

CLARA J. CHOI

"The way you look at the world determines how creative you can be"

-R. Keith Sawyer-

Clara Joungyun Choi

Assistant Professor / Program Coordinator

Visual Communication Design

School of Art and Design

The University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley

<https://jchoi.net>

clara.choi@utrgv.edu

clarachoi352@gmail.com

CURRICULUM VITAE

- 2** Education
- 2** Teaching Experience
- 3** Courses Taught
- 4** Published Intellectual Contributions
- 4** Research Presentation
- 5** Grant Awarded
- 5** Grant Under Review
- 5** Research/Creative Work In Progress
- 6** Committees + Advising Activities + Community Service
- 6** Research Teaching Collaboration
- 7** Professional Experience
- 8** Activities + Certificate
- 8** Technical Skills
- 8** Design Skills
- 8** Others

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Design

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Minnesota, USA
College of Design
Earned April 2019

Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Graphic Design

University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, USA
College of Art and Art History
Earned May 2014

Master of Design (MDes) in Product Design

Domus Academy, Milano, Italy
Degree validated and awarded by
University of Wales, UK
Earned January 2009

Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Visual Communication Design

Duksung Women University, Seoul, Korea
College of Fine Art
Earned February 2000

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor

The University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley, Edinburg, Texas, USA
September 2021 to the present

Visiting Assistant Professor/Adjunct Professor

The State University of New York-ESF, Syracuse, New York, USA
January 2019 to May 2023

Assistant Professor

South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota, USA
August 2017 to December 2018

Graduate Instructor

University of Minnesota, Minnesota, USA
August 2014 to May 2017

Graduate Instructor

University of Florida, Florida, USA
August 2011 to May 2014

Lecturer

Paichai University, Daejeon, Korea
August 2009 to June 2011

COURSES TAUGHT

Studio	<p>My teaching experience encompasses a wide range of graphic design courses delivered in studio, lecture, theory-based, and online formats, with a sustained commitment to engaging students from diverse cultural backgrounds and interdisciplinary fields in art and design.</p>
	Typography I, II (Basic and Advanced)
	<p>Design studio course that is focused on typographic history, theory and practice.</p>
	Senior Capstone and Portfolio
	<p>Senior design studio course that is aimed create comprehensive work for their senior exhibition and prepare their portfolio and a resume package for the professional graphic design industry.</p>
	Design and Visual Presentation
	<p>An online course introduces basic design practices and digital imaging used in Graphic Design field. Coursework consists of lectures, tutorials, readings, exercises, quizzes and discussions.</p>
	Graphic Design
	<p>This course provides a basic knowledge of Graphic Design focused on print/digital design.</p>
	Visual Communication
	<p>This course is for upper level students that is designed to further develop students' visual literacy, research, design process/theories and mastery of brand identity and package design.</p>
	Interaction Design (UI/UX/IxD)
	<p>Graphic design studio course that is based on user-centered design research and practice to learn the front-end web/mobile development and seek to guide students to a place where they can comfortably create dynamic user experiences.</p>
	Visual Methods and Process
	<p>This course introduces design process, methodologies, and design theories. Learning design process to explore complex problems in art and design and practicing use of design principals and elements as well as their application.</p>
	Graduate Design Studio (Graduate)
	<p>Advanced graduate course that students develop their works based on design theories, historic awareness, contemporary discourses in design for the MFA final exhibition.</p>
Theory + Research	Sustainable Product Design
	<p>Research (user, market, sustainability issues) based studio class that students use design thinking PPP and circular economy to solve environmental issues via re-design/develop sustainable product.</p>
	Design Research
	<p>Undergraduate course introduces design thinking, user experience workflows and design research methods that is focused on user-centered design.</p>
	Creative Thinking
	<p>A large format (100-150 students) foundation course for all design disciplines students. An active learning based class that explores comprehensive arts and design as well as theories of creativity and mindsets. Students engage creative activities in and out of the class to enhance their creative thinking skills.</p>
	Introduction to Design Thinking
	<p>Learning in detailed analysis of and critical thinking for current design production across many design disciplines. Students develop understanding of the ways in which design solutions are reflective of socio/culture values through critical design thinking and hands-on discovery.</p>
Writing Intensive	Graphic Design History
	<p>Basic design course on the historical analysis of visual communication influences Graphic Design. Learning how historical events are communicated/perceived through graphic presentation.</p>
	Graduate Design Seminar (Graduate)
	<p>A graduate course that students participate for the effective research, collaboration and script analysis methodologies and exploration practices for developing their graduate thesis.</p>

