The Graphic Communications Handbook contains information on the Pre-Graphic Communications program, the B.S. Degree in Graphic Communications, and the Graphic Communications minor. It includes the policies and requirements for each area as well as information on registering for courses.
The Graphic Communications (GCOM) degree is designed to prepare individuals for entry-level positions in the graphic communications industry. It is a three-track program, with emphases in 3D Graphics, Digital Design and Production, and Interactive Multimedia.

The 3D Graphics emphasis helps a graduate prepare for entry into technical graphics, the game industry, or as a computer animator. The Digital Design and Production emphasis prepares a graduate to create and produce graphics and layouts in areas such as advertising, publishing, and printing. The Interactive Multimedia emphasis concentrates on preparing the individual for a role as a multimedia and/or web designer. All three options heavily emphasize the use of computer technology as the key tool for the graphic communicator. Macintosh and PC computer platforms are taught, with the focus being on the Macintosh platform, as it is the primary computer utilized in the graphics industry.

The Graphic Communications program provides students with learning experiences that will assist them in becoming competent graphic communicators. The program is designed to expose the students to many real-life situations they will face in the workplace. It also strives to produce students who are accomplished with many of the new technologies used in today’s graphics industry. The program is multidisciplinary, with students enrolling in courses in Music Industry, Film, Mass Communications, Computer Science, and Graphic Design.

Graduates of this program are skilled in many areas of the graphics industry. This background provides them experiences in computer graphics, multimedia and web, game development, photography, printing, advertising, graphic design, presentation graphics, television motion graphics, video editing, CAD, and computer animation.

### Student Learning Outcomes

The program of study is designed to prepare a professional graphic communicator who possesses the skills and knowledge, acquired through education and hands-on experience, necessary to secure entry-level employment in the graphic communications industry.

- The student will be able to apply effective oral, written, graphic, and listening skills.
- The student will be able to implement various forms of manual and computer technology inclusive in the development and production of the visual image. This includes the many industry standard hardware and software applications used by the graphic communications industry.
- The student will be able to apply the methods of the graphic communications industry as described by the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), Printing Industries of America (PIA), and Graphic Communications Association (GCA).
- The student will be able to understand the sequence of estimating work. This includes the design and implementation of a company, the establishing of BHR’s, equipment selection, workspace design, and job estimation.
- The student will be able to initiate a design project, formulate and communicate the purpose and scope of their project, work independently to complete all aspects of the project within the assigned time frame, and present and interpret their work to industry practitioners.
Graphic Communications and Its Related Disciplines
Graphic Communications, while dealing with design, focuses more on the production and technology aspects of the graphics industry. A degree in Graphic Design focuses on design and aesthetics, incorporating the fine arts and art history courses into the degree. A Mass Communications degree is more involved with content and placement of mass media, such as public relations and advertising, journalism, and photojournalism.

Graduating with a Graphic Communications Degree
Upon graduation, the student will receive a Bachelor of Science degree in Graphic Communications, with an emphasis in either 3D Graphics, Digital Design and Production, or Interactive Multimedia. Graduates of this program are skilled in many of the areas within the graphics industry. This background provides graduates experiences in computer graphics, multimedia, photography, printing, advertising, graphic design, presentation graphics, television, CAD, and computer animation.

The Graphic Communications degree with an emphasis in 3D Graphics focuses on technical illustration, 3D modeling, and animation and simulations. Within this emphasis students take classes using software such as AutoCAD, Final Cut Pro, 3D StudioMax, MAYA, Pro Tools, and Photoshop. Classes include video and audio production. Graduates will find work in multimedia houses, small-market animation production houses, engineering graphics, game design, video editing, television stations, music industry, and advertising agencies.

The Graphic Communications degree with an emphasis in Digital Design and Production involves primarily the Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign software. Classes are focused on using the software to design graphics and layouts, create new graphics and images, and manipulate and enhance images. Projects are prepared from concept to production. At the 400 level students take prepress and production courses in which they learn to prepare projects for an offset lithographic press using digital prepress techniques. Graduates will find work in advertising agencies, newspapers, magazines, printing companies, in-house corporations, and music industry and multimedia production.

