

ART 418 - BUSINESS OF DESIGN

Texts + Module Overview

TEXTS

- Douglas Davis: Creative Strategy and Business of Design (2016)
- Keith Granet: The Business of Design: Balancing Creativity and Profitability (2021)

COURSE MODULES

- 1) **Design as a Business System** — How studios and freelancers create value, generate revenue, and stay profitable without sacrificing craft.
- 2) **Positioning & Differentiation** — Define your niche, competitive advantage, and the specific problems you solve better than alternatives.
- 3) **Client Discovery & Problem Framing** — Run intake conversations that surface real goals, constraints, stakeholders, and success criteria.
- 4) **Research to Insight** — Translate market/user research into clear insights that drive strategy (not just “nice-to-know” findings).
- 5) **Creative Strategy & Brief Writing** — Build briefs that connect audience, message, channels, and measurable objectives to creative direction.
- 6) **Concept Development & Strategic Rationale** — Generate concepts that are defensible in business terms and persuasive to non-design stakeholders.
- 7) **Proposals, Scope, and Change Control** — Write scopes that protect you, clarify deliverables, and handle revisions/creep professionally.
- 8) **Pricing Models & Value-Based Fees** — Compare hourly/flat/retainer/value-based pricing and learn how to price outcomes, not time.
- 9) **Contracts, Rights, and Risk** — The essentials of agreements, usage/licensing, IP, liability, and how to avoid common legal traps.

10) **Project Management for Creative Work** — Timelines, milestones, roles, feedback loops, and tools that keep projects moving (and clients calm).

11) **Client Communication, Critique, and Buy-In** — Interviewing, lead presentations, run critiques, handle objections, and build consensus without “design by committee.”

12) **Operations, Finance, and Profitability** — Cash flow, budgeting, utilization, overhead, and the metrics that keep a practice sustainable.

13) **Marketing, Sales, and Thought Leadership** — Build a pipeline through case studies, networking, content, referrals, and partnerships—without feeling salesy.

14) **Ethics, Professional Standards, and Career Strategy** — Make principled decisions (including AI use), plan growth paths, and build a resilient professional identity.