



MPJO-680-01/MPPR-680-01: WEB DESIGN

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY: MPS-JOURNALISM

Wednesdays, 8 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. | Spring 2015

Instructor: Roy Wilhelm

Downtown Campus, C226 (Mac Lab)

- Office hours are by appointment.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is intended to introduce students to information design. Students will learn how to communicate news and information effectively through layout, interface design, visualization and art selection. Students will survey the latest techniques used in web design and development, with a special focus on user experience, comprehension and design process. They will learn how to storyboard and build their own interactive stories.

This is a skills-based course, so students will need to be comfortable with learning to use computer software beyond word processors. Prior experience is not required or assumed, but a basic comfort level and willingness to experiment are vital.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Understand basic design principles and concepts of typography, space, grids, layouts, color, navigation, UX and user-centric design
- Lead brainstorming sessions, evolve ideas through sketching and discussion and understand design thinking as a process
- Understand how to use Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign to create simple layouts, wireframes, original designs, grids, information graphics and to edit photos
- Understand responsive design strategy and how to communicate with design across different devices and screen sizes
- Understand successful information graphics and how to create charts, maps, timelines, etc.
- Critique design in meaningful ways and understand the differences between good design and user experience and less successful design solutions
- Understand mobile design and how hierarchy, navigation and UI have to adapt for touch and smaller screen sizes

REQUIRED READING



There are no required texts for this course. Instead, the instructor will assign selected readings throughout the semester. Students will be expected to read materials before class and be prepared to discuss the topics in class.

RESOURCES AND FURTHER READING

Title: **Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability**

Author: Steve Krug

ISBN: 978-0321344758

Publisher: New Riders

Year: 2nd edition, 2005

Price: As low as \$24.90 (on Amazon) <http://www.amazon.com/Dont-Make-Me-Think-Usability/dp/0321344758>

Title: **The Wall Street Journal Guide to Information Graphics: The Dos and Don'ts of Presenting Data, Facts, and Figures**

Author: Dona M. Wong

ISBN: 978-0393072952

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company

Year: 2010

Price: As low as \$20.46 (on Amazon) <http://www.amazon.com/Street-Journal-Guide-Information-Graphics/dp/0393072959>

Title: **Type on Screen: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Developers, and Students (Design Briefs)**

Author: Ellen Lupton and Maryland Institute College of Art

ISBN: 978-1616891701

Publisher: Princeton Architectural Press

Year: 2014

Price: As low as \$16.14 (on Amazon) <http://amzn.com/161689170X>

Title: **Responsive Web Design**

Author: Ethan Marcotte

ISBN: 978-0984442577

Publisher: A Book Apart

Year: 2011

Price: As low as \$18 (on A Book Apart) <http://www.abookapart.com/products/responsive-web-design>



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Title: **Communicating Design: Developing Web Site Documentation for Design and Planning**
(2nd Edition) (Voices That Matter)

Author: Dan M. Brown

ISBN: 978-0321712462

Publisher: New Riders, 2nd Edition

Year: 2010

Price: As low as \$32.86 (Amazon) <http://amzn.com/0321712463>

ATTENDANCE

As outlined by the university, missing more than two classes will result in a final grade reduction of one level (for example, an A will be converted to an A-). Absences for classes beyond the initial two will result in further reduction of the final grade. If you are absent for more than four classes, you will be in danger of failing this course.

Each week builds upon the previous week, so you risk falling behind if you miss class. If you do fall behind, you are responsible for catching up and learning on your own.

If you have to miss a class session, let the instructor know as soon as possible. You will still be responsible for completing all the homework, assignments and projects.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE, CLASS PARTICIPATION AND OTHER GUIDELINES

Students should turn off all cell phones, pagers and other communication devices while in class. Class discussions should be respectful and considerate of others' views and opinions.

Students are expected to do all the reading and any homework before coming to class in order to be ready to learn additional concepts and to apply skills to the hands-on work in class. It is also expected that computers in class will only be used for coursework. It is easy to miss important parts or not fully grasp technical concepts if you are distracted. Email is the primary means of communication outside of class for any questions. Phone calls should be arranged by email.

Late work on an assignment will result in an automatic grade reduction of one level (for example, an A will be converted to an A-) for that assignment for each day after the deadline. If you have an emergency and will miss a deadline, you must request an extension from the instructor as soon as possible. If the request is approved, a new deadline will be given.

