

WRITING 2209G 650: Visual Information Packaging: Document Design

Winter 2024

PROFESSOR: David Barrick**EMAIL:** dbarric@uwo.ca**OFFICE HOURS:** By email/Zoom appointment**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

Contemporary digital technology makes it possible for a single person to perform all the roles (writer, editor, graphic artist, designer, printer, publisher) previously performed by a variety of specialists. This course examines information production and document design as an amalgam of skills and tools intended to communicate information clearly and effectively in multiple contexts. Students will learn about core principles of visual design and page layout to create functional and eye-catching documents in print and digital settings. By studying contemporary design work, typography, principles of human perception, and historical context, students will develop good visual language skills to reach a range of audiences. More generally, 2209G aims to contribute to the 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 also equip you with resources to solve communication/information problems and develop your critical skills in evaluating visual/written texts.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

- Course Pack (Western Bookstore Product Number 10494) available from The Bookstore at Western <http://www.bookstore.uwo.ca/> (Print only)
- Lupton, Ellen. *Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2010.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK

- Williams, Robin. *The Non-Designer's Design Book*. 4th Edition. San Francisco: Peachpit Press/Pearson Longman, 2015. ISBN: 9780133966152

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) must be submitted as DOCX files; designed/reformatted assignments (#2 and #4) must 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 Western's campus. Also, be aware that you are responsible for keeping backup 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 250-300 words) and one (1) that is a reply/response to another student (aim for 75-100 words).

For each unit with an associated discussion, 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 OWL forum posts, 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

I will not hold in-person office hours for this course. Instead, I will be answering questions and offering additional clarification/help through email (I am also open to booking brief Zoom appointments). 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.

SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES, INCLUDING PLAGIARISM

Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, which can be found here:

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.

All required papers may 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 Western and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools **only** for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. It is essential, however, that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize, develop, and articulate their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration, but students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism in any form. Note that for all assignments completed outside of class, the instructor can require you to attend an in-person interview to discuss your work before a mark is finalized. Assignments should always reflect students' own thoughts and constitute independent written work. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and ethical learning environment that promotes critical thinking, supports independent inquiry, and encourages original written contributions. **Do not use AI to generate rough drafts of essays or visual elements. Any/all use of AI in your assignments must be approved by me ahead of submission.**

PREREQUISITES

Ensuring you have the correct prerequisite(s) is your responsibility. The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines: "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 this course is: at least 65% in one of [Writing 2101F/G](#), [Writing 2125F/G](#) (or the former [Writing 2121F/G](#)), [Writing 2111F/G](#), [Writing 2130F/G](#) or [Writing 2131F/G](#); or at least 65% in one of [Writing 1000F/G](#), [Writing 1030F/G](#), or [Writing 1031F/G](#); or at least 65% in each of [MIT 1020E](#) (or both of [MIT 1021F/G](#) and [MIT 1022F/G](#)) and [MIT 1025F/G](#); or permission of the Department (consult the Undergraduate Program Director of Writing Studies).

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Senate language requires all requests for accommodation for a grade component of 10% or more to go to academic counselling. That same section, however, allows for (and encourages) instructors to deal directly with accommodation requests for grade components less than 10%. Here's the relevant Senate language:

"Accommodation by Instructor for work worth less than 10% of the overall grade in a course: Instructors are encouraged, in the first instance, to arrange participation requirements and multiple small assignments in such a way as to allow students some flexibility. A student seeking academic accommodation for any work worth less than 10% must contact the instructor or follow the appropriate Department or course specific instructions provided on the course outline.

In arranging accommodation, instructors will use good judgment and ensure fair treatment for all students. Instructors must indicate on the course outline how they will be dealing with work worth less than 10% of the total course grade. In particular, instructors must indicate whether medical documentation will be required for absences, late assignments or essays, missed tests, laboratory experiments or tutorials, etc. Where medical documentation is required, such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Academic Counselling/Dean's office, who will make the determination whether accommodation is warranted. Given the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy (https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/privacy.pdf), **instructors may not collect medical documentation.**"

MEDICAL ACCOMMODATION POLICY

"The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Dean's office (the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration/home Faculty) together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. These documents will be retained in the student's file and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy. Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic accommodation shall be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty. Academic accommodation shall be granted only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration, and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. (Note – it will not be sufficient to provide documentation indicating simply that the student "was seen for a medical reason" or "was ill.")

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner."

Documentation from Family Physicians/Nurse Practitioners and Walk-In Clinics

A Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is required where a student is seeking academic accommodation. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Documentation from Student Health Services

At the time of illness, students should make an appointment with a physician/nurse practitioner at Student Health Services. During this appointment, request a Student Medical Certificate from the Physician/Nurse Practitioner.

Documentation from Hospital Urgent Care Centres or Emergency Departments

Students should request that an SMC be filled out. Students may bring this form with them, or request alternative Emergency Department documentation. Documentation should be secured at the time of the initial visit to the Emergency Department. Where it is not possible for a student to have an SMC completed by the

attending physician, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that their ability to meet their academic responsibilities was seriously affected.”

Please note that individual instructors **will not under any circumstances** accept or read medical documentation directly offered by a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds or for related reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an ‘Attendance’ policy in the course). **All medical documentation must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling or Undergraduate office of a student’s home Faculty.

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:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.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. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519-661-3030 (during class hours) or 519-433-2023 after class hours and on weekends.

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.

Statement on Gender-based Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Other Student Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

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

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

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>