The Elements and Principles of Design are essential to Graphic Designers. They are the “rules” of what makes or breaks a good Graphic Design Artist. These Elements and Principles are universal in every art form: painting, sculpture, fashion design, graphics, etc.

In Graphic Arts and Design, you will need to know what the Elements and Principles are in order to create successful materials and images. As we go over each Element and Principle through the rest of the semester, your projects must start to reflect what we are learning. Let’s start off with a handful of Elements and Principles.

**Elements of Design Are As Follows:**

- Point
- Line
- Form, Shape, Space
- Movement
- Color
- Pattern
- Texture

**Principles of Design Are As Follows:**

- Balance (Symmetry and Asymmetry)
- Proportion
- Rhythm
- Emphasis
- Unity
Elements of Design

Point

A point is an element that has position, but no extension. It is a single mark in space with a precise, but limited location. Line or form is a natural result of multiple points in space.

Line

A line is an element characterized by length and direction. Lines create contours and shapes, and are often used to convey a specific kind of feeling or point to an important feature in design. Lines are also used to create perspective, and dominant directional lines are often adopted to create a sense of continuance in a composition. In addition, lines that are grouped together often create a sense of value, density or texture.
Color

Color is the response of the eye to differing wavelengths of radiation within the visible spectrum. The visible spectrum is what we perceive as light. It is the part of the electromagnetic spectrum that we can see.

There are many different kinds of color systems, and many different theories on color. We will get into that kind of detail in a later column. For now we will focus on the basics, using a color wheel for illustration purposes. There are three main components of color:

* **Hue**: Where the color is positioned on the color wheel. Terms such as red, blue-green, and mauve all define the hue of a given color.

* **Value**: The general lightness or darkness of a color. In general, how close to black or white a given color is.

* **Saturation**: The intensity, or level of chroma, of a color. The more gray a color has in it, the less chroma it has.
Principles of Design

Symmetry
Symmetry occurs when the weight of a composition is evenly distributed around a central, vertical, or horizontal axis. Under normal circumstances it assumes identical forms on both sides of the axis. When symmetry occurs with similar, but not identical, forms it is called approximate symmetry. Symmetrical balance is also known as formal balance.

Asymmetry
Asymmetry occurs when the weight of a composition is not evenly distributed around a central axis. It involves the arranging of objects of differing size in a composition such that they balance one another with their respective visual weights. Often there is one dominant form that is offset by many smaller forms. In general, asymmetrical compositions tend to have a greater sense of visual tension. Asymmetrical balance is also known as informal balance.
Rhythm

Rhythm is the repetition or alternation of elements, often with defined intervals between them. Rhythm can create a sense of movement, and can establish pattern and texture. There are many different kinds of rhythm, often defined by the feeling it evokes when looking at it.

**Regular Rhythm**

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**Progressive Rhythm**

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**Flowing Rhythm**

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