



Course Syllabus: ENGL 2123-201: Rhetoric of Visuals and Infographics

Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Spring 2026 (Jan. 20, 2026 to May 14, 2026)

Class meeting times/location: TR 11:00 to 12:20 in BW 117

Syllabus & Schedule

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Sally Henschel

sally.henschel@msutexas.edu

Office: **BW 214**

Office hours: We can visit in person, by phone, or in Zoom (Central Time)

Mon. Noon – 1:00 p.m.

Tues. 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Fri. 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Other times by appointment

Course/Catalog Description

A theoretical and practical inquiry into visual rhetoric and infographics, the visual display of information. Students learn how visuals are used to communicate and persuade; how culture influences the creation, delivery, and interpretation of visual messages; and how to apply this knowledge to the creation, arrangement, and delivery or display of visual information, data, and evidence.

Required Textbooks

- Williams, Robin. *The Non-Designer's Design Book*. Peachpit, 2015. [4th edition]
- Wong, Donna M. *The Wall Street Journal Guide to Information Graphics*. Norton, 2013

Important Dates

- Academic Calendar
- For long semester courses, last day to drop with a grade of "W": **Wed. April 29, 2026**, before 4:00 p.m. An F will result if a student ceases to attend class without completely processing a course drop or withdrawal from the University. Withdrawals after this date will receive grades of "F." Note: You can receive an Instructor drop with a grade of "F" or "WF" prior to that date: See course policies for Late Assignments, Academic Dishonesty, and the University policies on Withdrawals.

Student Learning Outcomes and Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand and apply the principles of visual rhetoric in their analysis of and justification for design decisions.

- Understand and address many of the ethical, legal, cultural, and economic issues that impact the creation, interpretation, and use of visual messages.
- Demonstrate the ability to apply skills needed to conduct research and/or engage in creative activities.
- Collaborate with peers to address real-world problems and respond to real world questions.
- Develop and apply design, teambuilding, and management skills to evaluating, researching, creating, and presenting visual information and arguments.
- Synthesize course readings, discussions, and assignments in a team project.

Assessment of THECB Core Objectives for COMMUNICATION

- *Critical Thinking Skills*, to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information. To assess the student's critical thinking skills, the Team Project Value Rubric will be applied to the Team Project presentation.
- *Communication Skills*, to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication. To assess the student's communication skills, the Team Project Value Rubric will be applied to the Team Project presentation.
- *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. To assess the student's teamwork skills, the Team Project Value Rubric will be applied to the Team Project presentation.
- *Personal Responsibility Skills*, to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making. To assess the student's personal responsibility skills, the Team Project Value Rubric will be applied to the Team Project presentation.

Assignments and Grading

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Individual Assignments	Points
Quizzes (4 x 2.5)	10
Critical analysis and redesign 1	5
Critical analysis and redesign 2	5
Infographics "dos and don'ts" (flyer & presentation)	10
MLA citations	5
Class demographics bar chart assignment	5
Research report w/graphic (related to team project)	20
Celebration of Scholarship reflection essay	5
	(65%)
Team (Collaborative) Assignments	
Team project proposal	5
Team project presentation	20
End of project closure report	5

Team member evaluation	5
	(35%)
Total Possible Points	100

Table 2: Total points for final grade

Grade	Points
A	90 – 100
B	80 – 89
C	70 – 79
D	60 – 69
F	< 60

Collaborative Team Assignments

Collaborating with a team member on the team assignments is a **requirement** (i.e., you cannot complete these assignments on your own nor receive a grade for a team assignment for which you did not contribute). Should your teammate not contribute or withdraw from the course, you will be re-assigned to a different team. (The final team assignments often are some of the highest grades received in the course.)

University and Course Policies and Procedures

Professionalism

Members of this class are expected to treat one another with courtesy, professionalism, and respect.

Cell phone, Earbud, Headphone Use

Cell phones, earbuds, and/or headphones need to be put away during the class session (e.g., in a pocket, purse, or backpack). Use of earbuds or headphones are not allowed during class unless you have obtained permitted use through MSU Disability Support Services and provided the instructor the necessary documentation. If you are using an e-text, please access the e-text on the class computer—not on a cellphone. If you receive a text or a call to which you need to read or respond, please leave the room to do so.

