purchase a textbook?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Page Break

Display This Question:

If When taking Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking, do you remember being required to rent or p... = Yes

Q6 Did you use the textbook for Journalism 273?

This includes reading for class or looking through the book to find answers to questions.

Yes (1)

No (2)

Page Break

Q7 What projects or activities did you enjoy completing while taking the class? Select all that apply.

- Learning how to use Adobe Creative Cloud software (1)
- Designing a resume (2)
- Designing a magazine spread (3)
- Learning about other designers (4)
- UI/UX design (5)
- Designing for web (6)
- Other (7) _____

Page Break

Q8 Since graduating from the School of Journalism and New Media, have you used Adobe Creative Cloud software or any of the design skills you learned while a student?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If Since graduating from the School of Journalism and New Media, have you used Adobe Creative Cloud... = Yes

Q9 What kind of software or application have you used since graduating? Select all that apply.

- Adobe InDesign (1)
- Adobe Illustrator (2)
- Adobe Photoshop (3)
- Adobe After Effects (4)
- Canva (5)
- InVision (6)
- Cinema 4D (7)

Page Break

Q10 When using your graphic design skills, have you used it for work OR personal projects?

- Personal Projects (1)
- Work Projects (2)

Page Break

Display This Question:

If When using your graphic design skills, have you used it for work OR personal projects? = Personal Projects

Q11 What kind of personal projects have you created with your graphic design skills?

- Social media graphics (1)
- Holiday cards (2)
- Resumes (3)
- Other (4) _____

Page Break

Display This Question:

If When using your graphic design skills, have you used it for work OR personal projects? = Work Projects

Q12 What kind of work projects have you created with your graphic design skills?

- Social media graphics (1)
- Programs & flyers (2)
- Packaging design (3)
- Other (4) _____

Q13 Do you think that taking Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking prepared you for entering the workforce after graduation?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Page Break

Display This Question:

*If Do you think that taking Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking prepared you for entering the w...
= No*

Q14 Why do you think Journalism 273: Creative Visual Thinking did NOT prepare you? Select all that apply.

I did not learn anything from the class (1)

I did not learn specific skills in the class (2)

I do not remember the things I learned in the class (3)

Other (4) _____

Page Break

Q15 Did you take any other design classes in the School of Journalism and New Media?

- Visual Communication (IMC 305) (1)
- 3-D Modeling (IMC 349) (2)
- Motion Graphics (IMC 473) (3)
- Designing Interactivity (IMC 524) (4)
- Other (5) _____

Q16 What specific skills/topics do you wish you had learned about? Or learned more about?
Select all that apply.

- Typography (1)
- Branding (2)
- Problem solving (3)
- Designing for newspapers (4)
- Designing for magazines (5)
- Digital design (6)
- UI/UX design (7)
- Other (8) _____

Q17 Is there anything else in regards to graphic design that you wish you were taught while a student at the School of Journalism & New Media?

End of Block: Default Question Block

VITA

MacKenzie Slate Ross

EDUCATION

Master of Arts in Journalism, University of Mississippi, Expected May 2022

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism, University of Mississippi, May 2019

WORK EXPERIENCE

Graduate Teaching Assistant, *University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS, August 2020 – May 2022*

- Serve 10 hours a week in the Student Media Center
 - Create marketing materials and serving as a graduate advisor to the yearbook staff
 - Design newspaper advertisements for The Daily Mississippian as well as digital advertisements for their website and social media platforms
 - Design special editions of the newspaper including their housing guides, Finals Frenzy publication, and Rebel Guide for summer orientation handed out to incoming freshmen students
- Serve 10 hours a week in the Dean's Office for the School of Journalism and New Media
 - Work with marketing a recruiting team for the school, designing flyers, pamphlets, and other marketing materials for on-campus recruitment as well as outreach events
 - Attend college fairs across the state, recruiting potential students
 - Begin to form a new database of photographs and videos for marketing
 - Design brand components for a new group, the Integrated Marketing Communication Association, a national organization bringing new ideas to high school students
 - Lead students in the creation of magazine projects including the School of Journalism and New Media's annual alumni magazine, The Review, during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years, and a new student magazine, She Plays, a magazine honoring student-female athletes, during the fall 2021 semester
- Teaching Assistant Experience:
 - Fall 2020: Journalism 401: Magazine Service Journalism
 - Spring 2021: Journalism 501: Magazine Service Journalism Publishing
 - Fall 2021: Journalism 401: Magazine Service Journalism
 - Spring 2022: Journalism 501: Magazine Service Journalism Publishing

