

WRITING 2209G 650: Visual Information Packaging: Document Design

Winter 2026

PROFESSOR: David Barrick

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Contemporary digital technology makes it possible for a single person to perform all the roles (writer, editor, graphic artist, designer, printer, publisher) previously performed by a variety of specialists. This course examines information production and document design as an amalgam of skills and tools intended to communicate information clearly and effectively in multiple contexts. Students will learn about core principles of visual design and page layout to create functional and eye-catching documents in print and digital settings. By studying contemporary design work, typography, principles of human perception, and historical context, students will develop good visual language skills to reach a range of audiences. More generally, 2209G aims to contribute to the development of an "... ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences." (Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents' statement on 'University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations' 24 October 2005). This course will also equip you with resources to solve communication/information problems and develop your critical skills in evaluating visual/written texts.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

- Lupton, Ellen. *Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students*. 3rd Edition. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2024. ISBN: 9781797226828 \$44.20
- Additional online readings will be available through our OWL Brightspace site.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK

- Williams, Robin. *The Non-Designer's Design Book*. 4th Edition. San Francisco: Peachpit Press/Pearson Longman, 2015. ISBN: 9780133966152 \$51.00 paperback or \$43.00 eBook

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Method of Evaluation	Grade Value	Due
Brightspace Discussion Forums	10%	Ongoing
Assign. #1 – Idea File Analysis (PART 1)	20%	Unit 4
Assign. #2 – Idea File Analysis (PART 2 w/ reformatting)	20%	Unit 7
Assign. #3 – Document Design Essay	25%	Unit 10
Assign. #4 – Reformatted Document Design Project	25%	Unit 12
	100%	

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT

Text assignments (#1 and #3) must be typed and double-spaced, and must have your name, course name, section number, and instructor's name on the first page. Designed/reformatted assignments (#2 and #4) must also be typed but will include creative visual page layouts (inspired by course material) to support/accentuate the content. When using sources, you will be expected to follow [MLA conventions for documentation/citation](#).

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are due on the date specified on the schedule (see below). **Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day unless I have granted you an extension.** You must talk to your instructor about extensions ahead of the due date; they are not automatic, nor will they be granted retroactively.

In this course, you will submit the final version of all assignments electronically through the OWL site. Text assignments (# 1 and #3) must be submitted as DOCX files; designed/reformatted assignments (#2 and #4) must be submitted as PDF files. When you upload your work to Brightspace, it will automatically be processed through Turnitin.com (see SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES section below). No hard copies are required. Do not fax or email assignments; do not drop off assignments anywhere on Western's campus. Also, be aware that you are responsible for keeping backup copies of all assignments submitted.

BRIGHTSPACE DISCUSSION FORUMS

This course is entirely online and asynchronous, but it is not self-paced. You will be required to participate in weekly Brightspace discussion forums (found under the site's Communications section). These mandatory responses will engage with the course content and be the equivalent of class attendance.

SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES, INCLUDING PLAGIARISM

Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, which can be found here:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently Western and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

In this course, the use of A.I. (such as automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT, etc.) **is prohibited**. If A.I. use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and/or other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them. **In short, do not use A.I. to generate rough drafts or to revise/modify any aspect of your assignments. If you have any reason for using A.I., it MUST be explicitly approved by me ahead of time.**

PREREQUISITES

Ensuring you have the correct prerequisite(s) is your responsibility. "Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites." The prerequisite for registration in this course is:

At least 65% in one of [Writing 2101F/G](#), [Writing 2125F/G](#), [Writing 2111F/G](#), [Writing 2130F/G](#) or [Writing 2131F/G](#); or at least 65% in one of [Writing 1000F/G](#), [Writing 1030F/G](#), or [Writing 1031F/G](#); or at least 65% in each of [MIT 1020E](#) (or both of [MIT 1021F/G](#) and [MIT 1022F/G](#)) and [MIT 1025F/G](#); or permission of the Department (consult the Undergraduate Program Director, Writing).

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

University policy on academic considerations [is described here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation.

Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests through the Student Absence Portal, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:
https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation, which may include a Student Medical Certificate. Recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request without supporting documentation in this course. Note that this DOES NOT allow extensions beyond the last day of the term (into exam period), which will always require formal supporting documentation.

Individual instructors **will not under any circumstances** accept or read medical documentation directly offered by a student. **All medical documentation must** be submitted following the protocol described above.

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519-661-3030 (during class hours) or 519-433-2023 after class hours and on weekends.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays and should give reasonable notice in writing (email), prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Statement on Gender-based Sexual Violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Other Student Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>