ENGW 2329
Document Design

Spring '16 :: JBWS 361 :: M/W 3:30-4:45 pm

Dr. Don Unger

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**Sorin Hall, room 118
Tues 11 am-12:30 am
Fri 10-11:30 am**

Goals

You've received a lot of training when it comes to writing content. Your classes in all the disciplines have helped you think about what you want to say, but I'm willing to bet that you've had very little training in terms of designing the content you create even though the design of your information matters as much as the content when it comes to writing effectively and convincingly. From this point forward, as you work through your courses, I want you thinking about the design of your content even as you're writing it.

Means

This class is unique among courses in the English Writing & Rhetoric major in that we will spend as much of our time designing words as we do writing them. Over the course of the semester, we will explore how typography, color, paper (or screen) size, and other factors influence the effectiveness of print and online documents. You will learn a new vocabulary that will enable to you talk intelligently about visual rhetoric. You will scour the Hilltop and the city of Austin for examples of good (and bad) documents; then, you will make these bad documents good and the good documents better. You will work with your classmates to negotiate competing notions about what complex documents should look like and how they should function.

Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- understand the role of design in (persuasive) communication;

- explain the relationship between the written and visual components of print and online documents;

- distinguish between effective and ineffective visual documents even as you interpret the larger ethical and moral implications of design;

- implement principles of effective document design in preparing documents; and,

- use various software programs to enhance your documents.

Assignments & Grading

Assignments

There are four major assignments, or projects, in the course.

In the first project, you will design a series of posters for a fictional client. This project serves to familiarize you with the elements and principles of design as well as software that we'll be using throughout the course, specifically Photoshop.

In the second project, we'll move further into the nuances involved in designing business documents for specific audiences. You will research a job, internship, or graduate school program and develop resumes, CVs, and cover letters in application for the position you choose. This project begins to ask how you would visually represent your work, values, and goals to others. For this project you'll work primarily in InDesign.

In the third project, we'll continue to explore how you can represent yourselves through the interplay of text and visuals by creating visual identity packages, the cornerstone of which relies on a personal logo.

Finally, in the fourth project, you will develop professional portfolios using WordPress. These portfolios bring together your work over the course of the semester as well as projects you have completed in other classes.

In addition to these projects, you will present five design(er) identifications to the class over the course of the semester. For these design(er) identifications you draw from the vocabulary and concepts we address in class in order to critique documents that you encounter in your day-to-day life, e.g., advertisements, official documents, product packaging, etc.

I will also assign ten quizzes pertaining to course readings throughout the semester.

Grading

Each project is worth 100 points. Prior to beginning each project we will discuss its assignment sheet, calendar, and grading rubric in class. Desgin(er) identifications are worth 20 points each, and quizzes are worth 10 points. Table 1 shows how the points comprise your overall grade.

Project 1: Poster Design	100
Project 2: Resumes, CVs & Cover Letters	100
Project 3: Visual Identity Package	100
Project 4: Professional Portfolio	100
Short Assignments Designer Identifications (5 x 20 points each) Reading Quizzes (10 x 10 points each)	100 100
Total Points	**600**

Table 1. Assignment point values.

Each of your project grades can be translated into a percentage out of 100 with a corresponding letter grade listed in Table 2.

Final letter grades will be determined using the scale illustrated by Table 2. To ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage. For example, a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.000 through 83.999.

A+	4.0	100—97
A	4.0	96—94
A-	3.67	93—90
B+	3.33	89—87
B	3.0	86—84
B-	2.67	83—80
C+	2.33	79—77
C	2.0	76—70
D	1.0	69—60
F	0.0	59—0

Table 2. Letter grades, GPA, and percentage equivalents.

