JOMC 717   Summer 2014

Information Visualization

The communication landscape has changed as a consequence of the spread of new means of gathering, organizing and delivering information.

JOMC 717 explores the overlap between several disciplines: cognitive science, graphic design, information visualization/ architecture, and journalism. In this course, you will learn the basic rules of graphic design and information visualization through readings from main authors in each field, discussions on real-world examples and the design of several projects. The goal is not that you become a graphic designer, but that you learn to visually organize information to improve understanding.

The course will begin with five in-house sessions at the MATC summer residency, then continue to be delivered online using Sakai (http://sakai.unc.edu).

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Readings

The required text for this course is *The Functional Art* by Alberto Cairo, published September 2012 (http://www.thefunctionalart.com). It includes a DVD with 90 minutes of video-lectures, which you will be viewing in the beginning weeks.

Readings of articles and book chapters and other links will be posted in the Sakai Week-by-Week. If you are really interested in information visualization and architecture, some of the books from which material is taken are:

Information Dashboard Design Stephen Few, O'Reilly Media (2006)
The Visual Display of Quantitative Information Edward Tufte, Graphics Press (2001)
Visual Language for Designers Connie Malamed, Rockport Publishers (2009)
Visual Thinking for Design Colin Ware, Morgan Kaufmann (2008)
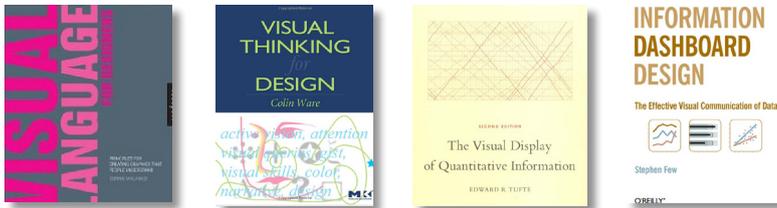
Video Lectures

Some weeks there will be video lectures rather than written lectures. These are required viewing and very important. There is also a DVD of video lectures that acompanies the text, but these are optional. You are encouraged to use these as a resource as we progress through the course.

Adobe Illustrator Software and Training

Adobe Illustrator is required software for this course. A good understanding of Illustrator is necessary for succeeding on the exercises. The basics will be taught at our on-campus sessions during summer residency, May 19-23.

Illustrator can be purchased through Adobe through the Creative Cloud, which is a monthly subscription to use Adobe products. There are many options but I suggest one of these two:
    1. Illustrator CC for $29/month: https://store1.adobe.com/cfusion/store/html/index.cfm?store=OLS-US&event=displayProduct&categoryPath=/Applications/Illustrator
    2. Educational year subscription to entire CC library including Illustrator and others: http://www.adobe.com/products/creativecloud/buying-guide-education.html
Earlier versions of Illustrator (CS4, CS5, CS6) are acceptable for use in this course.

A subscription or access to Lynda.com is also required. Lynda.com is a software training tutorials. video library. Specific Illustrator and Infographics tutorials will be assigned viewing in the first three weeks of class.

Lynda.com can be purchased at www.lynda.com for $25/month. It can also be accessed via UNC's Virtual Private Network (VPN). More details will be provided in the Sakai site.

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Course calendar

On-campus sessions
Mon., May 19
Fri., May 23

CORE CONCEPTS and TOOLS
Monday, 2-4 pm, CA 59 - Syllabus review; Introduction to core concepts
Tuesday, 9-11 am, CA 59 - Illustrator Intro to Interface
Wednesday, 9-11 am, CA 59 - Illustrator: Drawing and Polishing tools
Thursday, 9-11pm, CA 59 - Illustrator: Data Charts and Graphics
Friday, 9-noon pm, CA 59 - Online Tools, Production, review and critique

WEEK 1
May 27-June 3

Design Concepts

WEEK 2
June 4-10

Understanding Information Design

WEEK 3
June 11-17

Visual Perception and Graphics Forms

WEEK 4
June 18-24

Interviewing and Visualizing Data

WEEK 5
June 25-July 1

Uses, Purposes and Styles of infographics

WEEK 6
July 2-8

Maps and Interactive Infographics

WEEK 7
July 9-15

Ethics of Representation

WEEK 8
July 16-22

Final Project and Wrap Up

With the exception of the first week, each week will start on Wednesday morning and run until midnight Tuesday. All assigments and discussions must be submitted by 11:55 pm the day they are due.

Formal discussions will take place between Wednesday and Sunday nights. Class critiques or informal discussion will take place between Sunday and Tuesday nights.
Assigments and projects are due Sunday nights.

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Grading

This course uses the graduate grading scale of H (high pass), P (pass), L (low pass), and F (fail). Your grade will be based on several discussions, papers and exercises.