In the event of a weather emergency (or any other widespread emergency) that would close the Georgetown Downtown building during one of our in-class sessions, we will plan to meet virtually through online videoconferencing tools. More information will be provided on how this will work later in the semester.

We highly recommend that students consider signing up for the subscription with Adobe to get



access on your home computers to Photoshop, InDesign and Illustrator. See the Adobe Creative Cloud website for more information.

ASSIGNMENTS

Unless specified, all assignments are due Monday at 6 p.m. before the next class. More information will be provided on the assignments in class, including how you will be evaluated on each.

Individual in-class critique: Each student will present to the class a 5-minute critique of an interactive project of their choice. We will provide points to cover in the critique.

Deadline: Dates will be assigned at the beginning of the semester for each student.

Readings: Read assigned text, watch videos or complete tutorials as assigned. Readings should be completed **before class** so you are prepared to discuss the text.

In-class work: During most classes, we will teach skills and do exercises to reinforce the lessons. These might include software tutorials, design sketches or other hands-on work.

Deadline: At the end of class, when assigned

Weekly projects: After each class, there will be an assignment related to the topic covered. These take-home projects could be more in-depth software tutorials, small design or redesign projects, creating graphics and/or design research and critiques.

Deadline: At the beginning of class, as assigned. I will accept PDFs of work via DropBox or, where appropriate, photocopies of original sketches.

Final project site: Each student will be required to design a responsive website with design solutions for large screens (desktop/laptop), medium screens (tablets) and small screens (smartphones).

Deadline: April 22

Final project critiques: Evaluate your peers' project sites.

Deadline: May 6

GRADING

Your course grade will be based on the following:

In-class participation (including discussion of readings):	15%
Individual in-class critique:	5%
In-class work:	20%



Weekly projects:	25%
Final project site:	30%
Final project critiques:	5%
TOTAL:	100%

Graduate course grades include A, A-, B+, B, B-, C and F. **There are no grades of C+, C- or D.**

- A** 100-93 **B-** 82.99-80
A- 92.99-90 **C** 79.99-70
B+ 89.99-88 **F** 69.99-0
B 87.99-83

The instructor will provide a warning by mid-semester to any student who appears to be on track for a poor final grade.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Georgetown offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed on main campus or at the downtown location:

- MPS Writing Resource Program
202-687-4246 | <http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/>
- Academic Resource Center
202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu | <http://ldss.georgetown.edu/>
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services
202-687-6985 | <http://caps.georgetown.edu/>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

Students with documented disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; <http://ldss.georgetown.edu/index.cfm>) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. If accommodations are recommended, you will be given a letter from ARC to share with your professors. You are personally responsible for completing this process officially and in a timely



manner. Neither accommodations nor exceptions to policies can be permitted to students who have not completed this process in advance.

GEORGETOWN HONOR SYSTEM

All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity in pursuit of their education at Georgetown. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are held to the Honor Code. The Honor Code pledge follows:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

PLAGIARISM

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in journalism, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through the Gervase Programs at <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53377.html>. If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing and the need to credit, check out <http://www.plagiarism.org>.

SYLLABUS MODIFICATION

The syllabus may change to accommodate discussion of emerging topics. Also, the schedules of guest speakers may require some shifting of our agenda. The instructor will make every effort to provide as much advance notice as possible for any alterations.



CLASS SCHEDULE

****Please read the following article before the first day of class: How journalists can improve their storytelling with design thinking: <http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/newsgathering-storytelling/219625/how-journalists-can-improve-their-storytelling-by-embracing-design-thinking/>**

WEEK 1 (WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14)

We will start class off with a brainstorm to answer the questions: What is design? How does it affect you? This will be an active, hands-on way to learn the design thinking method.

We will have a discussion about careers in the design field (in journalism and communications as well as marketing, PR and agency work) and the value good design brings to businesses and products.

In-class work: Participate in the brainstorm

Deadline: End of class

Weekly project: Write a few paragraphs about what you hope to gain from this class and how you think design will be applicable in your current or future career.

Deadline: Beginning of class, Jan. 21

Readings for Jan. 21:

Harvard Business Review Design Thinking essay by Tim Brown

http://www.ideo.com/images/uploads/thoughts/IDEO_HBR_Design_Thinking.pdf

Virtual Crash Course Playbook in Design Thinking

<http://dschool.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/crashcourseplaybookfinal3-1-120302015105-phpapp02.pdf>

9 Rules for Running a Productive Design Critique

<http://www.fastcodesign.com/3019674/9-rules-for-running-a-productive-design-critique>

Getting the Most From Design Critiques

<https://medium.com/@aaroni/getting-the-most-from-design-critiques-33f6018097a8>

WEEK 2 (WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21)

Overview of basic design concepts: typography, negative space, grids, layouts, color, navigation, UX, user-centric design and more

Guest speaker: TBD



Weekly project: Write a two-page, double-spaced critique of a series of sites provided by the instructor. Evaluate design pluses and minuses of each site.

