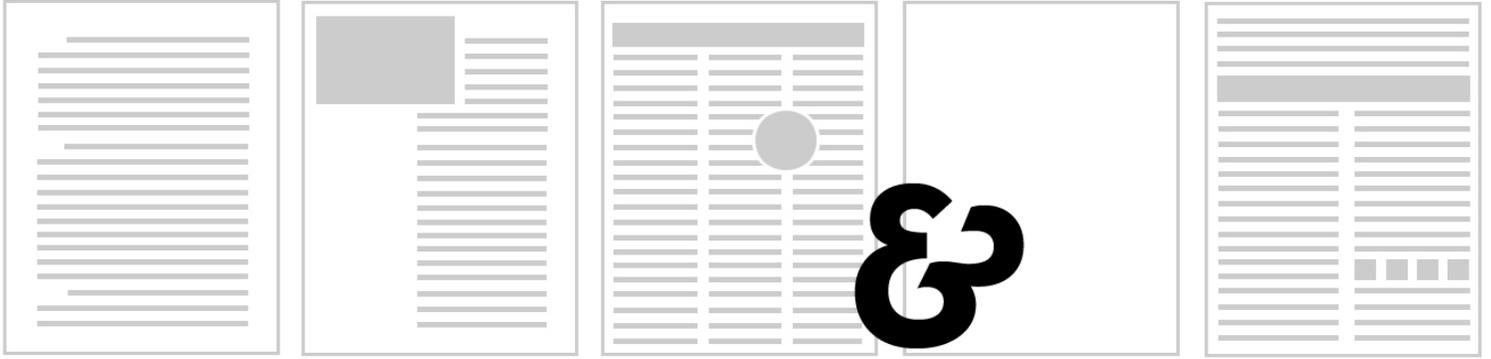


# visual rhetoric



# document design

WRA 360 • section 001 • spring 2015 • 317 Bessey  
MW 3:00–4:50pm • [www.msu.edu/~devosda/360](http://www.msu.edu/~devosda/360)

**Danielle Nicole DeVoss**

email: [devosda@msu.edu](mailto:devosda@msu.edu)

office: 276 Bessey Hall

office hours: *by appointment*

## overview

Professional writers not only *compose* a range of documents—including memos, letters, reports, slideshow presentations, web pages, brochures, flyers, forms, instruction sets, documentation and help files, and many others—we also *design* these documents. Document design requires that we think about how the structure and elements help readers understand and use the texts we create.

Thus, in this writing-, analysis-, and production-intensive course, we will:

- explore how design elements work within different types of documents;
- consider and experiment with the different rhetorical moves that can be made with various formatting and design choices; and
- describe, analyze, articulate, and justify our design decisions.

We will also create documents using different tools (e.g., software applications like Microsoft Word, Adobe Photoshop; using online image databases and materials we gather during the semester) so that we leave the class familiar with:

- navigating audience, purpose, and context in making document design decisions;
- negotiating the cultural and ethical implications of our document design work;
- selecting among different typographical elements;
- understanding how color works in particular documents;
- working with images—knowing when to use a graphic, stock art, photograph, diagram, etc.; and
- working with data displays—knowing when to use a table, bar chart, flow chart, info graphic, etc.

# readings & class materials

All of our course readings are available on our class D2L site (d2l.msu.edu). In the “Content” tab in our D2L course, you will find a folder for each week; inside the folder will be two subfolders (one for each day the class meets that week); inside each day’s folder, you will find two subfolders: one contains the **readings** due that day, and the other contains the **notes and materials** from class that day.

The other important class space is our class web site—[www.msu.edu/~devosdda/360](http://www.msu.edu/~devosdda/360)—all of our **class modules** (and related links and materials) will be posted on the class web site, along with document design examples we’ll collect throughout the semester.

# participation & attendance

Participation is **ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL**. Come to class prepared to discuss the readings due that day and the topics at hand. Plan on expressing your ideas, frustrations, questions, confusions, etc., even if you’re not able to articulate them without some hesitation—sometimes ambivalent or ambiguous remarks spark the liveliest discussions.

