DOCUMENT DESIGN

COM 424 / 528
M/W 11:25–12:05
SH 237

ANDREW J. ROBACK INSTRUCTOR
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SH 231 OFFICE
W 3:15–5:00 OFFICE HOURS

INTRODUCTION

The basis for responsibly and effectively communicating information is proper design. Structure, clarity, aesthetics—all are requirements of an effective design. Poor design results in lost time/wages/money, a loss of ethos, and potentially even miscommunications that result in accidental injuries and fatalities. Effectively communicating ideas requires consideration of the subconscious associations readers bring to documents as well as the ability to adapt and take criticism. Document design makes documents look nice, but designers wield real power to communicate, influence, and shape the narratives associated with all aspects of life. This course will teach you the skills and concepts associated with effective design.

REQUIRED BOOKS

The following books are required. All other readings will be available on Blackboard or the web.

Heller, S. & Anderson, G. (2016). *The Graphic Design Idea Book*. London: Lawrence King Publishing. 978-1-78067-756-9

Lidwell, W., Holden, K., & Butler, J. (2003). *Universal Principles of Design*. Beverly, MA: Rockport. 978-1-59253-587-3

Williams, R. (2008). *Non-Designer's Design and Type Books, Deluxe Edition*. Berkley, CA: Peachpit Press. 978-0-321-53405-7

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

★ Purchase a typesetter's ruler (link provided for reference - you don't need to buy that particular ruler)
★ A notebook with blank paper (graph paper also works)
★ You'll need a high quality digital camera; any current smartphone has what you need.
★ If you don't have one already, purchase an 8GB flash drive (unless you bring your computer everywhere, then don't bother)
★ Request a mypages account through the IIT portal (I'll walk you through the process)
★ Put some money on your printing account if you burned through it already. You'll need it from time to time in class.

SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

★ We'll use mostly open-source or free software for the course. If you don't have Microsoft Office applications, get them for free with a student license.
★ Demonstrations in class will use PC software. Ask if you need recommendations for equivalents on other operating systems.

ASSIGNMENTS

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS (35%)

You'll complete a series of individual projects that call for the following deliverables: a one-inch, pinback button; a rack card and business card; an event flyer; an email newsletter; and a set of instructions. I will provide you with details throughout the semester on requirements, formats, and deliverables. Your submissions will be judged based on adherence to assignment criteria and application of the course concepts. Each submission will be accompanied by a self-critique.

DOCUMENT DESIGN IN THE FIELD (20%)

Throughout the semester, you should be making observations of document design that you encounter in your daily life. You should take photos of documents regularly. You'll sign up for dates to present and critique one well-designed document and one document that needs help. The best examples will be documents that have different levels of execution along one particular design principle, i.e. make sure you can compare your examples with one another. I'll post a link to a sign-up sheet in week two.

FINAL PROJECT (30%)

For the final project, you'll work in teams to design a website and report document based on material that I provide for you. The project will be your chance to demonstrate everything you have learned in the semester; consider it your final exam. Groups will present their work during the final exam period. More details later in the semester.

PARTICIPATION (15%)

I expect you to come to class ready to discuss readings and participate in activities. We'll also have time in class to work on some of the projects, and I expect you to use that time appropriately. Working on outside work during class is not allowed. Please also keep phone use, email checking, and chatting to the absolute minimum. We'll have independent and group activities in class to practice concepts. You'll upload some of them so I can verify that you're grasping core concepts and skills. I'll also occasionally ask you to share what you have done with the class. Please note that if you sit silently the entire semester and never participate in discussion, your grade for this component will suffer significantly. Points go to people who actively participate in class discussion and activities.

GRADUATE STUDENT PROJECT (PART OF FINAL PROJECT GRADE)

Graduate students will be required to complete a conference poster that they will submit to an upcoming conference. The poster guidelines and due date will depend on the conference/submission deadline. More details later.

All grades on assignments are weighted to their corresponding values on the syllabus. To calculate your grade, take the percentage grade I give you on an assignment, multiply by the value on the syllabus, and add the resulting figures. That is your final grade in the course.

Grade	Percent
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
E	<60

ATTENDANCE POLICY

I have a zero tolerance attendance policy. You can miss up to three class meetings without penalty. After that, I'll reduce your final course grade by ten percent for each additional absence. If you miss more than six class meetings, your final grade in the course will be an "E" (provided they are not excusable absences such as illness, family emergency, etc.). If you are more than 15 minutes late for class, it counts as an absence.

Family and health emergencies happen and are excused absences; however, you must notify me as soon as reasonably possible if such a situation arises. If you stop attending class without a notification, I will assume you are not coming back and issue a grade of "E" for the semester. If you receive an email from me regarding absences and you do not reply, I will make the same assumption.

Finally, having a lot of work in your other classes is not an excuse for missing this class, nor are extracurricular activities unrelated to official university events or professional development (e.g. academic conferences, athletic events, etc.). Seek permission for excused absences from me in advance whenever possible.

FAQ AND TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SEMESTER

★ If I give you an extension due to extenuating circumstances and you fail to meet the agreed upon deadline, you will receive a zero on that assignment.
★ There is no extra credit in this course.
★ Take notes. They will help you remember the main points of our discussion and help you to use tools outside of class.
★ Make friends with a classmate so you can borrow notes if you are absent.
★ Please refer to the syllabus/course schedule/assignment guide before emailing me with questions. Questions about submission method, dates, or requirements that can be answered by the above documents will result in a friendly reminder to reread the documents.

★ If you are having trouble with the coursework or understanding the material, come talk to me. I have office hours after class and I have no problem staying afterwards (unless I have a meeting). If you have a conflict and can't make it to office hours, send me an email to set up an appointment to meet online.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

You are expected to adhere to all IIT rules regarding academic honesty and conduct. Please familiarize yourself with the Student Handbook policies. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas without appropriate attribution of those ideas to the original author. Reordering words or sentences but conveying the same ideas as another author and representing those ideas as your own still constitutes plagiarism. The same goes for computer code, graphs, and illustrations: unless you wrote/made it, proper citations are required. I expect you to write everything you submit for this class. Unless I tell you to work in teams, your work should be solely your own.

If I detect any plagiarized content in your work, you will automatically fail the assignment and, depending on the severity of the infraction, the course. Additional penalties may be imposed by the University, such as academic sanctions and/or expulsion. If you are concerned that your work might constitute a breach of academic integrity, contact me via email before turning in your assignment and I will advise you. I will report plagiarism to the appropriate university authorities without exception and issue failing grades as necessary to prevent academic dishonesty.

THE WRITING CENTER (SH 232-233)

The Writing Center is a tutoring service that helps students develop writing skills critical to success in academic and professional pursuits. I strongly encourage any student to visit the Writing Center if you are having difficulty with any part of the writing process or if you simply want some feedback on your writing from another writer. Since you will be writing a great deal in this class (and, presumably, your entire life), it is to your benefit to take advantage of this free service to help you become a better writer.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with documented disabilities. In order to receive accommodations, students must obtain a letter of accommodation from the Center for Disability Resources and contact me in the first week of the course. The Center for Disability Resources (CDR) is located in Life Sciences Room 218, telephone 312-567-5744 or disabilities@iit.edu.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

Program   Google Docs

Font families   RUBIK MONO ONE
                 JULIUS SANS ONE
                 Rokkitt