

Basic compositional theories

class meets tth
8:30am–11:20am
42388
12:30pm–3:20pm
43225
at art 201

this course is 4 semester
units and graded.

andrea english
lecturer
graphic design

san jose state university
art 327
andrea.english@sjsu.edu

office hours:
tth 11:30am–12:30pm

course syllabus and handouts
[http://www.sjsu.edu/people/
andrea.english/](http://www.sjsu.edu/people/andrea.english/)

Elements

the major forces of composition

<i>Space</i>	the area in which all elements act
<i>Line</i>	an energy or force that can divide, penetrate, enclose, or define space, line can direct motion force, opposition, or shape
<i>Solid</i>	an unbroken area having definite shape
<i>Mass</i>	either a unit weight or the collective weight of a group of elements
<i>Tone</i>	shades of gray
<i>Texture</i>	interwoven pattern of light and dark tones

Principles

the basic interrelated theories on how to build and work with the elements

<i>Relationship</i>	the connecting force (harmony & proportion)
<i>Transition</i>	an orderly progression from one element to another—implies the concepts of direction, movement, or flow through space and time
<i>Repetition</i>	the reoccurring use of the same element or theme
<i>Opposition</i>	the attraction of extremes, used to stimulate excitement, and tension
<i>Hierarchy</i>	the order of dominance among the various elements within a composition
<i>Position</i>	the placement of elements in a specific area. Position demands an understanding of space as an organized total to which elements are applied according to the various principles of design

Design Attributes

qualities or characteristics inherent in any composition or art form

<i>Balance</i>	a distribution of one or more elements which visually equal each other. balance may be symmetrical or asymmetrical. symmetrical balance is equal on both sides in weight and tone, while asymmetrical balance may be unequal in position and intensity
<i>Contrast</i>	an abrupt shift
<i>Rhythm</i>	the moving force connecting the elements within a composition