**PUBLISHED
INTELLECTUAL
CONTRIBUTIONS**

Choi, C. J. Visual Communication and Design Thinking for Bioeconomy/STEM Outreach. National Science Foundation Global Centers for Sustainable Bioproducts National Science Foundation, 2025

Choi, C. J. Design Thinking in Sustainable Material. Photoelectrosynthetic Aminoxy-Catalyzed Alcohol Oxidation. National Science Foundation, 2024

Choi, J., "How Creative Mindset Operates with Respect to Creative Performance: Pedagogical Factors that Ignite Creative Mindset in Design Education" Advanced in Communication of Design, AHFE 2019 International Conference, 2019, Springer.

Choi, J., "How Creative Mindset Is Involved in Positive Emotions and Attitude that Affects Creative Design Process" Advanced in Interdisciplinary Practice in Industrial Design, AHFE 2019 International Conference, 2019, Springer.

Choi, J., "Creative Mindsets in Design Education", 2019, University of Minnesota, USA (PhD Dissertation)

Choi, J., "Play and learn with nature", 2014, University of Florida, USA. (MFA Thesis)

Choi, J. "Personal kitchen "Exhibition": Show yourself through your kitchen" ,2009 University of Wales, UK. (MDes Thesis, collaborated with Veneta Cucine, Italy)

**RESEARCH
PRESENTATIONS**

"Weaving Design Thinking and Visual Communication into STEM: Enhancing Creativity, Engagement, and Inclusive Learning" AIGA Education Conference, Normal, IL (June, 2025)

"Creating a diverse and inclusive learning community: How effective visual communication contributes to STEM diversity" International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics, Nice, France. (July, 2024)

"How a learning-based system utilizing visual language and creative mindsets can increase participation in a complex concept of science campaign" International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics, New York, NY. (July, 2022)

"Pedagogical Factors that Ignite Creative Mindset in Design Education" International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics, Washington DC. (July, 2019)

"Relationship between Creative Mindsets and Emotional Intelligence in Design Education" International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics, Orlando, FL (July, 2018)

"Creative Mindsets in Higher Education" Hawaii international conference on education, Honolulu, HI (January, 2018)

**GRANT
AWARDED**

Choi, Clara (co-PI). (2025 – 2029), National Science Foundation - Collaborative Research: NSF Global Center for Sustainable Bioproducts. Outreach program team lead (Federal, \$299,999.00): Provide a robust learning platform/program for the center and (international) students. (Leading institution: UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, Total \$\$5,000,000.00)

Choi, Clara (co-PI). (2023 – 2025), National Science Foundation - Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental and Transport Systems (NSF CBET). *Collaborative Research: Photoelectrosynthetic Aminoxyl Catalyzed Alcohol Oxidation.* Outreach Lead: Federal, \$11,216.00 (Leading institute: SUNY ESF, Total \$450,000)

Research Grant (2022)
Research Office, The University of Texas Rio Grande valley

Scholarly Excellence Research Fund (2017)
SDSU Office of Academic Affairs, South Dakota State University

Research Grant (2016)
The Office of Scholarship and Financial Aid, University of Minnesota

**GRANT
UNDER
REVIEW
(SUBMITTED)**

Choi, Clara (PI). (2026 – 2028), Environmental Protection Agency - From Data to Sustainable Action: Responsible AI-Supported Clean Water System and Youth Stewardship (Federal, \$272,037.00)