If you are absent, you miss valuable class time with your peers and will have difficulty keeping up with the pace of the class. If you miss class, you are still responsible for obtaining class notes and completing work you missed. **A third absence will make a difference in your final grade; for every absence after two, your final grade will go down .25.**

# schedule

WEEK	DAY	WORK DUE
1	M 1/12	
	W 1/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Schriver, “What is Document Design?”</li><li>• Markel, “Designing the Document”</li></ul>
2	M 1/19	★ NO CLASS—MLK DAY
	W 1/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dobrin, Keller, and Weisser, Chapter 2: “Rhetoric and Technical Communication”</li><li>• Eshes and Lupton, selection from <i>Rhetorical Handbook</i></li></ul>
3	M 1/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sturken and Cartwright, Chapter 1 from <i>Practices of Looking</i>: “Practices of Looking: Images, Power, and Politics”</li></ul>
	W 1/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Davis, “The Elements of the Page”</li><li>• Cullen, “Structure and Organization”</li><li>• Lynch and Horton, Chapter 7 from <i>Web Style Guide 3</i>: “Page Design”</li><li>• <b>draft of Module 1 due</b></li></ul>
	Sat 1/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Module 1 due by midnight</b></li></ul>
4	M 2/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lipton, Introduction to <i>Designing Across Cultures</i></li><li>• Oliu, Brusaw, and Alred, “Using Graphics to Communicate Internationally”</li></ul>
	W 2/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spiekermann and Ginger, “Type is Everywhere”</li><li>• Heller, Introduction to <i>Typology</i></li></ul>
	Sat 2/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Module 2 due by midnight</b></li></ul>

5	M 2/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Williams, "Readability and Legibility"</li> <li>White, "Text"</li> <li>Before &amp; After, "Design Below the Line"</li> </ul>
	W 2/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cullen, "Typesetting Factors"</li> <li>Before &amp; After, "Callout Ideas"</li> </ul>
6	M 2/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Williams, "Four Principles of Conceptual Presentation Design"</li> <li>Reynolds, Chapter 6 from <i>presentationzen</i>: "Presentation Design"</li> </ul>
	W 2/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Haslam, "What is a Book?"</li> <li>Haslam, "Covers and Jackets"</li> </ul>
	Sat 2/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Module 3 due by midnight</b></li> </ul>
7	M 2/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Xerox, "International Color Guide"</li> <li>"Color and Appetite Matters"</li> <li>Morton, "Taking the Color of Medications Seriously"</li> <li>Bengal, "Pink &amp; Blue"</li> <li>Szantó, "The Color of Revolution"</li> </ul>
	W 2/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baer, "Process: Prototypes and Testing"</li> <li>Cerejo, "Design Better and Faster with Rapid Prototyping"</li> <li><b>Module 4 Activity 4 (instructions) due for workshopping</b></li> </ul>
	Sat 2/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Module 4 due by midnight</b></li> </ul>
8	M 3/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at least three "Day in the Life..." readings posted on D2L</li> </ul>
	W 3/4	★ NO CLASS—I AM OUT OF TOWN
<b>spring break</b>		
9	M 3/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harper, Introduction to <i>Radical Graphics</i></li> <li>Heller, "Cheapskate Design"</li> </ul>
	W 3/18	★ NO CLASS—I AM OUT OF TOWN
10	M 3/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Before &amp; After, "How to Design Motion"</li> <li>Before &amp; After, "Make a Theme"</li> </ul>
	W 3/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Before &amp; After, "Frame Shop Logo Makeover" (parts 1, 2, and 3)</li> </ul>
11	M 3/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aoki, Boyle, and Jenkins, <i>Bound by Law</i></li> <li>Moll, "Good Designers Copy, Great Designers Steal"</li> <li>Moll, "Good Designers Redesign, Great Designers Realign"</li> </ul>
	W 4/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>draft of Module 5 due</b></li> </ul>
	Sat 4/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Module 5 due by midnight</b></li> </ul>
12	M 4/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dragga and Voss, "Cruel Pies: The Inhumanity of Technical Illustrations"</li> <li>Doumont, "Verbal Versus Visual: A Word is Worth a Thousand Pictures, too"</li> </ul>
	W 4/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Markel, "Choosing the Appropriate Kind of Graphic"</li> <li>Wilbur and Burke, "Explaining How Things Work"</li> </ul>
13	M 4/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kimball and Hawkins, chapter excerpt, "Variables in Print Format"</li> <li>Williams, "Flyers"</li> <li>Before &amp; After, "Design a Multi-purpose Flyer"</li> <li>Before &amp; After, "Design a Flier that Sells"</li> </ul>
	W 4/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Before &amp; After, "How to Design a Small Poster"</li> <li>Before &amp; After, "Design a Brochure of Squares"</li> <li>Before &amp; After, "Design a Story-style Brochure"</li> </ul>
14	M 4/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kimball and Hawkins, "Production"</li> </ul>
	W 4/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>draft Module 6 due for in-class workshopping</b></li> </ul>
	Su 4/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Module 6 due by noon</b></li> </ul>