Graphic Design and Marketing Intern, *TESSBROS, Chattanooga, TN, June 2021 – July 2021*

- Design graphics for social media and websites

- Assist with weekly email campaigns
- Create content and write stories for the company blog
- Edit weekly YouTube videos with content producers
- Design new products including stickers and introduction of new cleaning line
- Redesign packaging for mailing products to clients to create a better experience for customers

Media Relations Associate, Operation Christmas Child, Samaritan's Purse, Alpharetta, GA, June 2019 – December 2019

- Oversee pitching and scheduling of media events for 40 speaker bureau tours
- Data collection from speaker bureau tours
- Build relationships with media outlets across the country to create press releases and local stories to promote Operation Christmas Child
- Build and present the end of the year presentation for the media relations and marketing teams
- Travel and speak with local volunteers about the work of Operation Christmas Child with needy children overseas
- Travel with Samaritan's Purse to an outreach event in the country of Georgia, spending the week working with international staff and student volunteers from the U.S. while handing out packaged boxes to children

Editor-in-Chief, The Ole Miss yearbook, Oxford, MS, May 2018 – May 2019

- Oversee the hiring of eight editorial team members and 35 staff members
- Work with the creative team for the overall concept of the book
- Design and layout stories along with illustrations
- Photograph various events on campus and in the community
- Brainstorm story and marketing ideas
- Work closely with university administration and collaborate with other student media publications to create a 368- page book, documenting school history
- Organize distribution with student staff and university administration, handing out 5,000 copies of the book to students at the University of Mississippi during the last month of the school year

PUBLICATIONS

Bridging the gap between Journalism 273 and graduation, and beyond (Thesis)

- MacKenzie Slate Ross
- School of Journalism and New Media, The University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi 38655

The coverage of carbon capture storage (CCS) in media in the United States compared to coverage abroad in Europe and Asia (November 2020)

- MacKenzie Slate Ross, Allen Brewer, Christian Lamphley, Christina Streeter, Dr. Kristen Swain, Benita Whitehorn

- School of Journalism and New Media, The University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi 38655

LEADERSHIP AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

The University of Mississippi

- The Ole Miss Chapter of the Society for News Design
 - May 2018-May 2019, August 2020-present, *President*; developed meeting agendas and ran monthly meetings, collaborated with other officers to develop a semester plan, helped advertise for events
 - August 2015-May 2022, *member*
- The Society for News Design
 - May 2017-present, *member*; attend in-person and virtual conferences, volunteer and aid in the annual competition to make sure categories are judged smoothly and quickly, help with documentation and organization of thousands of winning designs from national and international publications
- The Ole Miss yearbook
 - August 2020-May 2022, *graduate advisor*; aid in direction of the book, edit written content, work with the Editor-in-Chief to ensure the publication is advertised throughout Student Media Center publications

Sigma Phi Lambda

- Alumnae Council, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
 - May 2022-present, work as a liaison between university chapter and national leadership, travel with students to leadership conferences, visit chapter and meet with student members, support officer leadership decisions, maintain budget for chapter at UTC
- Alumnae Council, The University of Mississippi
 - May 2020-April 2022, work as a liaison between university chapter and national leadership, travel with students to leadership conferences, visit chapter and meet with student members, support officer leadership decisions, maintain budget for chapter at UM
- Undergraduate Member, The University of Mississippi
 - August 2015-May 2019, work with officers to establish online presence through creation of website, introduce social media campaigns around recruitment and public events, doubling membership from 50 during the spring semester of 2018 to 100 during the spring semester of 2019, oversee weekly meeting discussions as well as weekly small group discussions; plan fellowship events including weekend retreats