The Graphic Communications degree with an emphasis in Interactive Multimedia focuses on web and multimedia. Within this emphasis students take classes using software such as Flash, Dreamweaver, Final Cut Pro, and Photoshop. Classes include PHP/SQL and JavaScript. Graduates will find work in multimedia houses, web design firms, small-market music industry, and advertising agencies.

Graphic Communications Core Courses
For all students within the Graphic Communications program there is a common core of courses. The core includes all of the introductory courses that lead into the emphases to ensure graduates have a basic knowledge of all three areas. This also helps students make an educated decision about which emphasis to focus. The common core also includes upper-level classes such as project management and the GCOM final project.

GCOM 469: Graphic Communications Internship
Although not a graduation requirement, an internship in the Graphic Communications field is highly recommended. An internship provides students with a greater understanding of the opportunities available in the Graphic Communications industry. It also provides a valuable experience that will be an asset when obtaining employment after graduation.

An internship is an important addition to a résumé and may be taken for course credit. A student can register for a maximum of four internship credits per semester. Multiple internships can be taken, up to a total of 12 credits. If a student decides to complete an internship for course credit, the following must be done before registering for the internship:

1. Obtain an internship.
   The student is responsible for finding and securing an internship position in the Graphic Communications field.
2. Calculate the number of credits.
   One internship credit is equal to 10 hours of work per week for 16 weeks (or a total of 160 hours). Only hours spent on graphics work count, so if part of the time is spent answering phones, for instance, those hours cannot be included towards the internship total.
3. Complete the **Graphic Communications Internship Agreement**. Both the student and the employer must complete and sign this form.

4. Turn in the Internship Agreement to the student’s program advisor for final approval of the internship.

The following must be done **during** the internship:

1. Keep a *typed* journal of the internship.  
   Record the date and number of hours worked, a description of what was done that day, and any other questions or comments.
2. Collect samples of project pieces worked on during the internship.

The following must be done **at the end** of the internship:

1. Write a short paper reflecting on the experience and what was learned.
2. The employer completes the **Employer Internship Evaluation** form.
3. Turn in the journal, project samples, paper, and employer evaluation to the student’s program advisor.

*The Graphic Communications Internship Agreement form and the Employer Internship Evaluation form can be obtained from the Department of Technology office or the Graphic Communications website.*

**GCOM 459A & 459B: Graphic Communications Final Project**

To fulfill Graphic Communications graduation requirements, students will propose a capstone project that will pull together the skills and knowledge obtained from their time at MSUM as a Graphic Communications major.

The final project is taken over a time period of two semesters. Some examples of acceptable projects are: sets of technical drawings; animations; simulations or games; company branding, advertising and marketing collateral; magazine or book design; website design; or multimedia enhanced CD/DVDs.  

**GCOM 459A and 459B can be taken either Fall–Spring semesters or Spring–Fall semesters, but cannot be taken during Summer semester.**

**Graphic Communications Degree with a Double Emphasis**

Although most students focus on one emphasis, it is possible to pursue a Graphic Communications degree with a double emphasis. Choosing a double emphasis will **add one or more semesters** to the student’s graduation date.

The additional requirements for a Graphic Communications degree with a double emphasis are as follows:

1. Complete all Graphic Communications core classes.
2. Complete all required courses in both emphases, with **no classes counting in both electives and emphases**.
3. Complete two different project proposals in GCOM 459A, one for each emphasis.
4. GCOM 459B must be taken two semesters, once for each emphasis.

**Declaring a Graphic Communications Major**

Before declaring a Graphic Communications major, students must first complete the Pre-Graphic Communications program. Once completed, students must apply for admission to the Graphic Communications program.  

*(See the next sections, Pre-Graphic Communications and Graphic Communications Program Admission Policy, for more information.)*

**Registering for Courses as a Graphic Communications Major**

Students admitted to the Graphic Communications program may register for most 300- and 400-level Graphic Communications courses without a “program override” from a Graphic Communications program advisor.

Courses that require a “program override” from a program advisor are:

- GCOM 390  Topics in Graphic Communications
- GCOM 459A  Graphic Communications Final Project A
- GCOM 459B  Graphic Communications Final Project B
- GCOM 469  Graphic Communications Internship
- GCOM 490  Topics in Graphic Communications

Students may register for 300- and 400-level courses within Graphic Communications as follows:

1. Students **must** meet the specified course prerequisites for each Graphic Communications course.
2. If a “program override” is required, it must be obtained from a Graphic Communications program advisor **before** registering.

