MEJO 712: Visual Communication and Multimedia
Spring 2019

Section: 966
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Course Overview
This course is designed to help you develop your literacy in visual communication and multimedia, their role in journalism and mass communication, and their basic principles and best practices. In this course, you will:
- develop an understanding and appreciation for visual communication theories, principles, ethics, and best practices;
- gain experience putting those theories and principles into practice; and
- learn to analyze and critique works of visual communication.

The end goal is to give you the knowledge to speak the language of design, confidently evaluate works of visual communication, and collaborate effectively with designers, photographers, and other viz comm practitioners.

What This Course Is Not
This is not a course that will turn you into a professional designer if you aren't one already. It will teach you basic principles and best practices, but true mastery takes many more hours than this course can provide.

This course is also not about teaching software. The assignments are designed in such a way that you should be able to complete them with relatively basic programs, such as PowerPoint, iMovie, or a drag-and-drop design platform. If you wish to learn a more advanced program, you are certainly encouraged to do so. I am happy to help answer specific questions about a piece of software if I am familiar with it. However, providing extensive software training is beyond the scope of this course.

A couple resources from UNC if you are interested in learning software:
- Free access to Adobe Creative Cloud
- Free access to Lynda self-guided software tutorials

Required Textbook
The Non-Designer's Design Book, by Robin Williams
The full text of the third edition of this book is available for free online through UNC Libraries (sign in with your Onyen), though the reading interface is a little clunky. The fourth edition is available as an eBook ($16) or paperback ($23). The two editions are similar enough that you can choose either one.

Course Materials

All course materials will be available on the class Sakai site at http://sakai.unc.edu. Look in the Course Materials tab for weekly instructions and materials.

Your weekly materials will include the following:
- Readings: Your weekly discussions will be based around these.
- Influential and Interesting: Profiles about and interviews with influential figures in the field. These are meant to fill out your understanding about the history of visual communication, as well as provide perspectives from some of the masters of the craft. You should at least skim these. Occasionally, you may have a discussion question related to one of these pieces.
- Diving Deeper: Additional material related to that week's topic. This is optional. Sometimes I come across material that may be useful or interesting, but out of consideration for your time, I don't want to add them to the required reading list, so I tuck them into this section.

Grading

UNC's graduate school grading system is different from the traditional A/B/C/D +/- system you are probably familiar with. Per the UNC Graduate School handbook, the grade scale used for graduate-level courses is:

> H for High Pass
> P for Pass
> L for Low Pass
> F for Fail
> IN for work incomplete

This scale does not map to the A/B/C/D scale. An H is not the same as an A, and a P is not the same as a B or C. H's are rare throughout UNC's graduate-level programs. P's in no way suggest deficiency, and you should be proud of receiving a P. When I started my master's program at UNC, the program director told us, "There are more P's than H's in 'Happy'." That's good advice to live by.

Grade Breakdown
1. Weekly discussions: 35% of your final grade
2. Three assignments: 45% (15% each)
3. Final project: 20%

Each component is explained below.

Note: You will not earn a final course grade higher than a Low Pass if:
- You receive 4 Low Pass grades in the course, whether it's for weekly discussions, the assignments, or the final project; OR
- You receive 2 F's in the course, either for failing to submit an assignment or for not participating at all in discussions during a particular week.

Don't panic about that note above. Meet the weekly discussion requirements, follow directions on the assignments, and demonstrate that you are trying, and you should be ok. Also, life happens and we are all bound to have a crazy week or two. When that happens, let me know and we can try to make accommodations.

Weekly Discussions (35%)
In an online course, the discussion forums are where we "hold class," so participation in the forums is important. The forums are also where we will work on one of the main goals of this course—getting practice in evaluating and critiquing works of visual communication.

Here's how the discussion forums will work: Each week, typically by Monday night, I will post discussion topics under the Forums tab in Sakai. The discussions for each week will close at midnight on Sunday night.

The questions will be related to your weekly readings. In some weeks, there will also be discussion prompts related to your assignments, such as offering constructive feedback on your classmates' work on the most recent assignment. Most weeks will likely have at least one thread where you are required to post.

To earn a P for discussions in a particular week, students MUST
- have at least 5 substantive posts per week (see below), AND
- post in at least 3 discussion threads that week, AND
- post in all the discussion threads where participation is required (these will be noted in the titles of the threads)

Look in the Course Materials tab on Sakai for discussion guidelines, including examples of what "substantive posts" look like. In short, a "substantive" post is:

- Meaty: One-line posts don't count.
- On time: Great posts that come in at 12:01 a.m. Sunday night don't count (unless there are special circumstances that you tell me about in advance).
- On topic: Discussions will take off in various directions, and that's usually ok. Just make sure you have at least five posts that actually speak to the original discussion questions. Your post could be replying to or riffing off another person's post, just as long as it's still relevant to the question. Beyond those 5 posts, feel free to follow the discussion in whichever direction it goes.