Email and Instructor Response Policy

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). I will respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays, and within 48 hours on weekends and holidays. I typically grade and return assignments within one week following the due date.

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. After 6 unexcused absences, a student is subject to being dropped from the course with grade of "F."

Late Assignment Policy

All assignments will be due on the dates assigned. Students falling two assignments behind are subject to administrative withdrawal from the course by the instructor.

University Academic Dishonesty Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty is defined as “Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual’s to whom credit is given).” Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the [Student Handbook](#), under Academic Dishonesty Procedure or through the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

Course Academic Dishonesty Policy Details and Advice

All work submitted to D2L will be scanned by the Turnitin program which flags text that is quoted from a source or generated by AI. If quoted text is not placed in quotation marks and the correct source cited, you will receive a grade of zero for that assignment. If this occurs twice in the course, you will receive a grade of “F” for the course. There are no exceptions to this rule. To avoid this from happening, I suggest the following:

- **Ask for help:** First, and importantly, as the instructor of this course, I am available to assist you with any questions you have about the use and citation of sources. Just contact me several days before the assignment is due with a link to the source so that I have adequate time to look over the article and meet with you to discuss your concerns or need for assistance.
- **Don't use AI:** Generally speaking, you are not allowed to use artificial intelligence (AI) engines, software, or artwork generating programs **to produce content submitted for grading** in this class **unless** the assignment instructions specifically call for the use of AI. I will provide more information about any specific assignment that involves the use of AI when the time is appropriate in the course. You may not, however, construe this limited use as permission to use these technologies in any other facet of this course.
- **Provide Instructor access to all sources used in assignments:** All sources cited in an assignment must be available, accessible online for me, the instructor, to review as I grade your assignments. Simply provide a working link (URL) to the **complete article** at the end of each source cited in your Reference or Works Cited list, which should be included at the end of the document. If you cannot link to the article, upload the article to the dropbox for the submission. A link to an abstract or to an online database which has a paywall won't work: I need to be able to read the entire article, just as you did.
- **Accurately cite sources:** When using the ideas of other published and/or unpublished sources, students must use accepted documentation conventions (i.e., MLA or APA). All quoted content must be placed in “quotation marks,” and for quoted, paraphrased, and summarized content, the correct source must be cited in the text. Stating, “I meant to put the text in quotation marks but forgot to do so,” “I cited the name of the source but forgot the quotation marks,” or “I cited the wrong source” are not acceptable explanations for inaccurately citing sources.
- **Be aware of the penalty:** Please don't allow inaccurate use and citing of sources to negatively impact your grade. Doing so will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. If this happens twice, you will receive a grade of “F” for the course.

University Closure Practices

In the event of university closure because of inclement weather conditions or emergency situations, students will be notified through official campus channels (MSU Alert, MSU Safety app, Postmaster emails, and website headers) and through communication with the local news networks. Students should refer to their course syllabi, course D2L News announcements, and/or their university email for expectations related to assignments due during the closure. For this course, unless a change is posted to the course D2L News, assignments due to be uploaded or posted to D2L during the closure will remain due as scheduled. Students who are unable to complete assignments due during a closure (for example, due to a power outage) will not be penalized, but will be expected to notify the professor of their situation.

Constitutional Carry and Campus Facts Policies

Information on the University's policy may be found at [Campus Carry at MSU Texas](#).

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult [Academic Affairs Grade Appeals](#) for instructions.

University Opportunities and Services

Research & Creative Opportunities

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@msutexas.edu. Information and resources are available on the [EURECA website](#).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP)

MSU's [TASP](#) provides on-campus and distance education students tutoring options.

Assignment Schedule

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

Table 3: **Tentative** readings and assignments (If these change, students will be given advance notice.)

Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
Week 1 TR Jan. 20, 22	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the course, syllabus, required textbooks. <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDDB introduction to PARC principles of design
Week 2 TR Jan. 27, 29	<p>Tuesday prior to class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have read in NDDB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch1 Introduction Ch2 Proximity, and Ch6 Review of Design Principles Overview of CRD1 <p>Thursday prior to class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin to find and take pictures of flyers on campus that could use a re-design. In class, discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of flyers that would benefit from a redesign PARC Quizzes, which begin next week. Setting up Google drive folder for class activities with a Google document titled PARC Principles
Week 3 TR Feb. 3, 5	<p>Tuesday prior to class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In your PARC Principles Google document, have written your own definition of “proximity” as a design principle based on Williams’s description. Save a picture of <u>two</u> (or more) informative flyers/posters you would like to redesign for the first redesign assignment to your Google folder. Flyers must be local, not national (i.e., not something found online). In class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss what issues with Proximity are apparent in the flyers/posters Take quiz on Proximity <p>Thursday prior to class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have read in NDDB Ch3 Alignment, and Ch6 Review of Design Principles. In your PARC Principles document, have written your own definition of “alignment” as a design principle based on Williams’s description. Use a quote or two, but the definitions must also include your own summary, paraphrases, and/or examples. (Keep all definitions in the same document.) In class:

Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discuss what issues with Alignment are apparent in your saved flyers/posters. ○ Discuss, workshop Critical Analysis & Redesign 1 ○ Take quiz on Alignment
Week 4 TR Feb. 10, 12	<p>Tuesday prior to class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have read in NDDB Ch4 Repetition, and Ch6 Review of Design Principles ● In your PARC Principles document, have written your definition of “repetition” as a design principle based on Williams’s description. Use a quote or two, but the definitions must also include your own summary, paraphrases, and/or examples. (Keep all definitions in the same document.) ● Discuss what issues with Repetition are apparent in your saved flyers/posters. ● Have read in NDDB, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch7 Design with Color ○ Ch8 Extra Tips & Tricks <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have read prior to class in NDDB, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch9 Essentials of Typography ○ Ch10 Type (& Life) ● In class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take quiz on Repetition ○ Workshop Critical Analysis Redesign 1
Week 5 TR Feb. 17, 19	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have read prior to class in NDDB Ch5 Contrast, and Ch6 Review of Design Principles ● Have written your definition of “contrast” in your PARC Principles document. ● In class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discuss what issues with Contrast are apparent in your flyers/posters. ○ Review Discussion Post instructions for Sunday’s post <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have read prior to class in NDDB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch11 Categories ○ Ch12 Type Contrasts ● In-Class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take quiz on Contrast ○ Discuss conducting research, topics (list on board), and teams <p>Due:</p>

Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Analysis & Redesign 1, upload to the D2L Dropbox Thurs. Feb. 19, before 11:30 pm (original flyer plus your redesign and critique) • Discussion Post on possible team research topics Sun. Feb.22, before 11:30 pm
Week 6 TR Feb. 24, 26	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to class, have read other students' discussion board posts on possible team research topic. • In-Class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Form teams by topic areas <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss MLA/APA citation assignment • Discuss <i>Infographics Dos and Don'ts</i> presentation assignments • Sign up for <i>Infographic</i> presentation by next week. • Review Critical Redesign 2 assignment instructions • Ensure all class members are part of a team.
Week 7 TR Mar. 3, 5	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams review Team Proposal instructions • Create Team Google project folder and Team Project Proposal document • Sign up for <i>Infographic</i> presentations <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MLA citation assignment, upload to D2L Dropbox Tues. Mar. 3, before 11:30 pm <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to class: Have read in <i>WSG Infographic Dos and Don'ts</i> Introduction and The Basics (1-29): Charting, Numbers, Data integrity, Data richness • Discuss questions related to <i>Infographics Dos and Don'ts</i> presentation assignments • Team Proposal workshop: Check team Google folder and document
Week 8 Mar. 9-13	Spring Break ☀️
Week 9 TR Mar. 17, 19	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Team Project Proposal: In class, using doc. within the Google drive team folder, outline team data visualization project within the proposal ○ Discuss finding data sources

Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect data for Class Demographic assignment • Questions on Critical Redesign 2? <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual <i>Infographics Dos and Don'ts</i> presentations begin on Thursday: upload handout to dropbox by 5:00 pm the day prior to your presentation. • WSG Presentations (All students should have read chapters prior to class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Charting Numbers (20-23) 2. Data Integrity, Data Richness (26-29) 3. Fonts: Legibility; Topography charts (30-33) 4. Color charts (40-41), For color blind (44-45) <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Proposal. Upload to D2L Dropbox Thursday, Mar. 19, before 5:00 pm • Critical Analysis and Redesign 2 upload to D2L Dropbox Sunday, Mar. 22. Before 11:30 pm move
Week 10 TR Mar. 24, 26	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share and discuss data for the class demographics assignment • WSG Presentations (All students have read chapters prior to class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Lines: Height & weight; Y-axis increments (50-53) 6. Lines: Legends & labels; Clean lines clear signals (54-57) 7. Lines: Left-right y-axis scales, Comp. scales (58-61) 8. Horiz. bars: Ordering and grouping; Negative bars (70-73) <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring draft of demographics chart assignment to class. • WSG Presentations (All students have read chapters prior to class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Vert. bars: Form & shading; Zero baseline (62-65) 10. Vert. bars: Mult. bars & leg.; Broken bars outlier (66-69) 11. Pies: Slicing & dicing; Dressing up slices (74-77) 12. Pies: Slicing a slice; Proportional pies (78-81) <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class demographics chart assignment, upload to D2L Dropbox Sunday, Mar. 29, before 11:30 pm
Week 11 Tuesday Mar. 31 (Holiday: Thurs.- Friday Apr. 2-4)	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss IRR assignment (which is due on Wed. April 16) • WSG Presentations (All students have read chapters prior to class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Tables: Grid lines; #'s, aligning & ordering (82 -85) 14. Pictograms: Choice icons; Comp. quantities (86-89) 15. Do Math: Mean, med, mode: Avg, vs weight avg (94,98) 16. Percentages: Expressing %; Don't average % (107, 109)
Week 12 TR Apr. 7, 9	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSG Presentations (All students have read chapters prior to class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Copy Style Charts: Words, Numerals (110-111)

Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
	<p>18. T.S. Missing data (124-125); Coloring black ink (130-131) 19. Sched. Workplan (136), Com. Progress (138)</p> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Celebration of Scholarship and reflection essay. • Discuss IRR workshop
Week 13 TR Apr. 14, 16	<p>Tuesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRR workshop (IRR due next Wed., April 22) • Discuss Team Project presentation • Discuss Celebration of Scholarship <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal class: Instead, class will attend Celebration of Scholarship (undergraduate research sessions) <p>Due: Celebration of Scholarship refection essay, upload to D2L Dropbox Sunday, April 19, before 11:30 pm</p>
Week 14 TR Apr. 21, 23	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions on IRR (due tomorrow) • Team workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preparing Effective Oral and Poster Presentations ○ Using Google slides <p>Due Wed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Research Report, upload to D2L Dropbox <u>Wed. April 22, before 11:30 pm</u> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team workshop: team project slide presentation • Discuss team closure report
Week 15 TR Apr. 28, 30	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team workshops: team project slide presentation <p>Wed. April 29: Last Day to “W” from long-semester courses, by 4:00 p.m.; Drops after this date will receive grades of “F.”</p> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team workshop: Team closure report
Week 16 May. 5, 7	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to class on Tuesday, upload to D2L completed Team Project Slide Presentation to D2L to get feedback during the class period. • Workshop Slide Presentation and Closure Report <p>Thursday:</p> <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Closure Report, upload to D2L Dropbox Thursday, May 7, before 5:00 pm

Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
	<p>Friday:</p> <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final team slide presentation, upload to D2L Dropbox Friday, May 8, before 5:00 pm
<p>Week 17 Final exams week Tuesday, May 12, from 1:00 - 3:00pm</p> <p><u>MSU Final Exam Schedule</u></p>	<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class team slide presentation of team project, Tuesday, May 12 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm • Team members must be present in person for their own presentation and for all of the other teams' presentations. • Teammate evaluation. Complete Tuesday May 12 before 11:30 pm,