ENGL 2123-202: Rhetoric of Visuals and Infographics

Spring 2020 (9:30 TR)

Syllabus

Instructor	Dr. Sally Henschel Office: Bea Wood 211 sally.henschel@msutexas.edu 940.397.4731
Office hours	Tues. and Thurs. 11:00 to noon Wed. 9:00 to noon Other hours by appointment
Course description	A theoretical and practical inquiry into visual rhetoric and infographics, the visual display of information. Students learn how images are used to communicate and persuade; how culture influences the creation, delivery, and interpretation of visual messages; and how this knowledge can be applied to the creation, arrangement, and delivery or display of visual information, data, and evidence.
Student learning outcomes	1. Students will understand and apply the principles of visual rhetoric in their analysis of and justification for design decisions. 2. Students will understand many of the ethical, legal, cultural, and economic issues that impact the creation, interpretation, and use of visual messages. 3. Students will demonstrate the ability to apply skills needed to conduct research and/or engage in creative activities. 4. Students will be able to communicate analyses, interpretations, and significance of research through variable media. 5. Students will collaborate with peers/faculty and learn to address real-world problems/answer real world questions. 6. Students will develop and apply design, team building, and management skills to evaluating, researching, creating, and presenting visual information and arguments.

Upon completion of this course, students will have demonstrated the following Texas Core Curriculum Core Objectives:

Critical Thinking Skills, to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information. Learning activities and measurements: Completion of individual and team critical analyses/redesign and data visualization assignments.

Communication Skills, to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication. Learning activities and measurements: Class and team discussions, completion of course writing and design assignments, and class presentations, both individual and team-based.

Teamwork Skills, to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal. Learning activities and measurements: Students will employ skills in team building, design, and project management in a collaborative data visualization project which includes the creation of an infographic based

on the team's research, an oral presentation, an end-of-project report, and team-member evaluations.

Personal Responsibility Skills, to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making. Learning activities and measurements: Students will demonstrate these skills in the individual and team critical analyses of infographics and the data visualization assignments and the completion of team member evaluations.

Required course texts

Williams, Robin. *The Non-Designer's Design Book.* Peachpit, 2015. [4th edition]

Wong, Donna M. *The Wall Journal Guide to Information Graphics*. Norton, 2013.

Assignments

Individual assignments

• Critical analysis and redesign 1	5
• Critical analysis and redesign 2	10
• Infographic dos and don'ts (flyer & presentation)	10
• Journal/citation assignment	5
• Class demographics bar chart assignment	5
• In-class test: infographics	10
• Research report w/graphic (related to team project)	15
• Celebration of Scholarship reflection essay	10
	70 individual points

Team assignments

• Data visualization project proposal	10
• Written report w/ team created infographics	10
• Class presentation of project w/ infographics	5
	25 team points

Team member evaluations — **5 evaluation points**

100 total points

Grading system

A = 100—90%
B = 89—80%
C = 79—70
D = 69—60%
F = <60%

Late submission

All assignments will be due on dates assigned. **No late work will be accepted**. Students falling two assignments behind are subject to administrative withdrawal from the course by the instructor.

Absentee policy

Attendance is taken at the beginning of class: students who arrive late need to notify the instructor at the end of that class session of their attendance.
Negative points: Points are deducted against the final grade for absences:

- -0 points for 2 absences
- -2 points for 3 absences
- -4 points for 4 absences
- Two tardies (i.e., arriving 5-14 minutes late) are counted as one absence.
- Arriving 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes before class ends counts as an absence.
- **After 5 absences, a student is subject to being dropped from the course with grade of "F."**

