

## DEPARTMENT: COMMUNICATION DESIGN

As a member of the **Department of Communication Design** you will join a group of students who are part of the **School of Technology and Design** at New York City College of Technology, City University of New York.

**Mission:** For over 60 years, the Communication Design Department (COMD) has been preparing students for rewarding careers in the dynamic field of advertising, design and illustration. Communication Design is the strategic and conceptual development of visual information to tell stories and convey ideas and emotions. The department prepares students for the workplace by cultivating conceptual thinking, creativity and collaborative skills. Despite restructuring in the publishing industry, the media and advertising sector remains one of New York City's biggest employers.

The Emmy award-winning Communication Design department offers the only **NASAD** accredited BFA in Communication Design of any CUNY college. The curriculum emphasizes a foundation, skills, strategy, and studio model and prepares students for careers in graphic design, advertising, motion design, illustration, and web design.

The department is committed to increasing the variety of voices in professions that utilize creativity, technology, and design. The foundation of the COMD program is based on integrating fundamental theory and concepts with applied technology. We believe in building a culture that encourages creativity, collaboration, and conceptual thinking. The department is uniquely positioned to provide a level playing field through a rigorous creative and technical education.

### **First NASAD Accredited Department Within CUNY**

In the Fall of 2018, The Communication Design department at New York City College of Technology (City Tech) became the first within the CUNY system to offer a Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) degree in Communication Design accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

The program is housed in the newly renovated Pearl Facility, a 12,200 sq. ft. space devoted to developing concepts, including labs for creating them and presentation spaces for showcasing finished work. Currently the department can offer only a few courses in Pearl in Fall of 2021, more in-person classes are expected to be offered in the Spring of 2022.

**Students take courses from three categories:** Studio, Strategy, and Skills. In the required sequence of four Studio courses, students initiate and define the context

for substantive projects. Selecting from an elective pool, each student takes **three Strategy courses** and **four Skills courses**. In Strategy courses, students research, plan, produce and consider dissemination of visual communications. In Skills courses, students create solutions to communication design problems using a particular medium. Students may either sample a range of the Communication Design field or specialize in one of the following areas: Advertising, Graphic Design, Illustration or Web Design.

**Helping guide the student's career path** are the COMD full-time faculty who advise students in their career path and explain the course offerings that best fit the student's goals. The department has a [COMD advisement web site](#) on OpenLab that is an important tool for students in charting the best mix of course to prepare them for their area of interest.

The department Computer Lab Technicians (CLTs) have also established an [COMD CLT FAQ OpenLab Website](#) with information about the technical supports the department offers students, including information about the software and hardware needed for remote learning.

**Students also benefit** from the College's significant technological and information resources including:

- A learning management system, BlackBoard®, an interactive Internet-enabled technology connecting students and faculty for on-line learning experiences. In addition, many of our classes use OpenLab for our virtual classrooms.
- The college labs in the General building are available for all students.
- The City Tech library with its electronic databases and book collection

**Students engage in opportunities** such as internships and specialized shows:

### **Internships**

As one of its key capstone courses, the department requires students to work 120 hours in the field in their area of interest. They keep a journal on the OpenLab about this experience. Our students have worked at many well-known firms and cultural institutions including Etsy, Infor, Nickelodeon, Major League Baseball, Children's Television Workshop, Kenneth Cole, the Whitney Museum, and the

NYC Transit Museum. In the past two years, our students have also been selected for the very competitive internships run by the 4As Advertising Association's

Multicultural Advertising Intern Program and the Young Commodores Internship Program run by the Wunderman Thompson Agency (formerly J. Walter Thompson).

The Department has set up an Openlab Site to Coordinate its internship efforts at <https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/groups/comd-communication-design-internship-coordination-site/>.

### **Grace Gallery**

The Grace Gallery on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor (Namm Building) showcases student work each semester, including the Senior Project show. In addition to student shows, the Gallery also exhibits professional work such as the *Women in Comics* Show held in 2017 and the *As, Not For Show* in 2019, a collection of work by African American graphic designers. In the past year, The Grace Gallery has also been utilized for pop-up exhibits of both student and faculty work on the themes of “Gun Violence” and “Freedom of Speech.”

In the Spring of 2020, at the height of the pandemic, the Department took the [Grace Gallery Virtual](#) with a virtual exhibit of Student work in Spring 2020 and in Fall 2020, a student show was shown which was inspired by works of Gordon Parks, the first African American photographer for *Life* magazine, and the director of the influential 1971 film, *Shaft*. This Spring 2021 show is [on openlab](#) as is the [BFA student show from 2021](#) and the [BFA Show 2020](#).

### **Spring Portfolio Reviews**

Each Spring, the department selects the best portfolios of its graduating students who are invited to present their portfolios to industry professionals and the department's faculty. This Portfolio Review is usually held at the offices of Adobe Graphics in Manhattan. This event allows graduating students to receive important feedback on their professional work and, in more than a few cases, has led to job offers before graduation day.

**Students can join** department clubs that allow them to network at City Tech and also with professionals in the Tri-State area.

[The Art & Design Club](#) hosts a speaker series called “Meet the Pros” that allows students to hear from distinguished designers here on campus.

[The Ink Club](#) meets during club hours and also hosts a table at MOCCA, the New York area's largest independent comic, cartoon and animation festival.