My Grading Philosophy
The purpose of each assignment is not to follow rules or complete a checklist but to create a professional, informative, well-designed project that demonstrates your knowledge and ability. Your burden is to prove you understand the subject matter, so make it abundantly clear that you are an expert on the subject by executing a quality project. I expect professional, high quality work and projects must be at a level you would be proud to show a potential employer at a major publication,

Criteria	% Grade	Criteria	Grade
Discussion Questions	20	Top Quality Work	H
Articles	20	Work meets expectations	P
Excercises/Projects	30	Work lower than expectations	L
Final Project	30	Work is unacceptable	F

Components

The main grading components will be two articles (for which work spans multiple weeks); several exercises based on the concepts learned in the assigned readings and completed in Illustrator; a final project that consists of a complete information graphic about a news topic chosen in the last three weeks of the course; and your participation in discussions.

Article

The articles will be graded based on the following criteria:

-Writing style. The article should be written in an informal and engaging manner; these are not scholarly papers, but articles that could fit the style of publications such as Editor&Publisher or a professional blog, such as Information Aesthetics or Poynter. You must include footnotes and bibliographical references, but avoid overusing jargon.

-Comprehension. Your text will get you a better grade if it proves that you have a good grasp of course materials and that you are able to apply what you have learned to the analysis of visualizations in the media. (Both articles are critical reviews of news coverage.) Demonstrating your comprehension and synthesis of course materials is the first component of each article.

-Problem Solving. Proposing alternatives that, if implemented, would greatly improve the graphics and coverages is the second component of the article. You should write about different ways of conveying the same information, discuss what kind of professionals should be involved in the project if the newspaper/magazine had another chance to work on it, etc.

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Exercises

The following will be considered in grading the four exercises in Illustrator, including the final project:

-How well you apply the principles discussed in class.
-How clear the presentation is. Are the data well displayed? Is the graphic clear?
-How original your proposals are. Do not feel strictly constrained by rules but be able to innovate in an organized manner. That means create something different, but also be able to defend your ideas when the projects are discussed in forums: Why did you decide to use a particular font? Why did you arrange the layout that way? What do those colors mean?

Discussions

Through out the course there will be two types of discussions, but only one each week.

Formal: These are written essays where you should research, form an opinion, present and argument and provid evidence to your point that is linked and refrenced. You are expected to keep up with the discussion and reply to your classmates as they discuss your viewpoint.

Informal/Critique: Throughout the class you will be asked to critique each other's work. You will need to critique two different students' work and each person should have two or three critiques. You should respond to classmates' critiques when approproate.

Feedback will be provided on how you are doing discussion after the first week, so you can address issues on your participation for future conversations.

At the end of the semester, your contributions to discussions will be graded pass/fail.
If you are involved in the discussion providing quality responses on a regular basis you pass.
If you are not involved or responces are not substative then you fail this portion of the class.

Missed work

You can miss assignments only in the case of medical and urgent situations. In many cases, you will be given support in making up assignments, but the instructor and MATC administration should be informed as soon as possible of the situation. It is your responsibility to find out what was covered during the time you missed.

Contact information

Steven King, Assistant Professor
steven.king@unc.edu
skype: cujophoto | Gchat: stevenamyking@gmail.com | 919-360-8907

Steven will be available by appointment. Please email to schedule a time to meet by phone, Google Hangout or Skype.

Online Course Statement

1. By enrolling as a student in this course, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the Acceptable Use of online resources. Please consult the Acceptable Use Policy (http://help.unc.edu/1672) on topics such as copyright, net-etiquette and privacy protection.

2. As part of this course you may be asked to participate in online discussions or other online activities that may include personal information about you or other students in the course. Please be respectful of the rights and protection of other participants under the UNC Chapel Hill Information Security Policies (http://its.unc.edu/ITS/about_its/its_policies/index.htm) when participating in online classes.

3. When using online resources offered by organizations not affiliated with UNC Chapel Hill, such as Google or Youtube, please note that the Terms and Conditions of these companies and not the University's Terms and Conditions apply. These third parties may offer different degrees of privacy protection and access rights to online content. You should be well aware of this when posting content to sites not managed by UNC Chapel Hill.

4. When links to sites outside of the unc.edu domain are inserted in class discussions, please be mindful that clicking on sites not affiliated with UNC-Chapel Hill may pose a risk for your computer due to the possible presence of malware on such sites.

5. Online courses may at times require Web-based assignments that are public in nature and may be viewed by third parties online. This is especially true in social media and blogging platforms. Be mindful of the information you choose to share publicly as part of your assignments. Under the Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and UNC's FERPA regulation (http://registrar.unc.edu/AcademicServices/PoliciesProcedures/StudentRights/CCM1_042762), a student's education records are protected from disclosure to third parties. However, FERPA protection does not extend to material shared publicly by students.

UNC Honor Code

It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and to support the enforcement of the Honor Code (http://instrument.unc.edu), which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student, or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.