E-mail format	When sending emails to the instructor, a student should include in the subject line his or her last name, course, and the content of the email (e.g., Jones 2123 question).
Academic dishonesty	All students are expected to adhere to the Midwestern State University Student Honor Creed when completing any work for this course. When using the ideas of other un-published and published sources, students must use accepted documentation conventions (i.e., MLA). See the MSU Student Handbook (PDF attached to Course Documents in D2L) to read the Student Honor Creed and the university's policy on academic dishonesty.
Professionalism	Members of this class are expected to treat one another with courtesy, professionalism, and respect. Repeated unprofessional, rude, or inappropriate behavior can result in 50-100 points being deducted from a student's final grade for the course per instance of such be-havior.
Cell phone use	C**ell phones and earbuds need to be put away during the class session** (e.g., in a pocket, purse, or backpack). If you receive a call or text to which you need to read or respond, please leave the room to do so. If you are using an e-text, please access the e-text on the class computer—not on a cellphone. **Earbuds are not allowed in class** unless you have ob-tained permitted use through Disability Services and provided the instructor the necessary documentation.
Research and creative opportunities at MSU	Enhancing Undergraduate Research Endeavors and Creative Activities (EURECA) is a pro-gram that provides opportunities for undergraduate students to engage in high-quality research and creative activities with faculty. EURECA provides incentives and funding through a system that supports faculty and students in a cooperative research process. For more information contact the Office of Undergraduate Research, (940) 397-6274 or eureca@msutexas.edu . Or visit the EURECA website.
Americans with Disabilities Act	Midwestern State University is committed to providing equal access for qualified students with disabilities to all university courses and programs, and by law, all students with disa-bilities are guaranteed a learning environment that provides reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. This guarantee is provided through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA reads: "No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the ben-efits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subject to discrimination by any such entity." To obtain disability support services, students must be accepted for admission to Midwest-ern State University, complete a request for services form available through the Office of Disability Services, and provide current documentation from a qualified professional (such as a licensed physician, psychologist, audiologist, etc.) diagnosing the disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. If the instructor does not have proper notification, she will expect the same performance from each student enrolled in the course. For more information visit Disability Services at Midwestern State University

Assignment Schedule

Textbook abbreviations: *Non-Designer Design Book* (NDDB) and *The Wall Journal Guide to Information Graphics* (WSG)

Week	Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
Week 1	T Jan 21	Introduction to the course and to each other
	R Jan 23	NDDB introduction to principles of design Set up Google drive folder for class activities
Week 2	T Jan 28	Have read NDDB Ch1 Introduction and Ch2 Proximity * In Google drive, post a definition of "proximity" as a design principle
	R Jan 30	Have read NDDB Ch3 Alignment ***** Post your definition of "alignment" as a design principle to Google drive prior to class. * Bring to class a flyer or picture of a flyer for redesign assignment Discuss and send a document to WEPA printer on campus
Week 3	T Feb 4	Have read NDDB Ch4 Repetition * Post your definition of "repetition" as a design principle to Google drive prior to class.
	R Feb 6	Have read NDDB Ch5 Contrast and Ch6 Review of Design Principles * Post your definition of "contrast" as a design principle to Google drive prior to class *** Critical analysis and redesign 1, upload to Dropbox Sunday Feb 9, before mid-night (original flyer plus your redesign and critique)**
Week 4	T Feb 11	Have read NDDB Ch7 Design with Color Discuss the research process
	R Feb 13	Have read NDDB Ch8 Extra Tips & Tricks, and Ch9 Essentials of Typography Workshop critical redesign 2
Week 5	T Feb 18	Have read NDDB Ch10 Type (& Life)
	R Feb 20	Have read NDDB Ch11 Categories and Ch12 Type Contrasts *** Critical analysis and redesign 2 uploaded to Dropbox Sunday Feb. 23, before midnight (original flyer plus your redesign and critique)**
Week 6	T Feb 25	Conducting research
	R Feb 27	Workshop researching possible topics Sign up for infographic presentation
Week 7	T Mar 3	***Journal article/citation assignment due, printed at beginning of class** Have read *WSG Infographic Dos and Don'ts* Introduction Watch and discuss Storytelling with Data video (27min.) Sign up for infographic presentation
	R Mar 5	Have read WSG The Basics (1-29): • Charting • Numbers • Data integrity • Data richness Discuss infographic dos and don'ts presentation assignments: • Open with a reading/content quiz question • Handout saved as a pdf **Collect class demographic information**

