English 4/6618 Document Design

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This course will introduce you to the use of text and visual images as partner elements working together to shape information and attitudes. The idea that writers must be concerned with the design of pages became important with the development of widely available desktop publishing technologies in the 1980s, a development ranked as revolutionary as Gutenberg's invention of the movable printing press in 1440. Document design forms one of the foundations for study and practice in technical communication, and its interdisciplinary body of knowledge continues to evolve as technologies advance and as more publishing takes place in online environments. Principles of document design draw from many disciplines, including rhetoric, art, semiotics, cognitive and social psychology, and computer science.

You will spend this semester studying and practicing document design. You will examine examples of effective document design. You will complete assignments that draw on the readings and enable you to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of document design. Finally, relying on your document design skills, you will work with a client to develop a project that solves a real communication problem/need.

Course Objectives

Completing this course, students should

- be able to recognize and critique a range of document design models
- be able to discuss research on document design in technical communication, rhetoric, and other related disciplines
- understand and exhibit professional skills appropriate for working with clients
- create rhetorically effective and ethical technical designs

Prerequisites

English 3601 Introduction to Professional Writing or permission of instructor.

Requirements for Graduate Students

Graduate students enrolled in 6618 should fulfill all the requirements of 4618. In addition, graduate students will read more, write three reading responses and six

peer responses, and use their readings to write three 500-word rationales for their designs in the first three assignments.

Unlike the undergraduate students, the graduate students will not take readings exams.

Required Textbooks

Kimball, M. A. & Hawkins, A. R. (2008). *Document design: A guide for technical communicators.* Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. ISBN: 0312436998
Williams, R. (2008). *Non-designer's design book, 3rd Ed.* Berkley, CA: Peachpit Press. ISBN: 0321563077

Other readings will be assigned throughout the semester.