



COLLEGE OF VISUAL ARTS AND DESIGN
Design Department, Communication Design

December 2009 Communication Design Entry Portfolio Review Adobe Illustrator Proficiency Skills

The following is a list of the Adobe Illustrator skills you must possess and knowledge you must demonstrate in order to qualify for the Entry Portfolio Review.

Due to the limited number of credit hours available to any major area of study in a 120 hour undergraduate program at the university, the Communication Design program decided to eliminate the software classes from its curriculum. This was not an easy decision to make. When we compared the number of skills and competencies required of a new professional in graphic design and art direction beyond software knowledge, and the number of classes in which we had to deliver them all, we felt this course of action made the best use of the time you have available to spend learning with us.

It is not the intention of the Communication Design program to utilize this list of skills as a means to limit the number of students who participate in the review. It is a means to ensure that those who do participate and may be selected in the review are the best prepared to be successful in the beginning classes. Fortunately, there are accessible alternatives for you to gain the necessary skills in Adobe Illustrator. Here are a few:

- Denton/Dallas/Collin and/or Tarrant County Community Colleges. The schools in these systems offer courses in a wide variety of options from weekend courses to longer-term software courses.
- Lynda.com (<http://movielibrary.lynda.com/html/modListing.asp?pid=336>) Lynda offers on-line tutorials for a monthly fee.
- Adobe Illustrator CS3 or CS4 Classroom in a Book. You can teach yourself the necessary skills with this easy-to-use book.
- Endorphin Studio (<http://endorphinstudio.com/>) A local studio offering reasonably priced classes in software here in Denton.

One word of caution: You will be busy this semester with other courses, homework, jobs, friends, relationships, etc. If you choose to try to learn the software through a book or tutorials (online or not), you will need a great deal of self discipline to stay the course and practice. Last year—the first year we used the proficiency exams—nearly every student who tried to teach him or herself the software failed the exam. Nor was using an upper class student in the program as a tutor a successful alternative to learn the software. Remember, you will not only be taking a general knowledge test, you'll have to demonstrate that you can use the software. What we are asking of you is not rocket science or wildly difficult, but it does take practice. For almost all of you, an actual software course will be your best option. All decisions regarding how you will learn to use this software are yours and yours alone to make. It is interesting to note that those students who took the Adobe Illustrator Software classes at Endorphin Studio all passed the test easily.

WHO DOES NOT HAVE TO TAKE THIS TEST?

If you have successfully completed a graded college-level course in Adobe Illustrator, you may present a copy of that transcript grade along with a copy of the course description from the catalog or a copy of the course syllabus that details the subject matter for the course along with your required transcripts showing your prerequisites included in your entry portfolio.

Another word of caution: While we will accept in lieu of the test your successful completion of a college



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level course in Illustrator, you need to realize that just because you have taken and passed a course does not *necessarily* mean that you are well prepared to complete the skills on this test in the classroom on a daily basis. In this case, it becomes your responsibility to make sure you know and can perform these required skill sets so that you are not at a disadvantage in the ADES 1510: Typography I course should you be accepted into the program.

PRACTICE TEST

There is a sample test posted on the Communication Design link of the art.unt.edu web site so that you may take it and then practice the required skills. The test is scheduled for Saturday, November 21 between 9:00 and 12:00 in classrooms 231 and 313 in the Art Building on the UNT campus.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE

- You will be required to label all of the tools that comprise the tool panel in Adobe Illustrator cs4, and you will be required to briefly explain what each tool's function is. Here are the tools you must learn: selection; direct selection; pen + all nested tools; lasso; type + all nested tools—especially type on a path; line segment + all nested; rectangle + all nested; paintbrush; pencil; rotate + all nested; scale + all nested; warp tool; free transform + all nested; symbol sprayer; column graph; mesh; gradient; eyedropper + all nested; blend; live paint bucket; live paint; crop; eraser + all nested; hand + all nested; zoom; toggle fill; swap fill; default fill stroke, color – gradient – none; screen mode.
- Saving options.
- Importing or placing files for template purposes.
- CMYK, PMS, RGB color systems.

EFFECTIVELY DEMONSTRATE THE FOLLOWING SKILLS:

You will note that there is a very strong emphasis on drawing with the pen tool in the following list of demonstrable skills. Your skill with the pen tool will be greatly scrutinized. Great care must be exercised in placing and using the correct number of points as well as matching curves exactly. These skills come with practice. Simply using the pen tool and the selection tools once or twice prior to taking this test will not provide you with the level of pen tool experience you'll need to pass the test.

- Pen tool: each student will be required to draw a vector path around the contour of a provided letter or glyph. Each section of students will be provided with a different letter. All assigned letter forms or glyphs will have a counter which will require students taking the test to demonstrate the ability to make a compound path.
- Save this letter file.
- Open the supplied letter file.
- Make a new document and save as instructed.
- Perform the following steps with the letter they've created:
- Draw a guide and cut the letter in the middle or in half.
- Delete one half of the letter and close the remaining path by joining the open points.
- Make a mirrored image of the letter.



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- Group the new image.
- Reduce the size of the new image by a given percentage.
- Set a specific increment size, and step and repeat the image horizontally a given number of times.
- Group those new objects.
- Step and repeat a given number of times vertically to make a pattern.
- Draw a star shape.
- Make a layer mask with the pattern inside the star shape.
- Save this file.

- Open the original letter file.
- Make a new document and save as instructed.
- Perform some fill, stroke, and specific color fills, cmyk & pms commands.
- Save this file.

- Create a new document.
- Type a short phrase of three words. Place that type on a circle path, both top and bottom.
- Save this file.

- Create a new document and save as instructed
- Draw a box using given dimensions.
- Add a given number of new anchor points.
- Convert one of the corners or points to a curve.
- Cut a segment out of one of the sides of the box.
- Save this file.

- Create a new document and save as instructed.
- Draw a star shape.
- Draw an ellipse shape.
- Make a copy of both shapes. Perform the following skills with the copied shapes:
 - Overlap the star on the ellipse as instructed.
 - Using the shape mode tool, employ the add to shape area to make one new merged continuous shape.
- Make a copy of both shapes. Perform the following skills with the copied shapes:
 - Overlap the star on the ellipse as instructed.
 - Using the pathfinder tool panel, perform the divide function.
 - Pull apart all the new shapes created.
- Save this file. (Both examples must be visible in one file.)

- Open a supplied file.
- Create a new document and save as instructed.
- You should see 4 boxes in a pattern not aligned vertically or horizontally. Do not move these boxes with your selection arrows.
- Select all the boxes. Using the align objects tool panel, apply the horizontal align left function.
- Now, with all the boxes still selected, apply the vertical distribute top function in the distribute objects tool panel.
- Save this file.