**Graduation Requirements for a Graphic Communications Major**

To graduate with a B.S. degree in Graphic Communications, students must complete **all** courses in the major with a “C” or above (which includes core, emphasis, and related requirements) and have an overall GPA of at least 2.5.
Admission to the Graphic Communications Program

Beginning Fall 2008, MSUM students pursuing a Graphic Communications major must apply for admission to the Graphic Communications program. Admission to the program enables students to register for upper-level courses within the GCOM major and to pursue a B.S. degree in Graphic Communications.

The student-initiated Application for Admission must be approved by the Graphic Communications program advisors. (The Application for Admission can be obtained from the Department of Technology office or the Graphic Communications website.)

The student’s application must provide evidence that:

1. The student has earned a “C” or above in all Pre-Graphic Communications coursework. (This includes any coursework accepted into the Pre-Graphic Communications program by transfer).
2. The student’s overall GPA is at least 2.5 at the time of application for admission.
3. The student has completed (or is currently enrolled in) the 60th semester credit.
4. The student has completed (or is currently enrolled in) the required MSUM or accepted equivalent transfer coursework. (See coursework listed below.)

   - Digital Design & Production Emphasis: GCOM 252
   - 3D Graphics Emphasis: MC 251 or FILM 172 & FILM 100
   - Interactive Multimedia Emphasis: CSIS 212 or CSIS 311 will be taken after the completion of GCOM 366 & 368.

CMST 100            TECH 113            GCOM 216
MATH 127            GCOM 150            GCOM 255
CSIS 115            GCOM 152            GCOM 266
MC 230

Pre-Graphic Communications

About Pre-Graphic Communications

The Pre-Graphic Communications program is a series of 100- and 200-level foundation courses students must complete before they are admitted to the Graphic Communications program. Within these courses, students explore all three emphasis areas in the Graphic Communications major, and will be able to make an informed decision on which one they would like to pursue. The Pre-Graphic Communications program is designed to develop the necessary insight, skills, and knowledge-base needed to become a successful Graphic Communications major.

Registering for Courses as a Pre-Graphic Communications Student

Declared Pre-Graphic Communications majors may register for 100- and 200-level Graphic Communications courses without a “program override” as long as the specified course prerequisites have been met. The only exception is GCOM 290 Topics in Graphic Communications, which will require a “program override” from a Graphic Communications program advisor.

Students may not register for upper-level courses within Graphic Communications until they have applied, and been accepted, to the Graphic Communications program.

Completing Pre-Graphic Communications

Pre-Graphic Communications students must complete all required 100- and 200-level courses in the major with a “C” or above (which includes core, emphasis, and related requirements) and have an overall GPA of at least 2.5 in order to finish Pre-Graphic Communications.

Once students complete all of the requirements in Pre-Graphic Communications, they may apply for admission to the Graphic Communications program. When applying for admission, students must state the Graphic Communications emphasis they intend to pursue. (See the next section, Graphic Communications Program Admission Policy, for more information.)
About the Graphic Communications Minor

The Graphic Communications minor is segmented into three elements: The **required core**, a grouping of **restricted electives**, and a set of **free electives** within the Graphic Communications courses.

The **required core** (6 credits) includes **GCOM 255 Beginning Computer Graphics** and **GCOM 266 Introduction to Multimedia**. These two courses are the foundation for the Graphic Communications program, introducing the student to the building blocks of the industry. They are also the **prerequisites** to advance to any one of the three options in the restricted electives section.

The **restricted electives** (9 credits) are broken down into the emphases that make up the Graphic Communications major: **3D Graphics**, **Digital Design and Production**, and **Multimedia Development**. Students must select one of the three groupings.

The **GCOM electives** (6 credits) provide the student an opportunity to take supporting courses that will enhance the learning experience. A student with a Graphic Communications minor can take any GCOM course, as long as the prerequisites are met. The only exceptions are the Graphic Communications Project Management course (GCOM 452), the Graphic Communications Final Project courses (GCOM 459A and GCOM 459B), and the Graphic Communications Internship (GCOM 469). These courses are excluded from electives and are prohibited from being used in a Graphic Communications minor.

