

WRITING 2209G 650: Visual Information Packaging: Document Design

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OFFICE HOURS: By email/appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The personal computer has revolutionized the production and dissemination of information, making it possible for a single individual to perform all the functional roles (writer, editor, graphic artist, designer, printer, publisher) previously performed by skilled and experienced specialists. This course examines information production and document design as an amalgam of skills and tools intended to communicate information clearly and effectively whether the information is presented on the printed page or in a digital screen. We will examine the elements that constitute the packaging of effective visual communication, the goal being to develop good visual language skills to create information products that are meaningful and useful to the reader, accomplish their information and/or persuasive purpose(s), and appropriately consider the context in which the reader/user encounters the information.

More generally, the course aims to contribute to your development of an "... ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences." (Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents' statement on 'University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations' 24 October 2005).

This course will equip you with resources to solve communication/information problems, develop your critical skills in evaluating communication products, and enable you to create documents that are textually and visually effective in communicating with the reader.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

- Course Pack (Western Bookstore Product Number 10494) available from The Bookstore at Western <http://www.bookstore.uwo.ca/>
- Lupton, Ellen. *Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2010.
- Consult the bibliography in *Thinking with Type* for several excellent references to material discussing grids. Also visit <www.ThinkingWithType.com> for links to online sources

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Method of Evaluation	Grade Value	Due
OWL Discussion Forums	10%	Ongoing
Assign. #1 – Idea File Analysis (PART 1)	20%	Unit 4
Assign. #2 – Idea File Analysis (PART 2 w/ reformatting)	20%	Unit 7
Assign. #3 – Document Design Essay	25%	Unit 10
Assign. #4 – Reformatted Document Design Project	25%	Unit 12
	100%	

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT

Text assignments (#1 and #3) must be typed and double-spaced, and must have your name, course name, section number, and instructor's name on the first page. Designed/reformatted assignments (#2 and #4) must also be typed but will include creative visual page layouts (inspired by course material) to support/accentuate the content. When using sources, you will be expected to follow MLA conventions for documentation/citation.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are due on the date specified on the schedule (see below). **Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day unless I have granted you an extension.** You must talk to your instructor about extensions ahead of the due date; they are not automatic, nor will they be granted retroactively.

In this course, you will submit the final version of all assignments electronically through the OWL site; text assignments (#1 and #3) will be submitted as doc or docx files; designed/reformatted assignments (#2 and #4) will be submitted as PDF files. When you upload your work to OWL, it will automatically be processed through Turnitin.com (see SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES section below). No hard copies are required. Do not fax or email assignments; do not drop off assignments anywhere on campus. Also, be aware that you are responsible for keeping copies of all assignments submitted.

OWL DISCUSSION FORUMS

This course is entirely online and asynchronous, but it is not self-paced; you will be required to participate in weekly OWL discussion forums. These mandatory responses will engage with the course content and be the equivalent of class attendance.

You must attend class—defined as logging into our OWL section—by participating in all assigned OWL forums (see complete schedule below). This means at least TWO (2) separate posts during each of those weeks: one (1) that is a new thread you initiate (aim for 200-300 words) and one (1) that is a reply/response to another student (aim for 75-100 words).

For each unit, the OWL forums **will open on Monday at 9:00am and will be locked the following Monday at 9:00am.** Missed discussions cannot be made up without official accommodation from academic counselling. Posts in the OWL discussion forums must do the following:

- Contribute something meaningful (and new) to the conversation;
- Support your opinion with sufficient reasons or evidence;
- Display good grammar, effective organization, concision, and precision.

Posts **MUST NOT:**

- Contain disrespectful, insulting, or offensive language; **the use of racist language or any language that works against the values of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will not be tolerated.** Before posting, please review all your comments to ensure that they are appropriate.
- Be excessively long or excessively short;
- Be unrelated to the week's topic;
- Say things that do not contribute anything, e.g. "I agree with you" or "nice comment."

I will track your posts to the OWL forums, and at the end of term, I will arrive at a cumulative grade out of 100 that will constitute your 10% 'OWL Discussion Forums' mark. Note that 'attendance' in this course, as defined above, is mandatory. Failure to meet the minimum posting requirements for three weeks where there is an OWL forum will result in your final grade in this course being reduced by 10%. Failure to meet the minimum posting requirements for four or more weeks where there is an OWL forum will result in your final grade being reduced by 15%.

OFFICE HOURS/E-MAIL POLICY

This term, I will not be holding in-person office hours. Instead, I will be answering course questions and offering additional clarification/help through email. I respond to e-mails within 24 hours. If you have not heard from me in 48 hours, please resend your message. I do not check e-mail on the weekend.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Students experiencing general difficulty with the course material may contact the [Student Development Centre](#) for counselling and tutoring services, as well as writing consultation. The Student Development Centre also has staff members who specialize in assisting students with various disabilities to adjust to the university environment. Please advise me at the beginning of the term if you have any special needs.

SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES, INCLUDING PLAGIARISM

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.”

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above). Plagiarized work will receive an ‘F’ (ranging from 0 to 49) and may result in failure in the course as a whole.

All required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between Western and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).”

PREREQUISITES

“Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

The prerequisite for registration in this course is a) a final grade of 65 or more in one of Writing 2101, 2121, 2111, or 2131, or b) a final grade of 70 or more in Writing 1000F/G or Writing 1030F, or c) Special Permission of the Program.

ACCOMMODATION POLICIES

Note: the official Western [Accommodation Policy](#) appears below. This is in effect, but may be modified temporarily by the university during the academic year as conditions change.

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more

than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors by email within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see [Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#) and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing (email), prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Other Important Links for Student Services:

Registrarial Services: <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Student Support Services: <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

SPECIAL REQUESTS: Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing

Please refer to the "Information for All Students in a Writing Course" for more detailed information. Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean's office of your home faculty.