Choi, Clara (co-PI). (2026 – 2029), National Science Foundation - Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental and Transport Systems (NSF CBET). *Collaborative Research: Exploring Long-Lived Photoexcited Carriers in Mn-Doped Nanocrystals for Biomass Conversion*, Outreach Lead: Federal, \$11,963.00 (Leading institute: Syracuse University, Total \$550,000)

**RESEARCH
IN PROGRESS**

Choi, Clara (co-PI). NSF Center: Global Center for Sustainable Bioproducts" (OnGoing).
As Co-PI, I have led the development of interdisciplinary educational and outreach initiatives in sustainable bioproduct design and the global bioeconomy, including the undergraduate course Sustainable Product Design, a study abroad program, Design Thinking in Sustainable Science, the Sustainable Bioproduct Design Workshop for high school students, and Art and Sustainability for K-12 learners. IRB approval has been secured, data collection is underway, and peer-reviewed publications are planned.

"Between Courtyards: Living Traditions and Lifestyle of South Texas & Korea" (Ongoing).
This creative research project examines the architectural and cultural dialogue between traditional Korean hanok and South Texas hacienda/Spanish Colonial Revival styles, with particular attention to courtyards, materials, landscape integration, and visual motifs. Through historical and visual research, as well as the production of posters, illustrations, three-dimensional works, and a planned book design project, the work reinterprets these traditions through contemporary visual language. Outcomes are intended for peer-reviewed regional and national exhibitions.

Building a Design Research Innovation and Visual Culture Engagement Hub (DRIVE Hub) and a Visual Culture, Art & Design (VCAD) Archive in partnership with the Center for Latin American Arts (CLAA) Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (planned 2027 cycle submission; full proposal completed).
Collaborative proposal requesting \$2.8 million to establish the Design Research, Innovation, and Visual-culture Engagement (DRIVE) Hub and the Visual Culture, Art & Design (VCAD) Archive and Digital Preservation Lab at UTRGV. The project advances interdisciplinary humanities research in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands through design research, digital curation, archival preservation, community-based documentation, exhibitions, and publications. Major activities include developing multimedia research infrastructure, launching seed grants for faculty-student teams, and initiating the Letreros Pintados Project to document vernacular typography and hand-painted signage across South Texas and Northern Mexico.

**COMMITTEES
& ADVISING
COMMUNITY SERVICE
ACTIVITIES**

Department Service:

Visual Communication Design Program Coordinator

September 2023 to the Present

Visual Communication Design Program Assessment Coordinator

August 2024 to the Present

Committee Member of Graduate Program

August 2021 to the Present

Committee Member, School of Art and Design Director Search

October 2025 to February 2026

Committee Member, Visual Communication Faculty Search

January 2023 to April 2023

College Service:

Committee Member College of Fine Arts Strategic Plan

September 2023 to April 2024

Committee CO-Chair of Arts & Entrepreneurship Minor Course

February 2023 to April 2023

Committee Member of Ad Hoc Merit Salary Distribution

September 2022 to April 2023

University Service:

Limited Submission Review Committee

September 2025 to the Present

AI Framework Research Taskforce

March 2026 to the Present

Directed Student Learning:

Master's Thesis Committee Chair, "Decolonizing the Whitexican: Reclaiming Identity through Nahuatl and Mesoamerican Motifs," Laia Vite, Design, July 2025 to December 2025

Undergraduate Honors Thesis, Leroy U. delgado, November 2021 to May 2022

AIGA Student Group Advisor

August 2017 to December 2018 (SDSU) / January 2026 to the Present (UTRGV)

Public Service:

Facilitator of Cultural Event: Lunar New Year Festival

International Museum of Art & Science

January 2022 to the present

Judge in the Genius Olympiad

International High School Project Fair on Environment

June 2019 to the present

**RESEARCH/TEACHING
COLLABORATION**

Mobile Education and Outreach Unit RV Project

Creating the story of sea turtle conservation directly to schools, community events, and underserved areas across South Texas. Collaboration with Sea Turtle Inc. (2025)

Sustainable Product Design Course

Research (user, market, issues) based studio class that students use design thinking process to solve environmental issues via re-design/develop sustainable product.