15	M 4/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lannon, "Instructions"</li> <li>• E3 Media Group, "How to Make Instructional Videos that Won't End Up on a 'Worst of' List"</li> <li>• Before &amp; After, "Draw Great Visual Instructions"</li> </ul>
	W 4/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSU Career Passport, 2014-2015</li> <li>• Hansen, "Your Job Skills Portfolio"</li> <li>• Mathers, "Your Online Portfolio: The Rights and Wrongs"</li> <li>• Mathers, "19 Reasons Your Online Portfolio Gets Barely Any Visits"</li> </ul>
	Su 5/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Module 7 due by noon</b></li> </ul>
<b>any revised work due by noon on W 5/6</b>		

# grades

assignments	points	percentage	grade
document design presentation..... 125	2000–1900 = A	100–96 = A	4.0–3.7 = A
reading discussion..... 125	1899–1800 = A/B	95–91 = A/B	3.6–3.1 = A/B
modules 1–7 ..... 1750 (250 points each)	1799–1700 = B	90–86 = B	3.0–2.7 = B
	1699–1600 = B/C	85–81 = B/C	2.6–2.1 = B/C
	1599–1500 = C	80–76 = C	2.0–1.7 = C
	1499–1400 = C/D	75–71 = C/D	1.6–1.1 = C/D
<b>total..... 2000</b>	1399–1300 = D	70–66 = D	1.0–.7 = D

# assignments *note that these are just brief overviews—full-length assignments and examples will be provided in class*

 <p><b>document design collection</b></p>	<p>This is an optional assignment, but one I <i>much very recommend</i> that you engage in. Every week, add a document (or two or three or four or more) to your collection. You might look for interesting letterhead, flyers, photographs, announcements, invitations, newsletters, images from the web, brochures, wrappers or labels, magazine ads, etc.</p> <p>Save these materials in a folder (print and/or digital) and bring the folder to class. We will use the materials you collect as discussion points in class, and you should find the folder valuable as a visual and document design examples resource collection.</p>
<p><b>document design presentation</b> <i>125 points; due dates assigned in class</i></p>	<p>Once during the semester, you will be responsible for bringing in and discussing at least one document that you want to share with the class. You may choose the examples you present from your document design collection. You can bring in either a "bad" example or a "good" example. If possible, connect your discussion of the document to the week's readings/focus.</p>
<p><b>reading discussion</b> <i>125 points; due dates assigned in class</i></p>	<p>Once during the semester, you will be responsible for briefly presenting on the day's readings. The goal of this activity is to start a discussion about the day's readings with the rest of the class.</p>

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**class modules**

*250 points each; due dates on schedule*

Modules provide a space for you to explore, experiment, and gain some hands-on writing and design practice. Each week's module will relate to the week's readings and discussions. Modules *must* be completed in the order in which they appear on the course schedule; the modules are (or will be) available on our class web site.

Class activities and discussions will help you prepare for the modules, but it is *your* responsibility to read the modules and to prepare and submit your work in its entirety, so read the modules carefully.

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To receive any accommodation for any disability, students must first register with the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities. The RCPD will request appropriate documentation and make a determination regarding the nature of the accommodation to which a student is entitled. The RCPD will then give the student a "visa" that specifies the kind of accommodation that may be provided. It is then the responsibility of the student seeking accommodation to present the visa to his/her instructor.