As with restrictions for the Graphic Communications major, students in the minor must complete **all** of the 200-level courses in the minor with a “C” or above (which includes the core, restricted electives, and free electives) and have an **overall GPA of at least 2.5** before they can proceed to the 300- and 400-level GCOM courses. In addition, Graphic Communications minors must have completed (or be currently enrolled in) the **45th semester credit** by the time of registration.
Enrollment in Courses by Non-Majors and Non-Minors

Several courses offered by the Graphic Communications program have been identified by other departments as required or elective courses for students in programs other than Graphic Communications. For non-majors and non-minors, all 200-level and above Graphic Communications courses will require that a "program override" be obtained from a Graphic Communications program advisor.

Students who are not Graphic Communications majors or minors may complete a maximum of 6 upper-level credits without seeking admission to the program. These students may enroll in upper-level Graphic Communications courses as follows:

1. Students must have completed (or be currently enrolled in) the 45th semester credit by the time of registration.
2. Students must meet the specified course prerequisites for each Graphic Communications course.
3. Enrollment in upper-level Graphic Communications courses will require that a “program override” be obtained from a Graphic Communications program advisor.
Graphic Communications courses are designed to build knowledge from one course to another. Because of this, there is an important sequencing that must be followed. To move through the Graphic Communications program in a timely manner, students must be aware of course sequencing, course prerequisites, and semesters courses are offered.

**Graphic Communications Course Prerequisites**

Students are responsible for completing all prerequisites for every Graphic Communications class. Students should be aware of the prerequisites and plan ahead because some Graphic Communications courses are only offered in the fall or spring, not both.

The following chart lists the Graphic Communications courses and their prerequisites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE #</th>
<th>COURSE NAME</th>
<th>PREREQUISITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 150</td>
<td>Survey of GCOM</td>
<td>No prereq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 152</td>
<td>Design for GCOM I</td>
<td>No prereq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 216</td>
<td>3D Modeling</td>
<td>TECH 113 or ENG 113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 252</td>
<td>Design for GCOM II</td>
<td>GCOM 152 &amp; GCOM 255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 255</td>
<td>Begin Comp Graphics</td>
<td>No prereq. (although not a prereq, GCOM 152 should be taken before, or in the same semester as, GCOM 255)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 266</td>
<td>Intro to Multimedia</td>
<td>No prereq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 290</td>
<td>Topics in GCOM</td>
<td>Changes with topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 316</td>
<td>3D Animation</td>
<td>GCOM 216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 355</td>
<td>Interm Comp Graphics</td>
<td>GCOM 255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 366</td>
<td>Dreamweaver/CSS</td>
<td>GCOM 266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 368</td>
<td>Multimedia w/Flash</td>
<td>GCOM 366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 390</td>
<td>Topics in GCOM</td>
<td>Changes with topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 416</td>
<td>Adv 3D Graphics</td>
<td>GCOM 316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 452</td>
<td>GCOM Project Mgmt</td>
<td>Taken in conjunction with GCOM 459A or 459B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 455</td>
<td>Adv Comp Graphics</td>
<td>GCOM 355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 457</td>
<td>Digital Prepress</td>
<td>GCOM 455 or consent of instructor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information about Graphic Communications Courses

Not all Graphic Communications courses are offered in both the fall and spring semesters. Students need to plan ahead and be aware of this in order to complete the prerequisites before a course is offered. *If the proper prerequisites are not met for a course only offered in the fall or in the spring, the student will have to wait to take that course the next time it is offered (a year later)*. This will result in a student pushing back his or her graduation date for an entire year.