The [Moving Pixels](#) club is the department's newest club and affords those students interested in shooting and editing videos to gain expertise filming City Tech's own stories. The work of the Moving Pixels students can be seen on the COMD Youtube

channel at

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbHIFIEiXz63oceCpPrO\\_Yg/videos](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbHIFIEiXz63oceCpPrO_Yg/videos)

### **Options for Employment and Further Study**

The *Bachelor of Fine Arts in Communication Design*, building on the solid foundation in visual expression of the first two years, develops students' abilities to frame, research and solve increasingly complex visual communication problems. Students develop a professional portfolio that represents their talents and prepares them for employment upon graduation as art directors, graphic designers, illustrators and web designers.

In recent years, graduates of the program have been employed by a range of creative agencies, design firms, and organizations including BBDO, J. Walter Thompson Worldwide, Ogilvy, DDB, Google, Patients & Purpose, GLOW Digital agency, Victoria's Secret, The Vyater Group, Mass Appeal Records, Ralph Lauren Advertising, The New York Times, New York Code + Design Academy, AT&T Entertainment Group – DIRECTV, JP Morgan Chase, New York Life Insurance Company and UNICEF USA.

Students are also qualified to apply for Master's programs in related communication design fields. Many recent graduates have been accepted into the [Branding and Integrated Communications \(BIC\) Graduate program at The City College of New York](#).

**Faculty and Staff in the Department of Communication Design** specialize in various areas of the design field:

Daniel Wong, Chair, Associate Professor/Web Site Development/Graphic Design

Douglas Davis, Professor, Advertising/Art Direction

MaryAnn Biehl, Professor: Graphic Design

Maria Giuliani, Professor: Typography/Graphic Design

Robin Michals, Professor: Photography

Jenna Spevack, Professor: Graphic Design; Web Site Development

Lloyd Carr, Associate Professor: Graphic Design Production

Anita Giraldo, Associate Professor: Graphics Design, Photography

Genevieve Hitchings, Associate Professor: Graphic Design

Eli Neugeboren, Associate Professor: Illustration/Photo Retouching

John McVicker, Associate Professor: Advertising/Art Direction

George Garrestegui, Assistant Professor: Advertising/Art Direction

Tanya Goetz, Assistant Professor: Graphic Design Production/Professional Development

Josh Kapusinski, Assistant Professor: Motion Graphics/Video Production  
George Larkins, Assistant Professor: Photography/Motion Graphics/Video Production  
Sara Woolley, Assistant Professor: Illustration

Senior CLT: Luis Vasquez  
CLT: Michael Cannetti: Motion Graphics  
CUNYCOMD Office Staff: Sharmaine Bernard Hill, Emerald Williams

### **COMD Adjuncts: Professionals Who Teach**

Among the department's greatest assets are over 85 instructors who teach part-time while working as creatives during the day or in the evening, or both, in the case of freelancers. These instructors hail from a variety of backgrounds from publishing to agencies to corporate design studios. In addition to its full-time faculty, the department relies on these professionals to help students stay abreast of current industry trends and broaden their professional networks. A few of the adjuncts have been speakers as part of our *Meet the Pros* Series and adjuncts whose writing has achieved recognition in the field have been highlighted.

### **Fun Facts**

- ✓ Many COMD students have won industry accolades, including:
  - Emely Perez whose work was recognized at the London International Award Show and the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity and made the 4As 2017 list of 100 People Who Make Advertising Great. She was named to the Drum's 50 Under 30, of Emerging Female Talent.
  - Ameru Lulu, who interned with the One Club and is now an art director at Ogilvy, was also named to the Drum's 50 Under 30, of Emerging Female Talent.
  - To learn more about these two former COMD students, watch this video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qeGmuZ35tQw>.
- ✓ The Soho Memory Project is a documentary directed by City Tech student Or Szyflingier; the film won *best undergraduate documentary* in the CUNY Film Festival and also won *best film* in the CUNY Asian American Film Festival. This documentary can be found on the [Soho Project Memory Site](#) and to learn more about its director, view [Ms. Szyflingier's website](#).
- ✓ One alumna of the Communication Design AAS program, Distinguished Professor and world-renowned graphic designer and typographer Tony Di Spigna, has donated his 50-year archive to the department's Grace Gallery in what will become its first permanent collection. Professor Di Spigna, who was a student in the program from 1962 to 1964, recalls the heritage of the



department he graduated from, and looks forward to what it will accomplish in the future: “The two-year program has done wonders for students and their professional careers. Now that it’s a four-year B.F.A. program, imagine how much more it will do.”

- Mr. DiSpigna was also featured in a documentary called [“Imported from Brooklyn”](#) directed by COMD faculty member, Assistant Professor Josh Kapusinski. This documentary won an Emmy in the Spring of 2016.

### **Program Educational Outcomes**

The objectives of the Communication Design Baccalaureate degree are to prepare students to:

- Function as designers in a professional context or pursue graduate level study in design.
- Create a portfolio that represents the student’s conceptual and visual problem-solving abilities.

### **Program Learning Outcomes**

Graduates will be able to:

- Think critically to evaluate evidence and the perspectives of others before accepting or formulating an opinion.
- Think creatively to combine or synthesize existing ideas or images in original ways.
- Organize and interpret complex data.
- Research and evaluate information sources.
- Write to express ideas clearly and concisely.
- Prepare and deliver oral communication that promotes knowledge and understanding.
- Identify, evaluate and effectively respond to ethical issues as a citizen and a professional.
- Solve problems by designing, evaluating and implementing a strategy to answer an open-ended question.
- Value cultural diversity and demonstrate the capacity to collaborate.
- Grow and adapt, personally and professionally.