

# ENGL 2123-A20: Rhetoric of Visuals and Infographics

Spring 2019

## Syllabus

Instructor	Dr. Sally Henschel Office: Bea Wood 211 940.397.4731 sally.henschel@msutexas.edu
Office hours	Mon. and Wed. 12:30 to 4:30 Tues. and Thurs. 11:00 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students will understand and apply the principles of visual rhetoric in their analysis of and justification for design decisions.</li><li>2. Students will understand many of the ethical, legal, cultural, and economic issues that impact the creation, interpretation, and use of visual messages.</li><li>3. Students will demonstrate the ability to apply skills needed to conduct research and/or engage in creative activities.</li><li>4. Students will be able to communicate analyses, interpretations, and significance of research through variable media.</li><li>5. Students will collaborate with peers/faculty and learn to address real-world problems/answer real world questions.</li><li>6. Students will develop and apply design, team building, and management skills to evaluating, researching, creating, and presenting visual information and arguments.</li></ol>

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. [4<sup>th</sup> edition]  
Wong, Donna M. *The Wall Journal Guide to Information Graphics*. Norton, 2013.

Assignments

**Individual assignments**

- Critical analysis and redesign 1 5 points
  - Critical analysis and redesign 2 5 points
  - Infographic dos and don'ts (presentation) 10 points
  - Class demographics bar chart assignment 5 points
  - In-class test: analysis of infographics 10 points
  - Summary and analysis of guest lecture 5 points
  - Celebration of Scholarship reflection essay 5 points
  - Research progress report (related to team project) 15 points
- 60 individual points**

**Team assignments**

- Critical analysis and redesign 10 points
  - Data visualization proposal 10 points
  - Written report w/ team created infographics 10 points
  - Class presentation of project w/ infographics 5 points
- 35 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.

Attendance 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
- -3 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). Following the email message, a student should include his/her full name (e.g., Maria Jones).
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 unpublished and published sources, students must use accepted documentation conventions (i.e., MLA). See the MSU Student Handbook (PDF attached to Course Content 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 behavior.
Cell phone use	Unless a cell phone is being used for a class activity, all <b>cell phones need to be put away during the class session</b> (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. <b>Earbuds are not allowed in class</b> unless you have obtained 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 program 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@mwsutexas.edu . Or visit the <a href="#">EURECA website</a> .
Americans with Disabilities Act	<p>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 disabilities are guaranteed a learning environment that provides reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.</p> <p>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 benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subject to discrimination by any such entity."</p> <p>To obtain disability support services, students must be accepted for admission to Midwestern 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.</p> <p>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 <a href="#">Disability Services at Midwestern State University</a></p>

## Assignment Schedule

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

Week	Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
Week 1	T Jan 15	Introduction to the course and to each other
	R Jan 17	NDDDB introduction to principles of design
Week 2	T Jan 22	Have read NDDDB Ch1 Introduction and Ch2 Proximity * Bring to class a copy of your definition of “proximity” as a design principle * Bring to class a flyer for redesign assignment Discuss using your D2L locker space
	R Jan 24	Have read NDDDB Ch3 Alignment * Post your definition of “alignment” as a design principle to D2L locker prior to class. * Bring to class flyer for redesign Discuss and send a document to WEPA printer on campus
Week 3	T Jan 29	Have read NDDDB Ch4 Repetition * Post your definition of “repetition” as a design principle to D2L locker prior to class.
	R Jan 31	Have read NDDDB Ch5 Contrast and Ch6 Review of Design Principles * Post your definition of “repetition” as a design principle to D2L locker prior to class. <b>* Critical analysis and redesign 1, upload to Dropbox Thursday Jan. 31, before midnight (original flyer plus your redesign and critique)</b>
Week 4	T Feb 5	Have read NDDDB Ch7 Design with Color Discuss the research process and faculty panel lecture assignment Workshop critical redesign 2
	W Feb 6	<b>* Wed. Feb. 6: Attend Faculty Research Panel, Comanche Suites, 7:30-8:30 pm</b>
	R Feb 7	Have read NDDDB Ch8 Extra Tips & Tricks, and Ch9 Essentials of Typography Workshop critical redesign 2
Week 5	T Feb 12	<b>* Summary and analysis of faculty panel lecture due, printed, at beginning of class</b> Have read NDDDB Ch10 Type (& Life)
	R Feb 14	Have read NDDDB Ch11 Categories and Ch12 Type Contrasts <b>* Critical analysis and redesign 2 uploaded to Dropbox Thursday Feb. 14, before midnight (original flyer plus your redesign and critique)</b>
Week 6	T Feb 19	Form team for redesign 3 assignment
	R Feb 21	Workshop redesign 3
Week 7	T Feb 26	<b>* Critical analysis and redesign 3 (team) due, printed, at beginning of class Feb. 26</b> Have read <i>WSG Infographic Dos and Don'ts</i> Introduction Watch and discuss Storytelling with Data video (27min.)
	R Feb 28	Have read <i>WSG The Basics</i> (1-29): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charting</li> <li>• Numbers</li> <li>• Data integrity</li> <li>• Data richness</li> </ul> Discuss infographic dos and don'ts presentation assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open with a reading/content quiz question</li> </ul>

