

Professional Reflection

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GRA-491: Graphic Design Portfolio

Professor Washington

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Completing my capstone project was an enjoyable and enlightening experience that provided a comprehensive culmination of my journey at SNHU. Seeing my entire learning experience come together into a polished, professional portfolio I'm proud to present was fascinating. This capstone was a testament to my growth as a designer, bridging the gap between the theoretical knowledge and practical skills I honed throughout my academic career.

The journey towards designing my portfolio and website wasn't easy. I had to undergo an iterative process of receiving feedback, revisiting my designs, and refining my concepts. However, I found this process incredibly valuable as it showed me how important it is to get external perspectives when designing. I learned to embrace constructive criticism, which helped me to elevate my work. The feedback I received led to significant improvements in both my print-ready portfolio and website. This helped to enhance the usability, aesthetic appeal, and overall coherence of my design narrative.

Throughout the design process, collaboration emerged as a crucial element. Working alongside peers and instructors offered fresh insights and created a culture of mutual learning and support. These interactions were vital in refining my design ideas and approaches, highlighting the indispensable role of collaboration in the creative process. Additionally, the feedback received from this course and my previous courses has given me the opportunity to be prepared for when a client requests changes on the work I provided. For example, it has allowed me to have more of an open mind when it comes to feedback. Lisefski also mentions that a designer should be open minded. "Lose your ego and stay open-minded to ideas no matter where they come from. If you have to shoot-down an idea, use data and experience to justify your thinking. Stay polite at all time, even if you feel your client isn't." (Lisefski, 2019) I made sure to listen carefully to the feedback I received throughout this capstone, and I implemented changes to the

Uppercrust Bakery logo, SNHU logo, and made some typography adjustments for consistency and overall balance between the designs. Specifically, I removed the extra black outlines that were placed underneath the wheat elements on the Uppercrust Bakery logo which was suggested by my peer. I think it now looks much cleaner and modern and overall balanced as a whole. It was also recommended that I adjust the yellow element on the SNHU logo by my professor to make it the same weight as the typography and the same height. I think implementing this did provide a well-balanced logo that looks more professional. According to Darwin, “A logo design is clean only when it is free from any clutter. Many logos have too many fonts or colors. Or, the design itself is too complicated with a web of lines and shapes. The viewer cannot describe such a design and fails to get its meaning clearly.” (Darwin, 2014) For the TOWN menu, a peer suggested that I made sure there were consistent capitals within the titles. According to Melling, “Consistency looks professional and helps to ensure design work is communicating the intended message. A lack of consistency in design elements, sizes, colours etc can leave people confused and compositions looking messy!” (Melling, 2019) Therefore, making sure the typography is consistent throughout those print designs was essential.

Looking forward, I can see a clear path for applying the lessons learned from this capstone experience to my future endeavors. Technical skills, along with soft skills like critical thinking and effective communication, will undoubtedly be assets in my professional journey. I am particularly keen on maintaining ethical standards and incorporating social responsibility in my designs. The capstone reinforced my belief in the power of design to positively influence social change, inspiring me to strive for inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability in my work.

I have gained multiple goals after this capstone, but my main aspiration is to keep growing by seeking out new learning opportunities and staying updated with industry trends to

make my designs relevant and impactful. (Teal HQ, n.d.) I plan to continue networking with industry-related professionals and actively engaging with the design community. According to Kolos, "When you are approaching a potential prospect, submitting a portfolio with your prior work and showing them what you are capable of can make or break the negotiations." (Kolos, 2021) With my portfolio already designed it will be much easier now to network myself to potential clients. I have made some progress in networking by already joining multiple Facebook groups specifically for design. Additionally, I aim to take on some new projects to enhance my portfolio and gain more experience by taking on some freelancing jobs in the future and to figure out my niche or style as a designer. (Indeed Editorial Team, 2024)

Reflecting on the skills, abilities, and knowledge I've displayed and honed through this capstone, I recognize the importance of maintaining ethical principles and incorporating social responsibility to advance the graphic design industry and create artifacts (products or designs) that positively affect people and societies. According to Singh, "...graphic designers have a significant role to play in shaping public perception and must consider the ethical implications of their work. By balancing creativity with responsibility, designers can create designs that are both visually striking and socially responsible." (Singh, 2023) It is essential to practice honesty and respect, particularly in the design industry. I pledge to uphold these values by creating unique and non-offensive work. In addition, I will maintain a professional relationship with my clients going forward.

In conclusion, the capstone experience was a final project and a pivotal point in my academic and professional development. It has laid a strong foundation for my career in graphic design, equipped me with a deep understanding of the design process, and instilled in me the values of ethical practice and social responsibility. I'm excited for the opportunities ahead, ready

to apply what I've learned, contribute meaningfully to the industry, and achieve my goals as a Graphic and Web Designer. (Shen, 2024)

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