

# WRA 360



## designing print and digital documents

section 001 • fall 2020 • online

TTh 10:20am-12:10pm • [d2l.msu.edu](https://d2l.msu.edu)

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*please contact me to schedule an online meeting!*

### CLASS FORMAT

More specifics and details are included below, but please note **that class this semester will be ENTIRELY asynchronous**. Each week, there will be a mini-lecture videos, readings, activities, interactions, etc., but we will not meet together at the same time.

That said, **I will be online and available every Tuesday from 10:20am-12:10pm** (our regularly scheduled class time) to answer any questions you may have. The zoom link to find me on Tuesdays is posted in our class D2L site. Feel free to drop in to say hi (to me or to my cats, our unofficial class TAs) or to ask questions about class, specific readings, particular assignments, etc.



*Chuck*



*Taco*



*Meatball*

### CLASS 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 structure and elements do rhetorical work and 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, AND REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

**D2L ([d2l.msu.edu/](https://d2l.msu.edu/)):** In the “Content” tab in our D2L course, you will find:

1. a folder that includes our class syllabus, activities, modules, and dropboxes;
2. a folder that contains a link to our shared class Google Drive and a link for my zoom on Tuesdays; and
3. a folder for each week of class; inside each folder will be a subfolder for each day of class. Each subfolder will include the reading(s) due that day and a mini-lecture video.

**Shared Google Drive:** Our class Google Drive folder (linked from D2L) is where we’ll respond to reading prompts and share reading notes. We’ll also use the Google Drive folder to save and workshop drafts.

**Software:** We will work primarily using three types of tools:

1. the Microsoft Office Suite, which you have access to with your MSU netID
2. various free online tools; and
3. the Adobe Creative Suite, specifically Photoshop, InDesign, and Illustrator

The College of Arts & Letters is currently working with Adobe to secure student licenses; I’m hoping by the time we start working in the Adobe Creative Suite, I’ll know whether we have licenses for you or not.

If we are not able to secure student licenses for you and if you don’t already have a subscription to the Adobe Creative Suite, I would suggest you budget at least a two-month subscription for work for class (the student subscription cost is \$19.99/month). Know, too, that you can access the Adobe Creative Suite on any campus computer lab.

**Zoom:** We will not meet for class synchronously, but know that I am available during our regularly scheduled class time on Tuesdays (from 10:20am-12:10pm); the zoom link to find me is posted on D2L.

## SCHEDULE

Please note that depending on events during the semester, this schedule may change. If there are changes, I will try to share them as soon as possible.

