Description

This course provides a general introduction to document design theory, with special attention to the traditional print genres of technical and marketing communication (brochures, proposals, flyers, newsletters, catalogs, etc.). It also covers usability, rhetorical theory, cognitive psychology, and visual rhetoric. In this course, you will discuss, evaluate, and test document design theories and concepts in a series of exercises, workshops, and assignments that require you to design, redesign, and evaluate documents in a number of genres.

This course is organized as both a graduate seminar and a series of workshops. We will divide our in-class time between discussion and workshops. You are expected to read and prepare for class diligently, participate actively and thoughtfully in class discussions, and assume the role of discussion leader when appropriate. You can expect me to come to class prepared, ready to engage the readings and the issues raised in them. You will also participate in a series of workshops intended to give you hands-on experience in applying the concepts and principles discussed in the readings. During the workshops, you will be expected to assume a variety of roles, including workshop leader on a rotating basis. You will also be expected during the workshops to collaborate with classmates, share your work, evaluate the work of others, and work independently as needed.

By the end of the course, you should be able to 1) identify and discuss principles of print-based design, 2) understand the contributions of rhetorical theory, visual rhetoric, graphic design, cognitive psychology, and reading comprehension to the field of document design, and 3) apply document design theory and concepts to the computer-aided design and evaluation of your own professional print documents.

Required texts


Course materials online

This document, the course schedule, class notes, and other materials are available online: [http://www.faculty.english.ttu.edu/zdenek/courses/5375/summer06/](http://www.faculty.english.ttu.edu/zdenek/courses/5375/summer06/). If changes need to be made to the course schedule, you will find an updated copy online.
Grading

Your final course grade will be calculated according to the table below, using the standard curve of 90-100% = A; 80-89.9% = B; 70-79.9% = C; 60-69.9% = D; 0-59.9% = F. Under no circumstances will grades be rounded up or down.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course artifacts</td>
<td>See below</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis of typography</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redesign I</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Redesign II</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal for Design project*</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design project*</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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* The design project and proposal are group assignments. All members of the class will receive the same grade on these two assignments. All other assignments are individual assignments. See below for more info.

Assignments

Course artifacts
At the beginning of the term, you will choose 3-5 print documents (e.g. brochures, flyers, newsletters, etc.) and use them throughout the semester to ground our discussion of the readings. These artifacts will serve as discussion pieces in class and also help us apply concepts to real examples. Thus, the artifacts will give us an opportunity to ground theory in the analysis of real documents. Your course artifacts can be good or bad examples of document design and can be simple or complex. You should, however, choose artifacts from at least three of the following genres: flyer, newsletter, brochure, letterhead, catalog, guidebook, user’s manual, postcard, newspaper ad, and employee handbook. All of your course artifacts should be print-based (as opposed to web-based documents). Be prepared to share your artifacts in class with others on a regular basis.

Analysis of typography
For the typography analysis, you will choose a document (possibly one of your course artifacts) and evaluate its use of typography. Your evaluation should take the form of a 1000 word essay, be addressed to the authoring organization, and cover such topics as: typeface, typesize, type style, upper and lower case letters, leading, line length, alignment, positive or negative image, letter and word spacing, balance, (white) space, gestalt principles, and use of modular grids. In short, use the resources in Williams Chs. 8-10 and Schriver Ch. 5 to analyze the document of your choice (although you should probably choose a document that is type heavy.) Assess the quality of the document and offer recommendations. Submit a copy of the document you are analyzing.

