Information Design

Deliverables

DROPBOX.COM

All assignments should be submitted through dropbox.com. You will need to create an account at dropbox.com in order to submit your assignments. This account is free and comes with 2 GB of storage. You will receive an invitation to join the shared folder from me shortly before the semester begins or by the first night of class.

I have created a course folder called Information Design Fall 2016 with a subfolder called Students, which includes a subfolder for each of you. Within your student folder are several folders, one for each of the individual deliverables. Inside each of those folders is another folder called Ready for Grading. I will assume that any documents placed in this folder are ready to be graded.

> **Instructor Information**
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> Office hours: Mondays from 2:00-3:00 and by appointment

You can use dropbox in two ways: 1) Access it through the website or 2) download and install the dropbox client, which creates a drive on your computer like any other drive. You will not be able to download the dropbox client if you are not using your own computer.

Because I need to provide you all access to the course dropbox folder (Information Design Fall 2016), which will include multiple folders with materials necessary for the class (e.g., worksheets, readings, and so on) and which includes students' folders, everyone will have access to everyone else's folder. We will work on the honor system and agree that no one will go into someone else's folder without permission.

INDIVIDUAL DELIVERABLES

1. **Various In-class Exercises, Responses, & Participation or Graduate Paper**

   One aspect of participation will be periodically engaging in Show & Tells. For the first few minutes of class, you will have the opportunity to bring in/show something you saw/noticed and present it to the class. I expect everyone to participate in this process at some point in the semester.

2. **Response to the Syllabus**

   I want to be sure each of you are clear about what is expected from you in this class and to give you opportunities for raising questions about what I have planned. I also want to challenge you now to start being creative (but coherent) with a document that might otherwise seem to you to have great potential for being flat. All students must read/comment on the About Grading item available on the course website.

Continued

Read all the materials on this course website and look through the Weekly Schedule. Write 250-500 words in response, using the following questions to guide you. (Please do not write your response as a sentence-by-sentence response to these questions; instead, please work & play to come up with a creative but coherent way to respond.) Feel free to be as creative as you want to be.

Note: *This is not a critique of the syllabus design. I'm looking for a response to the content of the syllabus.*

- What are the main skills I am hoping you will gain by the end of the quarter?
- What do you think you need to learn or do to achieve those skills?
- How will we arrive at your grade for this class? Are you comfortable with how you imagine this process to work? (See Assessment document)
- What makes you most nervous about what I've written in the syllabus?
- What do you think will give you the most pleasure in this class?
- What are the skills you bring to class that you think will help you the most?
- Can you envision the shape of the semester from the Syllabus & Weekly Schedule? What remains vague to you? Is there anything you can suggest now for improving what you see ahead?

3. **Print Journal & Justification Memo**

   For this assignment, I will ask you to layout and design a fictitious journal, *Signatures*. You will need to use InDesign for this assignment. The text and images for this journal are available in dropbox→Deliverables→Print Journal folder. The journal contains five articles, a table of contents, a designed cover, author bios, and images. You might begin by evaluating other print journal layouts. We will begin this assignment in class by drawing thumbnail sketches. The cover memo should articulate your design decisions. See Assessment for a fuller explanation.

   Some examples

   Programmatic Perspectives (individual articles are in PDF)
   Technological Ecologies & Sustainability (individual articles are in PDF)
   Technologies of Wonder (individual articles are in PDF)
   Chubby Checkers (individual articles are in PDF)
   Other journals: *Missouri Review*, *Seneca Review*, *Conjunctions*, *Brevity*, *Lucky Peach*, *The Sun Magazine*, *n+1*, and any you find on your own

4. **Individual Deliverables connected to the collaborative project**
   - Pitch Proposal (informal; just be ready to say what the journal is, what its content is, and who the audience will be and how you will collect content for the journal)
   - Individual Activity Narrative (accounting of your time and activities on the collaborative project)
   - Performance Evaluations for each group member and yourself (critical evaluation of your own and your group members' performance on the collaborative project). Use the worksheet provided in dropbox→worksheets

5. **And the Winner Isn't website (**http://www.andthewinnerisnt.com**) from the Frain book.**
   For this assignment, I will ask you to build the website along with Ben Frain as he builds it in his book, *Responsive Web Design with HTML 5 and CSS3* **(be sure it's the first edition)**. Be sure to see the **notes** at the end of this document about using his book.

6. **End-of-Semester Reflection Memo**

As a cover memo for your semester work addressed to me, reflect on what you have learned about design, the design problem, and the design process. Consider the technical skills you've learned and still need to learn. How does this course connect to other courses in technical communication? What is its relevance? How do you think this knowledge can fit into your future plans, whether you intend to go on for additional schooling or transitioning to the workplace?

What suggestions do you have about the course? What worked or didn't work and why? What would you change and why? Addressing these questions is not an invitation to complain about the course in nonconstructive ways such as unhappiness with an assignment or lack of time to put into an assignment or to meet with a group. From a university perspective, work outside class time amounts to three hours per credit hour each week. I'm interested in substantive comments about course content and instruction. Simply responding to the questions above will not be considered competent-level writing. Find a way to focus the content. Please treat this memo as a significant piece of writing, paying attention to your prose and style. You might point to specific artifacts you created during the semester as support.

COLLABORATIVE DELIVERABLES

7. **Online Journal Website**

For this assignment, I will ask you to work collaboratively with 2 or 3 other students creating an online journal of your choice (see examples under Resources). These websites will involve invention, planning, and production of an interface design, navigation, and indication of content, images, and font choice. Keep in mind that each group will need to find content (text and images) for their journal.

