

Instructor Information

Dr. Tracy Bridgeford (tbridgeford@unomaha.edu | 554-3312)

Office: ASH 192D | **Office Hours:** M/W 2:00-4:00 and by appointment

Course Description

This course will focus on the concept of production of digital texts as a process of design problem-solving. In a workshop environment, students will create various versions of the same text using different tools and formats as well as read selected texts about design and production as theoretical concepts.

In the process, students will learn effective interface design, readability and legibility of text, layout techniques, and develop technical skills with design software such as Photoshop, InDesign, and Dreamweaver. Students do not need prior knowledge of the software.

Course Objectives

- Understand design as a problem-solving process
- Become familiar with and use design language
- Analyze audience, purpose and situation
- Apply principles of design
- Develop a design & production sensibility through standards, style sheets, & practice
- Develop technical skills with appropriate software

Course Books & Materials (available at UNO Bookstore)

The Non-Designer's Design Book, Robin Williams, 3rd ed.

The Non-Designer's Web Book, Robin Williams & John Tollett, 3rd ed.

The Non-Designer's InDesign Book, Robin Williams

The Non-Designer's Photoshop Book, Robin Williams & John Tollett

Previously written essay for another class (or choose from the ones I provide)

Sketch Book (any kind of nonruled blank notebook)

Flash Drive

Images purchases or found free on the Web (see resources page on course website)

Readings available in PDF in dropbox

Dropbox.com

All assignments will 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. I will create a folder for each of you using your last name. You will receive an invitation from dropbox to join this folder. Inside your folder will be another folder called "Ready for Grading." Once you have placed a document in the Ready for Grading folder, do not remove it. I will assume that any documents placed into the Ready for Grading folder are ready for grading. When responding to assignments, I will open a document and resave it using with my initials and add my comments and a grade. You are welcome to save any other

document in this space. Grades are assigned using scores of (lowest) 1-5 (highest). See the assessment document for more information.

Course Policies

Attendance and Participation

As in the professional workplace, much of the work we will be doing in this class depends on your interaction with others; therefore attendance is an essential component of your grade. If you must miss a class, please let me know ahead of time and be prepared to offer a plausible excuse. Missed classes do have a bearing on your grade: if you miss more than one class, you can expect a deduction in your grade. If you must miss a class, please find out from someone else in class what happened that day and the details of any assignments. I simply and honestly do not have the time or the energy to re-present what we've done in class—but if you ever want to discuss something that came up in class or look at versions of the work you are doing for class, I'll be more than happy to meet with you. *Keep in mind that a miss is still a miss, whether you have a good excuse or not. Students are required to attend ALL presentations.*

Instructor's Initial Expectations

You will complete many assignments as part of your development as technical writers. These assignments are not to be taken lightly. I will expect the level of competency generally associated with a 4000/8000-level course and therefore will assume that students are already well versed in the conventions of standard written English and responsible research. Written assignments should be scrupulously edited and virtually free from mistakes in grammar, spelling, and punctuation before they are turned in for a grade.

Assignments

Every class meeting will involve some type of assignment. Out-of-class assignments are due at the beginning of class, and in-class assignments are due at the end of class. All assignments are provided on this website. At the end of the semester, students will submit a semester portfolio that represents all work completed for this course with an end-of-the-semester self-assessment memo about what you learned in this class.

Students with Disabilities

Accommodations are provided for students with registered disabilities. For more information contact Services for Students with disabilities in EAB 117 or 554-2872, TTY 554-3799.

About Grading

What I hear at the end of the term from almost everyone is "I put more time into this class than I have into any other class"—with the implication that time alone should earn you an A. I do believe students work hard, but working hard does not equal excellence. Although this class (or any Technical Communication class) does require a lot of time, time alone does not make for excellent work; time alone does not make for work that gives you shivers of pride when you see it and gives others the sense that attentive thought went into the work. As you work in this class, you need to be attentive to what you are doing. You need to be focused on this work and nothing else—for the time that you are working on it. You need to look at your work continually and ask yourself if it gives you pleasure and

pride, if it is an expression of all you are capable. The list that follows includes observations of the kinds of activities and attentions I have seen in others who have performed A-level work in this class:

Developing and sustaining lively intellectual engagement with the ideas and concepts of class

- You come to class prepared to discuss the readings, with questions and opinions and considerations of consequences.
- You actively seek feedback on your own work from others, before it is due. Your work is on time and complete.
- Your work shows that you think about and respond to the feedback you receive from me and from others.
- You discover new resources for helping you do the work of class and share them with your instructor and classmates

Making steady and questioning application of the concepts and discussions in class

- You continually look around to see how people interact with the world (both natural and virtual) and other people, and ask yourself which interactions seem to support the kind of world in which you want to live—and then you work consciously at making your work encourage those kinds of interactions.
- You are continually attentive to how you and others learn and work to have the software you develop encourage others in their learning.

Taking personal responsibility for developing the technical skills you need in this field.

- You recognize that the technologies of our time are changing rapidly (with consequences for the pocketbooks and attentiveness of all of us), and that there is therefore no way this class can be your only source for learning all the technical skills or critical abilities or all the computer applications you need or want.
- You therefore work consciously to develop a questioning and personal relation with the technologies you use in your work, being carefully attentive to what *you* need to learn and the approaches by which you learn best.
- You are continually on the lookout for designs that use the technology (including non-computer technologies) differently from how you do, so that you learn not only that your way is not the only way but you also learn to turn to others for support and assistance.
- You make use of the considerable technical resources of the class and the lab. You ask others for assistance, you look through the materials provided, and you come to office hours with questions about how to do something.
- You share that knowledge with others in your community of practice, whether it is the class itself as a community, or the various collaborative groups you may work with while taking Technical Communication courses.

Contribute to a final project that shows all of us—including yourself—that you are engaged, learning, and applying what we discuss in class.

- Your final project may not be as complete as you would like, but what it does have is the result of much experimentation on your part: you have tested out different possible interactions and approaches, and have found one (or more...) that seems to you to encourage people to learn what you intended and to learn it richly.
- Your final project is engaging: you have used experimentation and testing to redesign your project so that people **want** to use it and **do** learn from it.
- Your final project is designed fully to achieve your goals: its buttons and interactions and screens have the appropriate level of polish, cohesion, and color for your audience and intention; its structure and interactions support the overall intentions of the piece.