Textbooks & Materials

Course readings come from a few different sources, but we'll primarily use Kimball and Hawkins textbook to address design specific issues and Johnson-Sheehan's textbook to address professional genres, such as resumes and cover letters. You are not required to buy either text. Kimball and Hawkins' book is out of print, so the bookstore is no longer able to get copies.
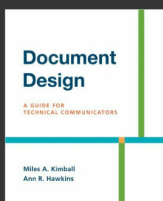
Document Design: A Guide for Technical Communicators, 2008
by Miles A. Kimball & Ann R. Hawkins, ISBN: 978-0312436995

Technical Communication Today, 5th ed.
By Richard Johnson-Sheehan, ISBN: 978-0321907981
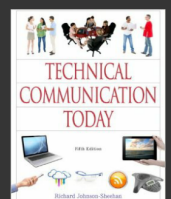
Note- or sketchbook for in-class writing, notes, brainstorming, etc.

Pinterest and WordPress accounts

Course Policies

Attendance

You are expected to attend every meeting of the classes for which you are enrolled. I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. I also know that life happens, so here is the attendance policy for all my courses:

1. You may miss a maximum of one week of class without penalty and with no questions asked. However, you still must turn in your work on time and keep up with the course. Because our class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays only, this means you may miss two (2) class meetings without penalty.

2. Each absence after this one week maximum will lower your final course grade by half a letter grade, regardless of how well you otherwise perform. If you miss four (4) or more class meetings, I reserve the right (but do not take on the obligation) to drop you from the course with a grade of "WA." If you remain on the roster after the drop deadline and "disappear," you will likely earn a grade of "F."

ProTip: The tl:dr Version

1. **Absent is absent: there is no difference in excused or unexcused.**

2. **In-class assignments or activities, including quizzes, cannot be made up.**

3. **If you "disappear" (stop attending) but do not officially drop the course, you will likely earn a WA or an F.**

4. **If you have a legitimate reason to leave early or arrive late, please talk to me in advance.**

Late Work

I deduct 10 points for each day your final projects are late unless you make arrangements with me prior to the due date. Problems can arise, but the key to their successful resolution is communication. Keep me informed; avoid simply not turning in projects or assignments.

Participation

You will complete much of your work for this course in small groups, and I expect you to fulfill your fair share of group work and interact courteously with your peers at all times. Most of our class sessions will be conducted in discussion/workshop format, and many of these workshops cannot be "re-created" outside of class, so regular attendance and active participation are essential to your success. Active participation may also include successful completion of reading quizzes, which will be used to assess your preparedness for a class meeting.

I recommend that you save absences for when you are sick or have an emergency. If you find that an unavoidable problem prevents you from attending class, please discuss the problem with me as soon as possible. If you plan to be absent for a religious or holy day, please plan with me in advance.

ProTip: How to Deal with an Absence

1. **Email/upload any work due that day in class.**

2. **Email a classmate for notes & changes to assignments so you are prepared the next day.**

3. **Check the syllabus and course website, and complete the work assigned in class**

Communicating with Me & Office Hours

The best way to contact me is by email. Please email me whenever you have questions. I also will email you regularly with reminders, instructions, and late breaking information. Therefore, a requirement of this class is that you check your SEU email & the course site daily, especially the day before and morning of class. Also, I am happy to meet with you by appointment if you cannot make it to office hours. Email me about setting up an appointment.

If you have an emergency, email me.

Learning Software vs. Learning How to Learn Software

Experience tells me that the most frustrating part of this course is going to be our use of software to complete the major projects. Depending on your major, you may have little interest in learning about writing online, CSS, or Adobe products. I understand this: however, software can allow us to communicate in ways that we simply can't in older media. There is a benefit to working with, rather than against, technology. But, technology changes. Rapidly. Our focus in this class is not on you all becoming expert users of InDesign or Photoshop. I want you to become learners experienced in learning how to learn software. Why? Because when you get into a professional setting, you're likely going to be asked to use software that is unfamiliar and foreign. I want you to have your own methods for dealing with this experience.

What does that mean for this class?
To help you learn how to work with the different kinds of software we'll be using this semester, I have arranged for Instructional Technology to come into our class to offer tailored workshops for our major projects. We're going to start with the "human assets" we have on campus, and let the experts from OIT guide us through some basic concepts.