Collaboration with UTRGV Mechanical Engineering (2025-2026)

Design Thinking in Sustainable Science Summer Study Abroad

Immersive summer course offers an opportunity for undergraduate students to explore the intersection of creative design thinking and STEM, focusing on sustainability in the bioeconomy and materials. Leveraging design thinking to solve real-world challenges, envision future applications of bioeconomy principles, and develop impactful solutions and communication strategies for societal benefit.

Collaboration with Hanyang University, Seoul Korea; State University New York, Haward University, Iowa University (2025-2026)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Freelance Multimedia Designer

2017 to the present

UI/UX, Print/Digital Publication, Way-Finding Systems, Web Design, Television Graphic Production Advertisement, Company Branding/Collateral, Campaign-Based Social Media (Working for Public Broadcasting Council of Central New York)

Founder/Owner

Web business, Nature Friendly Life-Style Product

October 2012 to the present

Managing a Web Store, Logistics System+Dealing with Wholesalers

Designing a Web business System (Web-Shopping Mall, Company Identity+Marketing, Advertisement)

Graphic Designer

College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Minnesota

October 2016 to June 2017

-Developing and creating advertisements, printing materials and brand design

Graduate Assistant

College of the Arts, University of Florida, Florida, USA

August 2011 to May 2013

-Reconstructed the website for graphic design (<http://www.ufdesigners.com/main>)

-Lab monitoring, organizing and managing lab equipment, including department cameras, Macs, plotters, printers and a/v systems

Collaboration with International companies

Project: Semi-Finished Product with SWAROVSKI

Domus Academy, Milan, Italy

October 2008

Project: Accessories for The Champagne with Veuve Clicquot

Domus Academy, Milan, Italy

February 2008

Project: Personal Kitchen System with Veneta Cucine

Domus Academy, Milan, Italy

December 2008

Internship as a Graphic Communication Designer

HOK, Houston, TX

May 2006 to August 2006

-Environmental graphic Design: Wayfinding, signage design

Graphic Designer

Amko, Houston, TX

March 2003 to August 2005

-Advertisement, Product Photograph

Graphic and Web Designer

Nworks Co., Ltd , Seoul, Korea

1999 to 2003

-Branding design, Web design, Web animations, various printing designs

ACTIVITIES
+
CERTIFICATE

Publication Director

Korean-American Scientists and Engineers Association
Overseeing organization's publication
2025 to the present

The Scientific Advisory Board Member

International Conference on Human Factors in Communication of Design
November 2018 to 2022

Professional Member/Educator Member

The American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA)
2013 to the present

Art Program Coordinator

Korean-American Scientists and Engineers Association-Texas Coastal Bend
Coordination/organizing/supporting local community STEAM program such as
Math Olympiad, Art Competition, Arts festival, etc within the Texas Coastal Bend at KSEA.
2022 to the present

Research, Faculty Fellowship,

"ARC (Advancement of Research & Creative works) Faculty Fellows,"
UTRGV College of Fine Arts
February 2024 to April 2024

Certificate in Effective Teaching Practice Framework

Association of College and University Educators (2023)
This certificate signifies my completion of a 25-module course in effective teaching practice
framework requiring the implementation of evidence-based instructional approaches.
The certificate is co-issued by the American Council on Education and distinguishes faculty
for their commitment to educational excellence and student success.

Research, Workshop,

"Keys to Research Program," Research Administration and Compliance, UTRGV
September 2021 to May 2022

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Adobe Creative Cloud: Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign, XD, Dreamweaver, Premiere, Acrobat
UI/UX: Sketch, Figma
Keynote
MS Office: Power Point, Word, Excel
HTML, CSS
SPSS
Rhino, 3D Studio Max, Maya
Proficiency in both PC and Mac operating systems

DESIGN SKILLS

Typography
Print Design
Web Design
User Experience Design
Brand Identity
Product Design
Photography
Bookmaking+Binding
Hand Drawing/Painting

OTHERS

Design Research (Qualitative+Quantitative)
Creativity
Collaboration
Time Management
Multi-tasks
Problem Solving