



The Classes

Creative Thinking

Designed to help students see the world from unexpected angles and become comfortable taking risks. Students will explore where ideas come from, brainstorm techniques, and new, varied expressions of ideas. As an early class, it also serves as an ice breaker and opportunity for the cohort to bond. Assignments could include daily sketchbooks, improv, redefining reality, over-the-top creative exercises, and finding new ways to observe truths. Work will be evaluated on originality, variety, and quantity.

Anatomy of an Agency

From client to commercial, this seminar-style series will show students how things get made. Brand strategy, comms, creative development, internal and client reviews, production and post production are all covered. By the end of this experience, students will have a grasp of terminology, key roles and departments in the agency (and industry), and project workflow and processes.

Adobe CS, An Introduction

Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator basics, shortcuts, file types, file formatting and how to prepare files for production.

Strategy

Nothing great ever came from a weak strategy. Students will learn how to accurately identify a problem, identify a true insight (versus just an observation), empathy for the target audience and client, and how to write and analyze a creative brief. Strategy is integral to the whole program and foundational in its relevance.

Design Principles

Introduces critical design principles through exercises, examples, and projects that begin on paper. In this class, students develop the vocabulary of visual communication while learning about hierarchy, layout, areas of focus, color, contrast, and application of typography. Students will also learn fundamental production practices, the Art Director's role in a team and agency environment, and the differences between an agency Art Director and Designer.

Introduction to Copywriting

Copywriting and advertising terminology, the role of elements (e.g. what does a headline do), communicating in varied voices, and learning to write naturally when a message is far from natural.

Team Projects 1

Introduces students to the basic collaborative work structure, AD/CW teams, in which they will work through the remainder of both school and their professional careers. Students will leverage knowledge gleaned from Strategy class and focus on techniques of team collaboration and concept development. Students will use these tools to execute ideas for ad campaigns through marker comps. This class is about ideas, not final, tight executions.

Headlines

What is a headline, and what is it supposed to do? Aren't tweets, captions, social, and meme copy also headlines? This is a class about succinct writing. Complementary to Intro to Copywriting, it also stresses strategic thinking and writing in varied voices.

Typography 1

Letterforms. Nitty gritty. The crucial, critical details of managing typography. Designed as the ultimate intro class for all designers and art directors.

Typography 2

Typography is the voice through which printed words (and words on screens) are expressed. Students will learn, on and off the computer, the elements of typography with focus on conceptual, practical, and technical (free vs. paid, web vs. print) type choices and treatment. What does a typeface convey, and what stories can you tell with letterforms?

Comping

A critical skill for professional art directors and designers, this is a class that will train students to prepare visuals, from multiple sources, for meetings. Students will learn how to assemble images for their own ideas while also learning the questions to ask when tasked with producing comps for others in an agency.

Team Projects 2

Groups of two or three work on spec ad assignments for their portfolios. Assignments include consumer packaged goods and services, as students learn to craft selling messages with aplomb and originality.

Scripts 1

Formats, word counts, casting, storytelling, dialog. It's all covered here. Media to include radio, and video (TV or streaming), with an emphasis on entertaining, original, strategic messaging. In this class, students actually produce commercials in the agency's in-house recording studio.

Design Concepts

Students will learn to identify truths about brands and leverage typography, color, and layout to create simple, impactful design solutions. This is the first designers-only class where students begin to create pieces for their portfolios.

Capstone Focus: Check-in 1

Less of an academic class and more of a focused workshop, this is where real-world problem solving becomes refined and directed. Students will present and execute ideas that are designed to solve real-world problems. Work begins for this class prior to its first meeting.

Concepting for Tech

Sometimes the media and the message are inseparable. What's possible? What makes sense for your brand? How can old tech be hacked and new tech engage your audience? This class will introduce students to new technologies, and they will create innovative ad campaigns that were not possible five years ago.

Branding One: Create and Refresh

Refreshing a tired brand, defining a brand just being born, repairing a brand that feels ... wrong. These are some possible projects in this class, where students will learn to identify truths about a brand that are relevant, powerful, and timeless, and then express them in a logo and identity suite.

Motion Graphics / Kinetic Type

A designer's ability to add motion to type and graphic elements is quickly moving from a "nice to have" to a "must have." In this class, students will learn After Effects to bring presentations, social posts, and videos to life through motion.

Branding Two: Designing for Existing Brands

How do you work a fresh idea into an established brand (think: an Academy inside an established agency)? This class prepares students for the kinds of projects they are likely to get on their first job while also allowing room for invention, brand extensions, and creative solutions to practical branding limitations.

Personal Branding with Benny Gold

How do you sell yourself? How do you brand an idea? A project? A person? In this class, existing student projects are given a coat of glitter, the cohort's branding will come in for a landing, and every student will become a visual brand of their own through logos, taglines, design of resumes, and personal website copy. Even email signatures.

Teams 3

Groups of two or three work on spec ad assignments for their portfolios. Assignments included inventing a brand that solves a personal problem.

Teams 4 (TV-focused)

Groups of two or three work on spec ad assignments for their portfolios. Assignments are focused on video/TV executions.

Teams 5

Groups of two or three work on spec ad assignments for their portfolios. Assignments include “considered purchases,” more-expensive products with long lists of features.

Competitions

Let’s win some pencils in the international British D&AD student competition. There are 17 briefs, this class will help student teams create submissions to the competition in their disciplines.

Teams Projects 7

Creating more spec campaigns for portfolios. Projects TBD.

Capstone Focus: Production

Less of an academic class and more of a focused workshop, this is where real-world problem solving becomes refined and directed. In this section of Capstone, students will execute (produce) ideas that are designed to solve real-world problems.

Copy Crafting

The fine-toothed comb. Working and reworking headlines and copy from existing campaigns to get them portfolio-ready. This is taught in one-on-one sessions with a senior copywriter or the Academy Director, Dan.

Layout Refinement

In Teams classes, ideas are only taken so far with regards to craft and execution. In one-on-one sessions with a senior agency art director, art directions students workshop and improve existing projects.

Design Refinement

One of the agency’s senior designers will work, one-on-one, with each designer guiding them to polish and improve existing projects for their portfolios.

Portfolio Polishing

Presentation, organization, and publishing of student web sites. Focus on project descriptors, resumes, personal logos, the ubiquitous “About Me” page – This is a class about packaging the person and projects. This is the final stretch, leading to graduation!