



FACULTY-LED  
STUDY ABROAD

## KIIS Netherlands Program, Summer 2027

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### ART 496 Topics: Travel via Graphic Design

**Instructor:** Anthony Mead

**Email:** amead@transy.edu

**Instructor's office hours:** on site and by appointment

*Syllabus subject to change*

#### 1. Course Description:

Graphic Design and visual communication permeate travel and culture, making both approachable. From wayfinding on transit to culturally relevant advertisements to menus and beyond. Students in Travel via Graphic Design will take inspiration from their adventures and encounters abroad to create icons and posters that communicate broadly to audiences about visited sites and assist in the travel experiences of others.

The visual language of non-text-based communication is critical to navigating unfamiliar cultural environments. Students will reflect on their own encounters with wayfinding and moments of being lost or confused. Students will develop original iconographic systems based on their travels. Recognizing that design communicates place, students will design posters to promote specific locations—ranging from an entire city to a local cafe—distilling the essence of a place into a compelling visual narrative. Instruction will be given through demonstrations, lectures, discussions, and critiques.

## 2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

### KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

### Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

## 3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

- Collect, examine, and analyze graphic design specimens and ephemera in contemporary and traditional cultural locations and public spaces of the Netherlands.
- Problem-solve and communicate graphic design content through various iterative stages and forms.
- Observe, translate, and react to cultural similarities and differences in graphic communication.
- Generate cross-cultural graphic communication, considering graphic design as a universal language.
- Evocatively apply design principles to the experience of travel to communicate the essence of place.
- Students will participate in peer critiques, providing constructive feedback and articulating their design intentions.

## 4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

Graphic Design and visual communication permeate travel and culture, making them approachable. From wayfinding on transit to culturally relevant advertisements and beyond.

Students will be expected to keep a regular digital journal of “graphic specimens” they encounter on their travels. These will be used as students move to creating wayfinding icons of their own in response to moving around the multi-transit environment of the Netherlands. Students will also take inspiration from typography and create custom typographic visuals related to their experience. Finally, students will choose a meaningful location from their travels and make a poster that evocatively promotes that location, pulling from vivid images, memories, and/or emotional responses they encountered. Along the way, courses will meet for discussion/feedback on design work, group feedback, presentation of materials, cultural site visits, and critique.

## **6. Required Readings and Materials:**

### **Software and Hardware:**

Adobe CC - Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign (helpful, but not required)\*

Laptop or Tabelet

Digital Camera (phone or tablet is sufficient/recommended)

**Additional Optional Materials:** Sketchbook, Pens, Pencils, Paper, Eraser, Ruler, Micron Pens, Markers and any additional drawing supplies.

\*Adobe software programs on a laptop are encouraged but not required. Alternative software such as Procreate, Affinity, Gimp, Inkscape, etc., is acceptable, but the instructor has limited familiarity. *Canva templates will not be accepted.* Coursework is suggested to be completed digitally, though hand-drawn physical works will be accepted if presented in a clean, well-drafted manner that demonstrates craft.

## **7. Graded Assignments:**

Graphic Specimen Digital Journal - 25%

Class discussion/Participation - 25%

Wayfinding and Typography Assignments - 30%

Evocative Place Poster - 20%

Graphic Specimen Digital Journal: This will be a Google Doc that you will upload images of graphic design “specimens” you find along the way. Examples include icons, wayfinding, typography, logos, posters, etc.

Class Discussions/Participation: In class, we will discuss formal strategies, creative ideas, and share insights related to our experience being immersed in the Dutch culture. Attendance is required for discussion credit.

Typography Assignments: Using inspiration from your travels, past experience, and personal reflection, you will create a custom typeface for two emotional adjectives related to your travels. The final visual outcome of the type from must invoke the work itself.

Wayfinding Assignments: Vast travel options exist in the Netherlands: bikes, trams, trains, planes, boats, and on foot, to name a few. All of these options create unique navigation problem-solving possibilities. You'll also be encountering a new culture with different norms and customs. Responding to these experiences, you'll create a set of icons that visually communicate how to proceed to users who encounter the same situation.

Evocative Place Poster: Meaning and the places it happens is core to travel. You will choose a location that was meaningful to you during your time in the Netherlands. It could be a big place like a whole city or a small space like a coffee shop or park. You'll be designing a poster that communicates the importance of that place and encourages people to visit it themselves.

100-90%=A Represents an exceptionally high achievement as a result of aptitude, effort and intellectual initiative. Work created exceeded all of the requirements for the project/course.

89-80%=B Represents a high achievement as a result of ability and effort. Work created met all requirements for the project and exceeded some of them.

79-70%=C Represents average achievement. Work met all requirements for the project/course.

69-60%=D Represents the minimum passing grade. Work met some requirements for the project/course and failed to meet some.

59% and below=E Represents unsatisfactory performance and indicates failure in project/course. Work did not significantly meet requirements for the project/course.

## **8. Generative AI Policy:**

**Generative AI is permitted/encouraged in some ways, with proper attribution, but prohibited in other ways.**

Students are allowed, encouraged, and even required to use Generative AI in some ways but are prohibited from using it in other ways. Keep in mind that any content produced by generative AI can "hallucinate" (produce false information), so students are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of any AI-generated content. Examples of citing AI are available at: <https://libguides.wku.edu/stylewrite/ai>.

**Students are permitted and encouraged to use generative AI in the following ways:**

- Brainstorming: You may use generative AI to stimulate creativity, generate ideas, or brainstorm topics for papers, presentations, and discussions. The generated content must serve as a steppingstone, not a final product.

- Citation Assistance: AI tools can be used to manage, format, and organize citations and references, promoting adherence to academic writing standards and specific style guides required for individual assignments.
- Grammar and Style Checking: AI-powered writing enhancement tools may be used to help with spelling, grammar, syntax, and stylistic errors.
- Concept Understanding: Generative AI can be used to explain or simulate concepts taught in class, aiding in a deeper understanding.
- Research Assistance: AI can be used to conduct initial research, compile data, and summarize articles, books, or papers. It should not replace traditional research methods but rather enhance them.

**You may not use generative AI in coursework in the following ways:**

- Plagiarism: Using AI-generated content as your original work without attribution. This includes essays, papers, presentations, and exam answers.
- Data Manipulation: Using AI tools to alter data or create misleading information.
- Misrepresentation of Skills: Using generative AI to complete tasks that are meant to assess your knowledge and skills.
- Confidentiality Breach: Using AI tools that might violate KIIS/university policies or laws related to data privacy and confidentiality.

**Metacognitive Reflection.** In addition to a proper citation, the student should include the following statement with any assignment where generative AI is used for assistance.

"I used generative AI [INSERT NAME OF PLATFORM] for assistance in the following ways on this assignment: [INSERT WAYS USED, such as brainstorming, citation assistance, grammar and style checking, concept understanding, and research assistance, etc.]."

## **9. Attendance Policy:**

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

## **10. Disability Accommodation:**

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, [maria.canning@wku.edu](mailto:maria.canning@wku.edu), to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, [haley.mctaggart@wku.edu](mailto:haley.mctaggart@wku.edu), if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

### **11. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:**

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / [ena.demir@wku.edu](mailto:ena.demir@wku.edu)) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / [michael.crowe@wku.edu](mailto:michael.crowe@wku.edu)). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to

WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see  
<https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.