This assignment begins with Pitch Night. Each student will make a 60-second pitch for a journal name, audience, and content. It's likely that this original idea will become modified as groups work on their projects. After all pitches have been made, the class as a whole will choose the three projects we will work on throughout the semester. Students will then indicate the projects on which they want to work. This process involves significant negotiation.

Each group will turn in for a grade the following deliverables:

- Design justification (cover memo) (addressed to me justifying your design choices; see example in dropbox --> Example Documents)
- Audience Analysis Report (use worksheet in dropbox)
  This report should be a one-page memo with rich descriptions that characterize the audience's sense of identity, its demographics, culture, reading habits, expectations for reading/viewing the journal, understanding of the subject matter, and how it finds meaning from the content.
- Logo (use Photoshop and save as a jpg or png)
- The Website
- Peer Group Website Evaluation (use worksheet in dropbox)

- Collaborative Narrative Report
  This report should be a one-page memo with rich descriptions that characterize how your group worked together to complete the project. This report should not simply state who did what. It should provide vivid descriptions of how the collaboration worked, how it created a sense of identity, and how the completion of the work resulted in the final product.
- Presentation

GRADUATE PAPER

For the graduate portion of your grade, graduate students will write a 10-page synthesis paper. A synthesis paper is an argument-structured discussion focused on a specific area of interest, in this case, information design.

You should begin by reading all articles/chapters provided in dropbox --> Graduate Readings folder. There are several articles/chapters that include theoretical to applied theoretical readings. These articles/chapters provide you with a snapshot of research questions and discussions in the field. Feel free to bring in additional research.

Your task is to organize some of the information around a theme or a question, make generalizations, and then present information (statistics, quotes, examples) in a logical way to support your argument. Remind yourself that a synthesis is NOT a summary, a comparison or a review. Rather a synthesis is a result of an integration of what you heard/read and your ability to use this learning to develop and support a key thesis or argument. Learning to write a synthesis paper is a critical skill, crucial to organizing and presenting information is academic and non-academic settings. I have provided two examples of what I consider to be well-written synthesis papers from previous classes in dropbox.

Remember that this paper, although shorter, is equivalent to a seminar paper and should be written in the academic prose expected at the graduate level. I'm willing to read a draft of the paper with a two-week notice.

I'd recommend that graduate students get together and discuss the readings throughout the semester in preparation for writing this paper. I am willing to participate in these meetings. Some sources I found on the Web about writing synthesis papers:

- Introduction to Syntheses
- Synthesis Writing
- What is a synthesis paper?

NOTES

Ben Frain, *Responsive Web Design with HTML5 and CSS3*

Overall
Sometimes when Frain shows HTML or CSS3 markup text, he shortens the example by eliminating some of the text, showing only the relevant code for the task he is explaining. Do not delete text (HTML or CSS) just because he doesn't show it in an example.

Add content when you see that he has included it in an example. Start adding content on page 46. Your font may look different from the examples in his screenshots. Don't worry about it for now. Fonts will be covered in Chapter 5.

Chapter 1
Read for Understanding

Chapter 2
Page 46: He is only adding a background color to demonstrate the different DIVs. Those colors can be deleted later. If Frain doesn't specifically tell you when to delete them, do so when it makes sense for the task.

Page 53: Note that multiple CSS selectors can be grouped when the value is the same. Value refers to the specific identifying characteristic (e.g., 10 px).

Chapter 3
Page 67: The total width of a webpage must add up to 100 whether in total pixels or percentages.

Comments: Whenever you see an asterisk (*) and a slash (/), the author is providing comments on the explanation he is providing. These comments are to make sure you understand what he is doing, and they are ignored by browsers. You do not need to include them in your markup.

Long percentages: Frain uses the full percentage number when defining the size of a value. Dreamweaver, however, does not feel the same way. If you are using the CSS panel to enter your values, Dreamweaver will only allow up to four percentage points and will round up or down. If you want to include the entire percentage as Frain does, you will need to type it directly in the code.

Skip: Setting up Adaptive Images, Putting Background Images Somewhere else, CSS Grid systems (pp. 84-95).

Chapter 4
Begin chapter at New Semantic Elements (p. 103.)

Skip: Hgroup (pp. 106-107)

When changing elements to HTML 5, make the changes directly in the code (both HTML and CSS), not the CSS panel.

Skip: WAI-ARIA—this is important, but we don't have time to cover it (pp. 119-122). You can try it if you want, but it is not required.

Skip: Embedding media (pp. 122-130). You will need to create a new page to do this. We'll go over that in class. You can try it if you want, but it is not required.

Skip: Offline Applications (pp. 131-135).

Chapter 5

Note that if you set the shadow values in the CSS panel, Dreamweaver will automatically include all the vender prefixes.

Read for understanding (pp. 137-145).

Skip: CSS3 Attributes and Selectors & CSS Structural Elements and Psuedo-classes (pp. 146-149; 155-159).

We will also discuss fonts and @font-face in class.

Skip: Color Formats and Alpha Channels. We will use Hex numbers throughout (pp. 169-174).

Chapter 6
Page 178: He uses the tag <em> for the phrase "When I watch the Oscars I'm annoyed." I found that using <span> works better.

Try all the shadow backgrounds that you want but keep only the one you want. Too many shadows makes reading more difficult.

Page 200: If your <background> tag for linear-gradient doesn't work, try the <background-image> tag.

Skip: Multiple background images and Sizable Icons (pp. 203-206).

Chapter 7
For transformations, read about them all, but only choose one transformation for the navigation buttons.

You can create the Quiz page if you want, but it is not required. However, I will give extra credit if you do.

Skip: Animating with CSS3 (pp. 228-235).

We won't be completing the activities in Chapters 8 & 9.