WEEK	DAY	WORK DUE
1	Th 9/3	
2	T 9/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Markel, “Designing the Document”</li> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
	Th 9/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dobrin, Keller, and Weisser, Chapter 2, “Rhetoric and Technical Communication”</li> <li>• Eheses and Lupton, selection from <i>Rhetorical Handbook</i></li> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
3	T 9/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sturken and Cartwright, Chapter 1 from <i>Practices of Looking: “Images, Power, and Politics”</i></li> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
	Th 9/17	<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> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
4	T 9/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Davis, “The Elements of the Page”</li> <li>• Cullen, “Structure and Organization”</li> <li>• Lynch and Horton, table of contents for <i>Web Style Guide</i> (4th ed.)</li> <li>• reading response</li> <li>• <b>Activity 1 due by 5pm</b></li> </ul>
	Th 9/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spiekermann and Ginger, “Type is Everywhere”</li> <li>• Heller, Introduction to <i>Typography</i></li> <li>• reading response</li> <li>• <b>draft of Module 1 due in our shard Google Drive for online workshopping</b></li> </ul>
	Su 9/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Module 1 due by 10am</b></li> </ul>
5	T 9/29	<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> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
	Th 10/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cullen, “Typesetting Factors”</li> <li>• Before &amp; After, “Callout Ideas”</li> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
	Su 10/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Module 2 due by 10am</b></li> </ul>
6	T 10/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Haslam, “What is a Book?”</li> <li>• Haslam, “Covers and Jackets”</li> <li>• “Getting Started with Kindle Direct Publishing”</li> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
	Th 10/8	<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> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Szantó, “The Color of Revolution”</li> <li>• reading response</li> <li>• <b>Activity 2 due by 5pm</b></li> </ul>
7	T 10/13	<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> <li>• reading response</li> <li>• <b>Activity 3 due by 5pm</b></li> </ul>
	Th 10/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heller, “Design Is One of the Most Powerful Forces in Our Lives”</li> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
	Su 10/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Module 3 due by 10am</b></li> </ul>
8	T 10/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baer, “Process: Prototypes and Testing”</li> <li>• Cerejo, “Design Better and Faster with Rapid Prototyping”</li> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
	Th 10/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harper, Introduction to <i>Radical Graphics</i></li> <li>• Heller, “Cheapskate Design”</li> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
9	T 10/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Williams, “Flyers”</li> <li>• Before &amp; After, “How to Design Motion”</li> <li>• reading response</li> <li>• <b>Activity 4 due by 5pm</b></li> </ul>
	Th 10/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Module 4 Part 4 (instructions) due in our shard Google Drive for online workshopping</b></li> </ul>
	Su 11/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Module 4 due by 10am</b></li> </ul>
10	T 11/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before &amp; After, “Make a Theme”</li> <li>• reading response</li> <li>• <b>Activity 5 due by 5pm</b></li> </ul>
	Th 11/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before &amp; After, “Frame Shop Logo Makeover” (parts 1, 2, and 3)</li> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
11	T 11/10	<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> <li>• Suggett, “The Case For and Against Stock Photography”</li> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
	Th 11/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dragga and Voss, “Cruel Pies: The Inhumanity of Technical Illustrations”</li> <li>• Dragga, “Is This Ethical?”</li> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
12	T 11/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Markel, “Choosing the Appropriate Kind of Graphic”</li> <li>• Wilbur and Burke, “Explaining How Things Work”</li> <li>• reading response</li> <li>• <b>Activity 6 due by 5pm</b></li> </ul>
	Th 11/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>draft of Module 5 due in our shard Google Drive for online workshopping</b></li> </ul>
	Su 11/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Module 5 due by 10am</b></li> </ul>

13	T 11/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kimball and Hawkins, chapter excerpt, “Choosing a Print Format”</li> <li>• Before &amp; After, “Design a Multi-purpose Flyer”</li> <li>• Before &amp; After, “Design a Flier that Sells”</li> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
	Th 11/26	• NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING
14	T 12/1	<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> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
	Th 12/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kimball and Hawkins, “Production”</li> <li>• reading response</li> <li>• <b>draft Module 6 due in our shard Google Drive for online workshopping</b></li> </ul>
	Su 12/6	• <b>Module 6 due by 10am</b>
15	T 12/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at least three “Day in the Life...” readings posted on D2L</li> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
	Th 12/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>MSU Career Passport</i> and <i>MSU 12 Essentials for Success</i></li> <li>• Steck, “How to Create a Killer Writing Portfolio for Freelancers”</li> <li>• Quinn, “6 Elements of a Kick-Ass UX Writing Portfolio”</li> <li>• reading response</li> </ul>
F	W 12/16	• <b>Module 7 due by noon; any revised work due by noon</b>

## GRADES

Your final course grade is made up of:


document design activities (6 for 100 points each).....	600
reading notes contributions (15 for 50 points each).....	750
modules 1-7 (200 points each) .....	1400
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE.....</b>	<b>2750</b>

Your final course grade will be calculated as:

points	percentage	grade
2750-2612 = A	100-96 = A	4.0-3.7 = A
2611-2475 = A/B	95-91 = A/B	3.6-3.1 = A/B
2474-2337 = B	90-86 = B	3.0-2.7 = B
2336-2200 = B/C	85-81=B/C	2.6-2.1 = B/C
2199-2062 = C	80-76 = C	2.0-1.7 = C
2061-1925 = C/D	75-71 = C/D	1.6-1.1 = C/D
1924-1787 = D	70-66 = D	1.0-.7 = D

