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PORTFOLIO CAPSTONE + PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE = CO-REQUISITES FOR DESIGN STUDENT SUCCESS

This presentation explains the requirements for co-requisite Professional Practice and Portfolio Capstone classes that prepare senior-level undergraduate design students for the transition from academia to a successful career. The presenter developed the curriculum for both within the BFA in Graphic Design curriculum at Arkansas State University over the last decade. Many colleges insist on stuffing all elements taught in these classes into one semester-long course, but this is impossible to do at the level explained here.

The Professional Practice coursework begins with a brand, which develops from its logo, positioning, and tone to complete visual identity. All elements evolve from this, including a cover letter and resumé, websites, business forms, social media presence, and a complete brand book. Students compose letters as if to creative directors, which ties into the networking and interviewing skills taught in the course. Ensuring students understand how to apply these materials for a successful career, they develop a business plan that displays comprehension of legal aspects and taxes in relation to the cost of living, which also ties into the comprehensive Job Hunt Journal project.

An overview of the Portfolio Capstone course will also be provided, including the importance of a class devoted to developing a professional-level portfolio and why independent study under the witness of a group is the best delivery method. Other work produced from this Capstone course includes process books and the development of captions/talking points for each portfolio piece.

The presentation will also explain how world-altering events since 2019 affected these courses. Presenter hopes for informative discussions, like the present state of a printed cover letter - is it now a way to stand out from the email crowd, or is it an unwanted extra amongst viral threats and climate change? In addition to the visual presentation of information, work from students will be shared.

BIO:

An obsession with the communicative aspect of art led Nikki Arnell first to advertising. Moving from Midwestern Indiana to Denver, Colorado, she began a decade in the fast-

paced and exciting world of advertising. This time provided experiential education and awards, from design for local shops to art direction for mega-brands like Procter & Gamble and Coors Brewing Company. However, an unexpected teaching job while freelancing changed her desired career path, and so she returned to school to earn a Master of Fine Arts. At Colorado State University as both a student and a teacher, traditional fine arts and art theory formed another dimension to the communication of her art. Her graphic design shuffled out of the expected computer formula and instead mixed disciplines and technologies and experimented with the levels of communication per context.

In 2010, Ms. Arnell took a position with Arkansas State University's Art + Design Department. She continues to push the unexpected in graphic design by balancing the commercial sell and gallery aesthetic in classes like *Art Direction in Advertising* and *Professional Practice for Design*. *Multi-Platform Design* is a class in development to remove the division between print and user interface. She has also instructed *History of Graphic Design* for the past 12 years, an arm of scholarship in which she is deeply interested and involved. Over one of the VisCom campfires, she hopes to discuss her most recent academic conference presentation, "Rewriting the Canon: How a Timeline Project Revision in Design History Challenged Students to Engage in Change".

Speaking of VisCom, this is the seventh she has attended in person!