The following chart lists the Graphic Communications courses that are only offered in specific semesters. GCOM courses not on this list are usually offered both fall and spring semesters. *(Please note, no Graphic Communications courses are offered in the summer.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE #</th>
<th>COURSE NAME</th>
<th>SEMESTER OFFERED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 150</td>
<td>Survey of GCOM</td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 152</td>
<td>Design for GCOM I</td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 252</td>
<td>Design for GCOM II</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 290</td>
<td>Topics in GCOM</td>
<td>On Demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 316</td>
<td>3D Animation</td>
<td>Spring (first half)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 390</td>
<td>Topics in GCOM</td>
<td>On Demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 416</td>
<td>Adv 3D Graphics</td>
<td>Spring (second half)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 452</td>
<td>GCOM Project Mgmt</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 455</td>
<td>Adv Comp Graphics</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 457</td>
<td>Digital Prepress</td>
<td>Fall (first half)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 458</td>
<td>Digital Production</td>
<td>Fall (second half)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 466</td>
<td>Adv Interact Graphics</td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 490</td>
<td>Topics in GCOM</td>
<td>On Demand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggested Course Sequencing for Pre-Graphic Communications

The following chart is the suggested sequencing of courses within the Pre-Graphic Communications program. It takes into account both the course prerequisites and the specific semesters some courses are offered.

This chart is the suggested way to stay on track; this sequencing is not guaranteed. Some of the ways a student may not be on this suggested sequence is: a student begins the Pre-GCOM program in the spring, does not register in a timely manner and a course fills, or does not receive a “C” or above in a course and must repeat it. Straying from this suggested sequence may add one or more semesters to the student’s graduation date. If it is necessary to rearrange courses within the sequence, students must pay close attention to the course prerequisites and the specific semesters some courses are offered in order to avoid adding additional semesters.

SUGGESTED COURSE SEQUENCING FOR GCOM Pre-Graphic Communications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year in Pre-Graphic Communications – Fall Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 150 (1 cr)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year in Pre-Graphic Communications – Spring Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 266 (3 cr)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second Year in Pre-Graphic Communications – Fall Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GCOM 216 (3 cr)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second Year in Pre-Graphic Communications – Spring Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MC 230 (3 cr)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Digital Design & Production Emphasis only  **3D Graphics Emphasis only

Suggested Course Sequencing for the Graphic Communications Major

The charts on the following page are the suggested sequencing of courses within the Graphic Communications major. It takes into account both the course prerequisites and the specific semesters some courses are offered. (Please note, there is a chart for each of the three emphases, so be sure to refer to the appropriate one.)

These charts are the suggested way to stay on track; this sequencing is not guaranteed. Some of the ways a student may not be on this suggested sequence is: a student begins the Pre-GCOM program in the spring, does not register in a timely manner and a course fills, or does not receive a “C” or above in a course and must repeat it. Straying from this suggested sequence may add one or more semesters to the student’s graduation date. If it is necessary to rearrange courses within the sequence, students must pay close attention to the course prerequisites and the specific semesters some courses are offered in order to avoid adding additional semesters.
The Graphic Communications list serve is where all **official** Graphic Communications notices are posted. It is important that **all** students in the Graphic Communications program sign up for this list serve. Non-Graphic Communications majors or minors who are interested in receiving information are also welcome.

Through the list serve, students will receive important information about the Graphic Communications program, such as:

- advising and registration
- curriculum updates and changes
- internship opportunities
- Digital Arts Club activities
- field trips
- etc…

The Graphic Communications list serve is **not** used for homework or other information within courses. Some classes in the program have their own list serves to subscribe to when enrolled.

To subscribe to the Graphic Communications list serve:

- send a message to: [majordomo@mnstate.edu](mailto:majordomo@mnstate.edu)
- leave the subject blank
- in the body of the message, put the following: `subscribe gcomlist`

After sending the email, students will receive a message saying they have successfully subscribed to the gcomlist. Save this message; it explains how to unsubscribe.

If students would like to **be removed from the gcomlist**, they must **unsubscribe** themselves!

This list serve is also a way for students in the program to ask each other questions or have discussions. **Remember everyone subscribed to the GCOM list serve will see messages sent to it. If students “Reply” they will reply to the original sender. If students “Reply All” they will reply to the list serve.**

To send messages, send them to: [gcomlist@mnstate.edu](mailto:gcomlist@mnstate.edu)
To find out more information about the Graphic Communications program, please contact:

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Moorhead, MN 56563
Phone: (218) 477-2104
Fax: (218) 477-5958

**Or visit the Graphic Communications website:**
www.mnstate.edu/gcom