# ASSIGNMENTS

*note that these are just brief overviews—full-length assignments and examples will be provided during 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 feel free to draw on them for ideas, examples, or inspiration during class and in your reading notes contributions, your design activities, and your module work.</p>
<p><b>reading notes contributions</b></p> <p><i>750 points; ongoing</i></p> <p><i>for full points, contribute 15 times during the semester for 50 points per contribution</i></p>	<p>Weeks 2 through 15 of class, I will post a prompt related to the readings on our shared Google Drive folder (accessible through D2L). As you read or after you read—but before midnight on Sunday eastern of each week of class—comment on the prompt I’ve provided. Feel free, also, to respond to each other in, on, or for your response!</p> <p>The two goals of the reading notes are, first, for you to reflect on and respond to the readings we’re doing for class, and, second, to create a huge, ongoing repository of good ideas, illustrations, illuminations, and more—that we can all contribute to and draw from.</p> <p><b>Note that reading responses are due each week by midnight eastern on Sunday and you can’t go back in time.</b> For instance, if you choose to respond to the week 3 Tuesday reading prompt, you must do so by Sunday, September 20 at midnight eastern. If you choose to respond to the week 5 Thursday reading prompt, you must do so by Sunday, October 4 at midnight eastern. I’ll post ongoing contributions and grades three or four times during the semester on D2L, but you should keep track of how many reading responses you’ve posted.</p>
<p><b>design activities</b></p> <p><i>600 points (six activities, 100 points each)</i></p> <p><i>due dates on schedule</i></p>	<p>The six required class activities are smaller activities that provide a space for us to play and experiment and to wrestle with concepts and ideas that we’re discussing and reading about. Activities <i>must</i> be completed in the order in which they appear on the course schedule; activities will be made available and should be submitted on our class D2L site, in the “syllabus, activities, modules, and dropboxes” subfolder.</p>
<p><b>class modules</b></p> <p><i>1400 points (seven modules, 200 points each)</i></p> <p><i>due dates on schedule</i></p>	<p>The seven required class modules are longer, larger activities that provide a space for you to gain some hands-on writing and design practice and to put concepts from class and from class readings into practice. Modules <i>must</i> be completed in the order in which they appear on the course schedule; modules will be made available and should be submitted on our class D2L site, in the “syllabus, activities, modules, and dropboxes” subfolder.</p> <p>Drafts of some module work will be due for online workshopping; due dates are included in the schedule above, and drafts for workshopping will be shared on our class Google Drive.</p>

## THRIVING IN AN ONLINE CLASS

Class will move quickly this semester, and online classes are *different* from face-to-face classes, primarily because you are more responsible for doing, participating, and performing the work of class. It's also very important that you ask questions—any questions, at any time you have them! Don't feel you have to figure out everyone online and on your own. If you're struggling with a concept or an assignment, it's likely others are, too.

I would *strongly* suggest that you **plan to spend at least four hours a week working on this class**. For some of you, four hours a week might be enough time to complete the readings, participate in the reading notes, and work on activities or modules. Some weeks this might be more than enough time; other weeks you'll need more time. Protecting at least four hours a week is important. Further, I would also *strongly* suggest that if you don't already, **create a calendar for yourself**. It might just include our 360 milestones, or it might include all your class due dates for the semester. Being able to anticipate what's coming up will help you manage your time and stay on top of class work.

If your life circumstances change this semester, or something happens that interrupts your ability to complete class work, please reach out as soon as you can. There may not be much I can do, but I'd at least like to know what's going on and if there's anything I can do to help you succeed in the class.

## ETHICS AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The work you submit must be produced originally for this class and cannot be used for another course in the same semester without my permission. You should also credit others' contributions to your work. You should not claim, as your own, work (or writing) that is not your own (to do so is considered plagiarism).

It is perfectly appropriate for you to borrow graphics, to quote passages, and to use ideas from others. However, when you do so, follow appropriate credit-giving or citation conventions. University information about academic honesty is included in the *Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide*.

## ADA AND RCPD SUPPORT

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.



the five goals of document design  
according to **Mike Markel**:

- 1** to make a **good impression** on readers
- 2** to help readers understand the **structure and hierarchy** of information
- 3** to help readers **find** the information they need
- 4** to help readers **understand** the information
- 5** to help readers **remember** the information