Deadline: Beginning of class, Jan. 28

Readings for Jan. 28:

Design principles for news apps and graphics:

<http://www.propublica.org/nerds/item/design-principles-for-news-apps-graphics>

Color:

<http://eagereyes.org/basics/rainbow-color-map>

WEEK 3 (WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28)

Building on the basics covered in the previous class, this lesson will focus on the flow of information and editorial structure in design; we will look at editorial sites, marketing and various applications as examples of different types of design.

In-class work: TBD

Deadline: End of class

Weekly project: Write a two-page, double-spaced critique of a series of sites the instructor will provide. Evaluate the aesthetic and user interface design.

Deadline: Beginning of class, Feb. 4

Readings for Feb. 4:

The web is all about typography, period.

<https://ia.net/blog/the-web-is-all-about-typography-period/>

Responsive typography: the basics

<https://ia.net/blog/responsive-typography-the-basics/>

WEEK 4 (WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4)

Introduction to Photoshop and InDesign

In-class work: Photoshop and InDesign tutorials

Deadline: End of class

Weekly project: A series of small projects using the programs. Students will make simple edits to photos and create silhouettes and a simple site design in Photoshop. They will create a grid and make basic wireframes using InDesign.

Deadline: Beginning of class, Feb. 11



Readings for Feb. 11:

Visual literacy in the age of data:

<http://source.mozillaopennews.org/en-US/learning/visual-literacy-age-data/>

A conversation with data viz experts:

<http://source.mozillaopennews.org/en-US/articles/conversation-data-viz-experts/>

The Danger of Charts:

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/itsallpolitics/2013/02/13/171935151/chart-check-did-obama-s-graphics-enhance-his-big-speech>

Take care of your Choropleth maps:

<http://vis4.net/blog/posts/choropleth-maps/>

Productive design with Adobe Illustrator:

<http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2011/01/17/productive-web-design-with-adobe-illustrator/>

WEEK 5 (WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11)

Introduction to Illustrator and basic information graphics

Guest speaker: TBD

In-class work: Illustrator tutorial; create charts and learn tools in the program

Deadline: End of class

Weekly project: Instructor will provide data and chart types. Students will create charts and lay them out on a page.

Deadline: Beginning of class, Feb. 18

Readings for Feb. 18:

Learning to see

<https://ia.net/blog/learning-to-see>

WEEK 6 (WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18)

This class will be a continuation of the information graphics overview with a focus on when to use various types of charts, best practices for displaying data, creating keys and basic mapping.



In-class work: Chart Race: Data will be provided and students will have 30 to 45 minutes to create a chart, design it and write chatter. After, students will show their work.

Deadline: End of race time in class

Weekly project: Students will take a data set and design a layout with charts of their choice.

Deadline: Beginning of class, Feb. 25

Readings for Feb. 25:

Cycling story from WaPo: <http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/digital-strategies/205767/the-washington-post-creates-its-own-snow-fall-for-cycling-story/>

10 integrated projects:

http://www.mediabistro.com/10000words/10-snowfall-like-projects-that-break-out-of-standard-article-templates_b17340

Visually explaining the Boston marathon bombing: <http://source.mozillaopennews.org/en-US/articles/visually-explaining-boston-bombing/>

WEEK 7 (WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25)

A look at elements of successful multimedia design. Additional critiques of unsuccessful graphics in class, a discussion about how to present information, think through which kinds of graphics work and the best ways to tell stories using graphics and data. Students will also learn best practices for incorporating audio, video and photography into graphic interfaces.

In-class work: Students will participate in a critique of various interactive pieces and multimedia design projects.

Deadline: End of class

Weekly project: Design a layout that contains a combination of audio, video, graphics and photography. Blend provided elements into a seamless, informative and beautiful design.

Deadline: Beginning of class, March 4

Readings for March 4:

Sketching: the visual thinking power tool

<http://alistapart.com/article/sketching-the-visual-thinking-power-tool>

What screens want, by Frank Chimero

<http://frankchimero.com/talks/what-screens-want/transcript/>

Responsive web design

<http://alistapart.com/article/responsive-web-design>



WEEK 8 (WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4)

We will again focus on design process, and students will participate in brainstorming, sketching, idea generation and whiteboarding, then move on to wireframing. Final projects will be assigned.