When you ask me a question, my first question will most likely be, "Did you Google it?" I am not doing this to deflect your question. I will ask what steps you took to learn something because experts aren't always going to be available (and there will be times when you don't want someone to know what you don't know). So, I'll be asking you to use all those free, online resources to help you find answers because googling just might help you land a job one day. How much you learn and how quickly will be determined by you and what you hope to get out of this class. Just know that your grade will always be determined by how well you work with the principles and concepts we are discussing in class, not how well you use the software.

Challenges & Accomdations

If you have a confirmed medical, psychiatric, or learning disability that I need to accommodate in teaching you, please see me right away. I want to help you succeed, so please come see during office hours or make an appointment, preferably during the first week of classes. You will need to prove your disability by submitting certain documents to Student Disability Services in Moody Hall 155. Please note that I cannot accommodate any disability without a "504 letter," nor can I accommodate disabilities retroactively. If you do have a 504 letter to submit, my preference would be for you to come by during my office hours. This will give you and I some privacy, and it will allow me to make a copy of your letter for my files.

Please also remember that a 504 letter entitles you to reasonable accommodations, not to an easier course. You should read the reverse side of the 504 letter for information about your duties and responsibilities. I will ask you to sign the reverse side of the letter.

In addition, if you are under a great deal of stress or you just want someone to talk to confidentially, see the staff in the Health & Counseling Center (Lady Bird Johnson Hall, Suite 100). They can help you develop strategies for personal success and coping with challenges.

Academic Counseling and Exploration (ACE), located in Moody Hall 155, also offers services to help students develop and use effective skills for successful academic performance, including low-cost tutoring for most subjects.

Note: This syllabus is subject to change. Students will be notified on the course website and/or by email of changes made to the policies or syllabus.

Academic Integrity

The Student Handbook states, "St. Edward's University expects academic honesty from all members of the community, and it is our policy that academic integrity be fostered to the highest degree possible. Consequently, all work submitted for grading in a course must be created as a result of your own thought and effort. Representing work as your own when it is not a result of such thought and effort is a violation of our code of academic integrity. Whenever it is established that academic dishonesty has occurred, the course instructor shall impose a penalty upon the offending individual(s). It is recognized that some offenses are more egregious than others and that, therefore, a range of penalties should be available. Whenever possible, it would also be important to try to determine the intent of the offender, since the error could be a result of careless work rather than an intent to deceive. The maximum penalty for a first offense is failure in the course, and if that penalty is imposed, the student does not have the option of withdrawing from the course. In cases of mitigating circumstance, the instructor has the option of assigning a lesser penalty."

The St. Edward's University Undergraduate Bulletin and the Student Handbook state that a student who is dishonest in any work may receive the maximum penalty of an F for that course. SEU does not allow students to withdraw from a course where an F in the course for academic dishonesty has been imposed. Students caught committing academic dishonesty in this course will be subject to the full range of penalties as described in the bulletin and handbook.

At St. Edward's, plagiarism includes turning in as your own work any drafts, papers, journals, or homework that incorporates any ideas or actual writing done by others (or from the internet) without acknowledging the source you used. The availability of documents and information on the internet has made it increasingly tempting to plagiarize, so please maintain a rigorous sense of academic honesty.

Calendar Overview

Classes Begin	Mon., Jan. 11
Last Day to Change/Add Classes	Fri., Jan. 15
MLK Day	Mon., Jan. 18
Last Day for Unrecorded Drop	Wed., Jan. 27
Project 1 Due	Sun., Feb. 7
Project 2 Due	Sun., Mar. 6
Spring Break	Mar. 14-18
Easter Break	Mar. 24-28
Project 3 Due	Sun., Apr. 7
Last Day of Classes	Fri., Apr. 29
Project 4 Due	During Our Final Exam Time

Detailed calendars that list class work and homework will be included with each project assignment sheet.