

WHO WE ARE: COMMUNICATION DESIGN

As a member of Communication Design, you will join a group of students who are part of the [Technology and Design School](#) at New York City College of Technology, City University of New York.

The Mission of the Department:

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 in all students. 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 all CUNY colleges. Our 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 our 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.

The Communication Design department offers three clubs that allow students to network here 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



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work of the Moving Pixels students can be seen on the COMD Youtube channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbHIFIEiXz63oceCpPrO_Yg/videos

Faculty in the [Communication Design Department](#) specialize in various areas of the design field.

Faculty and Staff in the Communication Design Department:

Daniel Wong, Chair, 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

COMD COA : Sharmaine Bernard Hill

BFA Degree

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



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range of the Communication Design field or specialize in one of the following areas: Advertising, Graphic Design, Illustration or Web Design.

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.

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.

Our department Computer Lab Technicians (CLTs) are also on site in the Pearl building while classes are running to offer support to both students and faculty.

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



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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. The department is now running many hybrid and fulling in person classes in the Pearl facility. The department also runs classes on the 11th floor of the Namm building and in the photo studio on the first floor of the Voorhees building.

Grace Gallery

In addition to its labs of the Grace Gallery on the 11th floor 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 2023, the Grace Gallery on the 11th floor showcased the work of NYC high school students in the exhibit *Self Portraits: Explorations of Identity* from December 1, 2022 to February 16, 2023.

At the height of the pandemic, the Department took the [Grace Gallery Virtual](#) and so we did a virtual exhibit of our Student work in Spring of 2020 and this Fall, we did a student show 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 our [BFA student show from 2021](#) and our [BFA Show 2020](#).

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



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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/>.

Portfolio Reviews for Senior and Sophomores

Each Spring, the department selects the best portfolios of its graduating students and these students are invited to show their portfolios to industry professionals and the department's own faculty, both full-time and adjunct. This Portfolio review is usually held at the offices of Adobe Graphics in Manhattan. This event allows our 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.

Last year, the department also launched its Sophomore Portfolio Review, an internal review by COMD faculty of portfolios created by students at the end of COMD 2400 so that our students will be given direct feedback on a body of their work to gain a better sense of their strengths and weakness prior to taking upper level BFA classes. This will help them to fine tune their existing projects as well as future projects. It also enables students to better compete for internships in the field as it will improve their portfolios well before senior year.

COMD Adjuncts: Professionals Who Teach

Among the department's greatest assets are the over 85 instructors that teach part-time while working as creative during the day or in the evening of 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 our students stay abreast of current industry trends and broaden their professional networks. A few of our adjuncts have been speakers as part of our *Meet the Pros* Series and we are also highlighting those adjuncts on our staff whose writing has achieved recognition in the field.

Students also benefit from the availability of 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



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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

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

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.

Fun Facts:

Many COMD students have gone on to win industry accolades such as 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. Ameru Lulu, who interned with the One Club and is now an art director at Ogilvy, was named to the Drum's 50 Under 30, of emerging female talent, as was Emely Perez, another COMD alumnus was also named to this list. To learn more about these two former COMD students, watch this video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qeGmuZ35tQw>.



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The Soho Memory Project is a documentary directed by City Tech student, Or Szyflingier; the film won for 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, you can view [Ms. Szyflingier's website](#).

One alumnus 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.



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