



ENGL 2123-201: Rhetoric of Visuals and Infographics

Spring 2024

TR 11:00 to 12:20 in BW 117

Syllabus & Schedule

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Sally Henschel

Office: PY 211

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

Tues. 12:30 – 2:30 pm

Wed. 12:00 – 1:00 pm

Thurs. 12:30 – 2:30 pm

Other times by appointment

E-mail: sally.henschel@msutexas.edu

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](#) (See 2023-2024)
- For long semester courses, last day to drop with a grade of "W": **April 24, 2024** before 4:00 pm (See: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#))
- Deadline for May graduates to file for graduation: Feb. 12, 2024

Course 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.

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.

Upon successful 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.

Assignments and Grading

Individual assignments

• Critical analysis and redesign 1	5
• Critical analysis and redesign 2	10
• Infographic 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	10

65 individual points

Team assignments

• Data visualization project proposal	10
• In-class slide presentation of project w/ infographics	10
• End of project closure report	10
• Team member evaluations	5

35 team points

100 total points

Final course grade calculation

A = 100—90%

B = 89—80%

C = 79—70

D = 69—60%

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 an 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 cell-phone. If you receive a call or text 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.

Negative points: Points are deducted against the final grade for unexcused 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 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 dates assigned. No late work will be accepted. 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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

Campus Carry Rules/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 the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#): Select the current catalog > under the Catalog Search menu, select **Registrar > Appeal of Course Grade**

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* (NDDDB) and *The Wall Journal Guide to Information Graphics* (WSG)

Week	Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
Week 1	TR Jan 16, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the course and to each other • NDDDB introduction to principles of design • Set up Google drive folder for class activities with a Google document titled PARC Principles. • Discuss examples of flyers that would benefit from a redesign
Week 2	TR Jan 23, 25	<p>Tuesday prior to class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have read in NDDDB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch1 Introduction ○ Ch2 Proximity • In your Google document, have written your own definition of "proximity" as a design principle based on Williams's description. You can use a quote or two, but the definitions must also include your own summary or paraphrases and examples. • Save a picture of an informative flyer (or two) you would like to redesign for the first redesign assignment. Save the picture files to your Google drive folder. <p>Thursday prior to class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have read in NDDDB: Ch3 Alignment • In your Google document, have written your own definition of "alignment" as a design principle based on Williams's description.

Week	Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
		In class Tuesday & Thursday workshop Critical Redesign 1.
Week 3	TR Jan 30, Feb 1	<p>Tuesday prior to class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have read in NDDB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch4 Repetition • Have written your definition of “repetition” in your Google document. (Definitions should all be on the same document.) <p>Thursday, prior to class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have read in NDDB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch5 Contrast ○ Ch6 Review of Design Principles • Have written your definition of “contrast” in your Google document. • Workshop Critical Analysis & Redesign 1
Week 4	TR Feb 6, 8	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have read in NDDB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch7 Design with Color ○ Ch8 Extra Tips & Tricks ○ Ch9 Essentials of Typography <p>Tuesday & Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop Critical Analysis Redesign 1 <p>Due: Critical Analysis & Redesign 1, upload to the Dropbox Thurs. Feb 8, before 11:30 pm (original flyer plus your redesign and critique)</p>
Week 5	TR Feb 13, 15	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have read in NDDB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch10 Type (& Life) ○ Ch11 Categories ○ Ch12 Type Contrasts <p>Tuesday & Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop Critical Redesign 2 <p>Due: Critical Analysis and Redesign 2 uploaded to Dropbox next Sunday Feb. 18, before 11:30 pm (original flyer plus your redesign and critique)</p>
Week 6	TR Feb 20, 22	<p>Tuesday & Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss conducting research and possible topics • Discuss topic discussion post and MLA/APA citation assignment • Discuss <i>Infographics Dos and Don'ts</i> presentation assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sign up for Infographic presentation ○ Open with a reading/content quiz question ○ Handout saved as a pdf and uploaded to dropbox <p>Due: Discussion Post on possible team research topics by Sun. Feb. 25</p>
Week 7	TR Feb 27, 29	<p>Tuesday prior to class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload MLA citation assignment draft to dropbox. • Have read other students’ discussion board posts on possible team research topic.