Tutorial
For this assignment, you will lead the class in a tutorial on an advanced feature of Microsoft Word. Why MS Word, when there are other software programs for designing documents that are considered more robust? First, you are undoubtedly familiar with the basic features of MS Word. Second, you may, at some point, work for an organization that may not have the budget (or the desire) to purchase a suite of Adobe or other high-end products for designing documents. In such cases, you may only have access at work to a program such as Word to design quality documents and justify your continued existence to the organization. For your tutorial (20-30 minutes), you will 1) explain the feature to the class and why it is important, 2) provide some examples of how you might use the feature (e.g. to improve the quality of your documents, save you time, etc.), 3) lead the class (who have now moved to the computers) through the steps they’ll need to take in order
to make use of the feature, and 4) provide them with a short exercise that will allow them to apply the feature to a document supplied by you. Assume that your audience knows a great deal about Word already. The answers to these four prompts should be included in a one page handout that you will give to each member of the class. Advanced features include but are not limited to: style sheets, macros, creating custom templates, watermarks, sharing docs and tracking changes, advanced keyboard shortcuts, using/interpreting readability statistics, working with forms and fields, creating indexes, etc. I hope to be able to invite members of the English Department to join us for the tutorials.

Redesigns I & II
The redesign assignments are opportunities for you to apply what you are learning in the design workshops to the real artifacts of your choice. For each redesign assignment, you’ll choose an appropriate artifact (e.g. a flyer) and redesign it using the desktop publishing software we are learning in class. You’ll also submit a short 500-750 word memo that explains how the redesigned document adheres to principles of good document design (as explained in the readings).

Design project (with proposal)
For the design project, you will work with the rest of the class to design a document (or closely related series of documents) for a real client in the Lubbock area. (Please note that I have already located a client in Lubbock for us to work with. More information will be provided in class.) This is a group assignment: you will collaborate with your peers, divide up the workload equitably, and share the same grade. The design project should be a substantive indicator of your document design abilities. It should also be designed using the desktop publishing software we have covered in the workshops (i.e. InDesign CS2). By the time you start this project, you will have a solid background in document design theory and a fair amount of practice redesigning and critiquing documents. You will submit a proposal to the client during a presentation on the final day of class (see the schedule). The proposal will pitch a small number of design solutions and solicit feedback from the client. For this reason, I am going to divide the class up into small groups so that you are able to compare (and ultimately pitch to the client) multiple design options. Based on feedback from the client, you will work as a whole class to redesign and finalize a single design and submit it to the instructor on June 9th. Along with the document you design from scratch to address a real need for a real client, you will also submit a 1000 word justification of the design choices you made, referring to the readings to do so. This 1000 word justification paper will be submitted to the instructor only.

Expected learning outcomes
Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Identify and discuss the principles of print-based design discussed in the readings,
2. Understand the contributions of rhetorical theory, visual rhetoric, graphic design, cognitive psychology, and reading comprehension to the field of document design,
3. Analyze the document needs of organizations and propose document solutions, and
4. Apply document design theory and concepts to the design and evaluation of new print documents.

Methods for assessing the expected learning outcomes
Reading assignments, in-class discussions of readings, a tutorial assignment in which each student is required to master a different advanced feature in MS Word and then teach it to the class, a typography analysis assignment, numerous workshops in which students practice critiquing and redesigning real documents, hands-on training in learning a leading software program for page design, and a Lubbock-based client project that will ideally give students an opportunity to propose and design a project for a real client.

Course policies
- Be prepared for class by doing the assigned reading and writing in advance.
- Submit all required assignments to be eligible for a passing grade.
- Be on time for class.
• Attend every class meeting.
• Talk with me immediately (i.e. after class on the first class day) to discuss your special needs or ADA accommodations, if any.
• Expect to participate actively in class discussions.
• Respect the views of others.
• Do not plagiarize. Your work must be your own. If you borrow words or ideas from another writer, you need to make it explicit (through proper citation practices) that the words/ideas in question are not your own. If you use someone else’s paper as your own (e.g. a paper found on the Internet), you are in violation of the University’s policy on academic integrity (p. 49 of the University Catalog). Please keep in mind that the penalty for plagiarism can be severe. See me immediately if you have questions about the University’s policy on plagiarism.
• Submit your work on time. Assignments should be submitted in hard copy (unless otherwise noted) at the beginning of class. Late work is penalized 10% per day. Assignments more than three days late will not be accepted.
• Feel free to discuss course questions and concerns with me during office hours, by appointment, or via email (sean.zdenek@ttu.edu). I will do my best to respond to your email queries within 24 hours, except during weekends and holidays.