In-class work: Sketch/whiteboard ideas for final project

Deadline: End of class

Weekly project: Write a design brief for the final project. This brief will outline scope, features and goals of the project. A structure for the brief will be provided in class.

Deadline: Beginning of class, March 18

Readings for March 18:

Mobile navigation, conversion, input and more:

<http://www.lukew.com/ff/entry.asp?1936>

Anatomy of a Mobile-First Responsive Web Design:

<http://bradfrostweb.com/blog/mobile/anatomy-of-a-mobile-first-responsive-web-design/>

NO CLASS ON MARCH 11 FOR SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9 (WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18)

This class will focus on design specifics for mobile design. We will look at user interface differences, the importance of hierarchy and order of information and best practices for navigation. We will look at tons of examples of both iPhone and iPad apps.

Guest speaker: TBD

In-class work: Design a single mobile-sized page for an existing site.

Deadline: End of class

Weekly project: Wireframe and begin visual design of the final project site for mobile.

Deadline: Beginning of class, March 25

Readings for March 25:

Six lessons for multimedia journalists: <http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/digital-strategies/209339/how-news-can-compete-with-cat-videos-6-lessons-for-multimedia-journalists/>



WEEK 10 (WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25)

This class will be an overview of web tools like Infogram, TimelineJS and MapBox. We'll look at how these tools can help create and add interactivity to pages.

In-class work: Along with instructor, build simple graphics with the tools that are covered.

Deadline: End of class

Weekly project: Create a graphic with one of these tools mentioned above. This should be related to the final project. Begin work on wireframes of desktop version of final project. As you progress, indicate in wireframes where this element will be used.

Deadline: Beginning of class, April 1

Readings for April 1:

Mobile First Responsive Web Design: <http://bradfrostweb.com/blog/web/mobile-first-responsive-web-design/>

Extreme Makeover, Craigslist Edition:

http://www.wired.com/entertainment/theweb/magazine/17-09/ff_craigslist_makeover

WEEK 11 (WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1)

An introduction to responsive design. We will look at several examples, discuss how it works (HTML/CSS, frameworks), the differences between responsive and adaptive design, approaching design mobile first vs. content first, how sites need to scale and how best to prioritize elements for screen size and context.

In-class work: Sketch and wireframe

Deadline: End of class

Weekly project: Redesign a Wikipedia page

Deadline: Beginning of class, April 8

Readings for April 8:

NYT director of digital design on their latest redesign:

<http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/mediawire/206935/nyt-design-honcho-on-redesign-were-not-going-to-do-things-that-dont-work/>

Inside the NYTimes redesign:

<http://www.theverge.com/2013/3/13/4094824/inside-the-new-york-times-web-redesign>



WEEK 12 (WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8)

This class will look at the before and after examples of the Wikipedia page and story projects. Students will have time at the end of class to work on final projects.

Guest speaker: TBD

In-class work: Group critique of redesigns

Deadline: End of class

Weekly project: First draft of visual designs for mobile and desktop versions of your site. You should be ready to show classmates and instructor for discussion and feedback.

Deadline: Beginning of class, April 15

Readings for April 15:

Infographics and the brain:

http://www.perceptualedge.com/articles/misc/Infographics_and_the_Brain.pdf

Are you getting the design right or do you have the right design?

<http://thenextweb.com/dd/2012/11/30/instagram-mike-krieger-design-tips-and-principles/>

WEEK 13 (WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15)

This class will focus on how the brain perceives design. We'll focus on usability and the value of user-testing designs and prototypes before products or stories are finished.

In-class work: With a partner, do a usability test of assigned site and take observations. Later, we'll do partner and instructor feedback on your final project designs.

Deadline: End of class

Weekly project: Continue work on final projects

Deadline: Beginning of class, April 22. Finished projects are due at the end of class, May 6.

WEEK 14 (WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22)

This class time will be used to finalize projects.

In-class work: Finishing touches of project

Deadline: End of class

Weekly project: Write a critique of three final projects assigned to you. It should be two pages, double-spaced. Be prepared to present your final project to the group.

Deadline: Beginning of class, May 6



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NO CLASS ON APRIL 29 FOR STUDY DAYS

WEEK 15 (WEDNESDAY, MAY 6)

We will present and discuss final projects.