



**VISUAL LITERACY PROGRAM:
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO TEACHING THE BASIC ELEMENTS
AND PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN**

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The Visual Literacy Program was the result of a two-year feasibility study involving four disciplines to team teach a freshman level course on the basic elements and principles of design. This program is one of the first in the country to take this unique approach in delivering a subject matter common to Art, Clothing and Textiles, Architecture, and Interior Design. The estimated 200 students were lectured by all the faculty (present in all of the lectures) on a rotating schedule to include one faculty teaching his/her area of expertise to all of the eight sections with approximately 25 students in each class. This program refers to a collection of courses cooperatively designed, taught, and administered by the College of Architecture, College of Fine and Performing Arts, and College of Human Resources and Family Sciences. These courses (lecture and lab) are required of all freshman students interested in the design profession and fine arts.

Students in the Visual Literacy Core Studio and Lecture developed critical, analytical, and expressive skills in a variety of visual contexts. Students developed the above skills through instruction in a variety of visual problems that promote optical and tactile sensitivities; explore different modes of visual expression as a means to represent ideas; develop a clear understanding of the creative process; encourage each student to conduct, express, and engage in criticism; and develop a student's ability to apply analysis in the search of formal compositional understandings. Altogether, the students were required to (1) apply critical thinking and creative processes, (2) develop skills and understandings of presentation, (3) understand influences in design, and (4) demonstrate professional practices.