Week	Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handout saved as a pdf</li> </ul> Sign up for infographic presentation
Week 8	T Mar 5	Have read WSG (30-43): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fonts: Legibility</li> <li>Fonts: Topography in charts</li> <li>Visual-data continuum</li> <li>Color: Basics, palettes</li> <li>Color in charts</li> <li>Color chart templates</li> </ul>
	R Mar 7	<p><b>* Individual presentations begin: upload to Dropbox presentation by 6:00 pm the day prior to your presentation. (Two student presentations each class period)</b></p> Have read WSG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Color in charts (P1)</li> <li>Coloring for the color blind (P1)</li> <li>Lines: Height and weight (P2)</li> <li>Lines: Y-axis increments (P2)</li> <li>Lines: Legends and labels</li> </ul>
Week 9	T Mar 12	Have read WSG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lines: Left-right y-axis scales (P3)</li> <li>Lines: Comparable scales (P3)</li> <li>Vertical bars: Form and shading (P4)</li> <li>Vertical bars: Zero baseline (P4)</li> </ul> <p><b>*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.</b></p> Collect class demographic information Discuss team formation for major team research project
	R Mar 14	Have read WSG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vertical bars: Multiple bars and legends (P5)</li> <li>Vertical bars: Broken bars and outliers (P5)</li> <li>Horizontal bars: Ordering and grouping (P6)</li> <li>Horizontal bars: Negative bars (P6)</li> </ul> Review class demographic assignment Teams formed: Create and share a Google drive folder and document. Mid-term grade check
Week 10	Mar 18-22 Spring Break	
Week 11	M Mar 25	Last day to withdraw from a course, 4:00 p.m. Drops after this date = "F"
	T Mar 26	<p><b>* Class demographics bar chart assignment due, printed, at beginning of class</b></p> Have read WSG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charting your course: Work plan</li> <li>Charting your course: Communicating progress</li> </ul> <p><b>* In class, in Google drive team folder, outline Team Project proposal.</b></p>
	R Mar 28	Have read WSG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentages</li> <li>Copy Style in Charts</li> <li>Maps: Mapping and shading</li> </ul>

Week	Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do the Math</li> </ul> <b>* Team project proposal w/ Gantt chart due, uploaded to Dropbox by end of class.</b>
Week 12	T Apr 2	Have read WSG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pies: Slicing and dicing (P7)</li> <li>Pies: Dressing up the slices (P7)</li> <li>Pies: Slicing a slice (P8)</li> <li>Pies: Proportional pies (P8)</li> <li>Pictograms: choice of icons</li> <li>Pictograms: Comparing quantities</li> </ul>
	R Apr 4	Have read WSG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tables: Grid lines (P9)</li> <li>Tables: Numbers, alignment and ordering (P9)</li> <li>Tricky Situations: Missing data (P10)</li> <li>Tricky situations: Big numbers, small change (P10)</li> <li>Tricky situations: Comparable scales ant vs. elephant</li> <li>Tricky situations: Coloring with black ink</li> </ul>
Week 13	T Apr 9	<b>* In-class test: analysis of an infographic critique (45 minutes)</b> Team workshop
	R Apr 11	<b>*Individual research progress report due, printed, at beginning of class.</b>
Week 14	T Apr 16	Team workshop
	R Apr 18	<b>Holiday: No class on Thursday.</b>
Week 15	T Apr 23	Team workshop
	R Apr 25	<b>* Attend Celebration of Scholarship 9-5</b>
Week 16	T Apr 30	<b>*Celebration of Scholarship reflection essay due, printed, at beginning of class.</b> <b>* Final team written project due, upload at end of class.</b>
	R May 2	Team workshop for presentation Review and take team evaluations home to complete
Finals Week	Final Exam Thursday May 9, 8–10 am	Final exam (presentation of team assignment) <b>* Final presentations uploaded by Monday, May 6th, at 6:00 pm</b> <b>* Team evaluations due at beginning of final class May 9th</b>