Week	Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have read in <i>WSG Infographic Dos and Don'ts</i> Introduction and The Basics (1-29): Charting, Numbers, Data integrity, Data richness <p>Tuesday in class: Begin team formation.</p> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch and discuss Storytelling with Data video (27min.) • Discuss questions related to <i>Infographics Dos and Don'ts</i> presentation assignments <p>Due: Final draft MLA citation assignment, upload to D2L by Thrus. Feb. 29 by 11:30 pm)</p>
Week 8	TR Mar 5, 7	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outlining the team data visualization project. ○ Team data visualization project proposal ○ Finding data sources ○ Team Google folder and document <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): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fonts: Legibility; Topography in charts 2. Lines: Height and weight; Y-axis increments 3. Lines: Legends and labels; Clean lines clear signals 4. Lines: Left-right y-axis scales, Comparable scales
Week 9	Mar 12—14	Spring Break!
Week 10	TR Mar 19, 21	<p>Tuesday & Thursday:</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) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Vertical bars: Form and shading; Zero baseline 6. Vertical bars: Multiple bars and legends; Broken bars, outliers 7. Horizontal bars: Ordering and grouping; Negative bars 8. Percentages: Expressing percentages; Don't average % <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) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Pies: Slicing and dicing; Dressing up the slices 10. Pies: Slicing a slice; Proportional pies • In class, using doc. within the Google drive team folder, outline Team Project Proposal. <p>Due: Class demographics chart assignment, uploaded to dropbox by Sunday, Mar. 24, before 11:30 pm</p>

Week	Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
Week 11	T Mar 26	<p>Easter holiday: No classes on Thursday.</p> <p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss IRR assignment • WSG Presentations (All students have read chapters prior to class): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Color: In charts; Coloring for the color blind 12. Tables: Grid lines; Numbers, alignment and ordering 13. Pictograms: Choice of icons; Comparing quantities 14. Percentages: Expressing percentages; Don't average %
Week 12	TR April 2, 4	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have read in WSG: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. To be posted. 16. To be posted. 17. Tricky Situations: Missing data; Big numbers, small change 18. Tricky situations: Comparable scales ant vs. elephant; Col-oring with black ink <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have read in WSG:: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Maps: Mapping and shading; Mean, medium, mode 20. To be posted. • IRR workshop
Week 13	TR Apr 9, 11	<p>Tuesday & Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Celebration of Scholarship assignment • Workshop IRR <p>Due: Individual Research Report, uploaded by Thursday, April 11, before 11:30 pm</p>
Week 14	TR Apr 16, 18	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team workshop: final presentation: Using Google slides • Team workshop: Preparing Effective Oral and Poster Presenta-tions <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal class: Instead, class will attend Celebration of Scholar-ship undergraduate research sessions (on Thurs. April 18). <p>Due: Celebration of Scholarship reflection essay, uploaded to dropbox by Sunday, April 21, before 11:30 pm</p>
Week 15	TR Apr 23, 25	<p>Wed., April 24: 4:00 pm – Last Day to “W” from long-semester courses; Drops after this date will receive grades of “F.”</p> <p>Tuesday & Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team workshops: team slide presentation • Discuss team closure report
Week 16	TR Apr. 30, May 2	<p>Last Week of Classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to class on Tuesday, upload to D2L completed Team Slide Presentation to D2L to show professor and get feedback during the class period.

Week	Day/Date	Assignment and/or Activity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday workshop: Team Closure Report <p>Due: Final team slide presentation, upload for grading by Friday, May 3, 11:30 pm</p> <p>Due: Team Closure Report, upload by Sunday, May 5, 11:30 pm</p>
Week 17 Finals Week	Our exam is Tues. May 7 1:00 to 3:00 pm	<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class team slide presentations. Tues., May 7 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. • Complete teammate evaluation by Tues. May 7, by 11:30 pm