Having fewer than 5 substantive posts will result in a Low Pass for the week. Having zero posts in a week will result in an F.

Finally, please do not use the forums for anything other than class-related discussions. If you are not sure if a topic is appropriate for the forums, just ask me.

Assignments (45%)
You will complete three assignments in the first 12 weeks of this 15-week course:

1. Creating a PowerPoint presentation
2. Creating an infographic
3. Creating a multimedia explainer

Details are posted in Sakai under Course Materials.

Final Project (20%)
Over the last three weeks of the class, you will create a final project where you pull together what you have learned in the course. Details about the final project are posted in Sakai under Course Materials.

Technical Issues
The ITS Response Center provides 24/7 assistance with Sakai requests.

- Phone: 962-HELP(4357)
- Submit a Help Request
- Live Chat (M-F, 9 a.m.–6 p.m.)

You can also contact me if you are encountering problems in Sakai. I'm no Sakai expert, but I can at least take a look before we escalate to the next level of tech support.

Honor Code
The UNC honor system and code are in effect for MEJO 712. They are available in full at http://honor.unc.edu.

In brief, the Honor Code is the heart of integrity at UNC-Chapel Hill. It says that all students shall "Refrain from lying, cheating, or stealing," but the Honor Code means much more. It is the guiding force behind the students' responsible exercise of freedom, the foundation of student self-governance at UNC, which subscribes to the view that members of the UNC community should be responsible for upholding the values that have been agreed upon by the entire community.

Diversity
The university's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is found at http://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/. UNC-Chapel Hill is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community, and the university does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Need Help?

If you have any disability or other special situation that might make it difficult to meet the course requirements, please discuss it with me as soon as possible. If you have not done so already, you should also contact the Department of Accessibility Resources & Service (AR&S) at 919-962-8300 or accessibility@unc.edu. Visit https://accessibility.unc.edu for more information.

Members of A Community

Students in this course should recognize their membership in a learning community. We are partners exploring issues in a digital environment.

In this course, we do not have the benefit of body language or face-to-face contact, so we have to work a bit harder at understanding and at being understood. We perceive only what is typed on the screen.

Plagiarism and Digital Media

We all use the internet for research. With a wealth of information available, including everything from pre-written essays to ready-made graphics, the potential for plagiarism is enormous. Keep in mind that as easy as it is for students to find and copy information from the internet, it is just as easy for instructors to find the same information.

To avoid plagiarizing, remember that the same rules apply to information found on the internet as to information found in print sources:

- When you take ideas or quote from a source, you must paraphrase accurately and give credit by appropriately citing to the original source.

- If you take a sentence or phrase directly from a source, you must indicate it by using quotation marks around the direct quote and citing the original source.

- Citing digital sources can be confusing. For more information on how to cite Web-based sources, see the Citing Information tutorial (http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/) or contact a reference librarian (http://www.lib.unc.edu/ask.html).

Academic Integrity

Because academic integrity is the foundation of college life, academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure on the assignment in question. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, fabrication, submitting the same work in multiple courses and aiding and abetting.

Online Class Statement

1. By enrolling as a student in this course, you agree to abide by UNC-Chapel Hill policies related to the Acceptable Use of online resources. Please consult the

Acceptable Use Policy (http://its.unc.edu/about-us/how-we-operate) on topics such as copyright and privacy protection.

2. 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 apply. These third parties may offer different degrees of privacy protection and access rights to digital content. You should be aware of this when posting content to sites not managed by UNC-Chapel Hill.

3. 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.

4. 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) a student's education records are protected from disclosure to third parties. However, FERPA protection does not extend to material shared publicly by students.

Accreditation
The School of Media and Journalism's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here: http://journalism.ku.edu/acejmc-professionalvalues-competencies.

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, including:

- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

Course schedule

Week	Dates	Topic	Assignments Due
1	1/9-1/13	Introduction to visual communication	
2	1/14-1/20	History of visual communication	
3	1/21-1/27	Theory & research	PowerPoint assignment, Part A (1/27)
4	1/28-2/3	Layout	
5	2/4-2/10	Typography	
6	2/11-2/17	Color	PPT assignment, Part B (2/17)
7	2/18-2/24	Photography	PPT assignment, Part C (2/24)
8	2/25-3/3	Data visualization/infographics	
9	3/4-3/10	Logos & branding	Infographic (3/10)
SPRING BREAK 3/8-3/17			
10	3/18-3/24	Video	
11	3/25-3/31	Pulling it all together	
12	4/1-4/7	Web and mobile	Multimedia explainer (4/7)
13	4/8-4/14	Usability and accessibility	
14	4/15-4/21	Laws and ethics	
15	4/22-4/26	Final Project (short week)	Final project (4/26)