Week	Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
Week 8	T Mar 10	*** Individual presentations begin: upload to Dropbox presentation by 5:00 pm the day prior to your presentation. (Two-three student presentations each class period)** Have read WSG (30-43): • Fonts: Legibility P1 • Fonts: Topography in charts P1 • Color: Basics P2 • Color: Palettes P2 • Color in charts P3 • Color chart templates P3
	R Mar 12	Have read WSG: • Color Scale application P4 • Coloring for the color blind P4 • Lines: Height and weight P5 • Lines: Y-axis increments P5 • Lines: Legends and labels P6 • Lines: Clean lines Clear Signals P6 Discuss team formation for major team research project. Note topic posting assignment due Tuesday after Spring Break
Week 9	Mar 16-21 Spring Break	
Week 10	T Mar 24	Have read WSG: • Lines: Left-right y-axis scales P7 • Lines: Comparable scales P7 • Vertical bars: Form and shading P8 • Vertical bars: Zero baseline P8 ***Prior to class, post one (or two) possible research project topics to the Discussion Board with attachments or links to *at least* three sources related to each topic**.
	R Mar 26	Have read WSG: • Vertical bars: Multiple bars and legends P9 • Vertical bars: Broken bars and outliers P9 • Horizontal bars: Ordering and grouping P10 • Horizontal bars: Negative bars P10 Review class demographic assignment **Teams formed: Create and share a Google drive folder and document**. Mid-term grade check
Week 11	M Mar 30	Last day to withdraw from a course, 4:00 p.m. Drops after this date = "F"
	T Mar 31	*** Class demographics bar chart assignment due, printed, at beginning of class** Have read WSG: • Charting your course: Work plan P11 • Charting your course: Communicating progress P11 • Percentages: don't average percentages P12 • Copy Style in Charts P12 * In class, in Google drive team folder, outline Team Project proposal.

Week	Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
	R Apr 2	Have read WSG: • Pies: Slicing and dicing P13 • Pies: Dressing up the slices P13 • Pies: Slicing a slice P14 • Pies: Proportional pies P14 *** Team data visualization project proposal w/ Gantt chart due, uploaded to Dropbox and printed by end of class.**
Week 12	T Apr 7	Have read WSG: • Pictograms: choice of icons P15 • Pictograms: Comparing quantities P15 • Tables: Grid lines P16 • Tables: Numbers, alignment and ordering P16 • Tricky Situations: Missing data P17 • Tricky situations: Big numbers, small change P17 Team workshop
	R Apr 9	No classes on Thursday and Friday (Holiday)
Week 13	T Apr 14	Have read WSG: • Tricky situations: Comparable scales ant vs. elephant P18 • Tricky situations: Coloring with black ink P18 • Maps: Mapping and shading P19 • Do the Math: Mean, medium, mode P19 Team workshop
	R Apr 16	*** In-class test: infographics**
Week 14	T Apr 21	Team workshop
	R Apr 23	***Individual research progress report due, printed, by end of class.**
Week 15	T Apr 28	Team workshop
	R Apr 30	**No class:* Attend Celebration of Scholarship 9-5**
Week 16	T May 5	***Celebration of Scholarship refection essay due, printed, at beginning of class.** *** Final team written project due, upload and printed at end of class.**
	R May 7	Team workshop for presentation Review and take team evaluations home to complete
Finals Week	Final Exam Tuesday May 12 8–10 am	Final exam (presentation of team assignment) *** Final PPT presentations uploaded to dropbox by Sunday, May 10, 5:00 pm** *** Team evaluations due at beginning of presentation period**