

# WRTG 3305: writing as information design

fall 2015 >> 11259 >> Thompson 105 >> MWF 12-12:50pm

## course description.

### from the Undergraduate Bulletin:

Upper-division workshop course for writing majors and minors and students in other programs. Focuses on academic and professional forms of writing. Student will use advanced strategies for print and electronic writing and examine how to shape the composition process for specific writing tasks and purposes.

**Dr. Allison H. Hitt**

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office >> Thompson 323

hours >> M & W 1-3pm

T 11am-12pm

& by appt.

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 @ahhitt

### from me:

We often talk in writing courses about composing the **content** for print and digital texts. Another important part of the composing process is design. Designing information involves considering the structure (organizing & chunking information) and the elements (color, typeface, images & captions) that help readers understand and make meaning with texts.

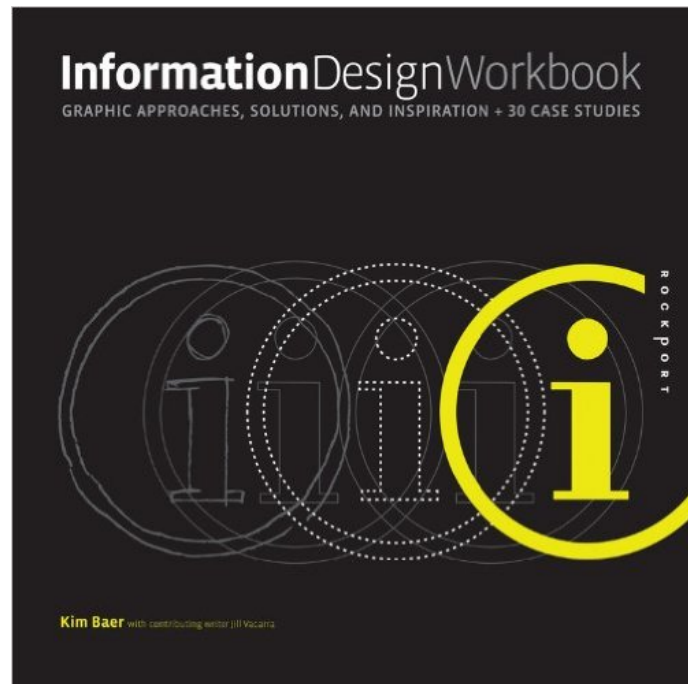
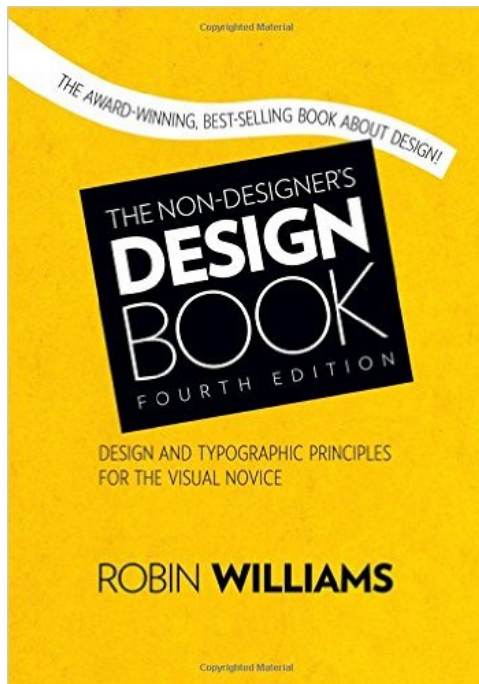
Document design helps readers **use** the texts we compose.

In this course, we will design both print-based and digital-born documents to better understand the role design plays in the composing process. We will discuss theories of accessible and usable document design, visual rhetoric, and typography, while also applying these theories to concrete design tasks.

Some questions we will consider:

- How do visual rhetorical design choices help to construct arguments?
- How do factors such as style, font face and size, and color impact the success or usability of a document?
- What are the ethical implications of our design choices?
- What are the affordances/constraints of different technologies on design?

texts & materials.



required.

1. Williams, Robin. *The Non-Designer's Design Book: Design and Typographic Principles for the Visual Novice*. 4th ed. San Francisco: Peachpit Press, 2015. Print. ISBN-13: 978-0133966152
2. Baer, Kim. *Information Design Workbook: Graphic Approaches, Solutions, and Inspiration + 30 Case Studies*. Beverly, MA: Rockport Publishers, 2010. Print. ISBN-13: 978-1592536276

additional.

I will make additional readings available as PDFs through Google Classroom, which you will need to access regularly throughout the semester to submit your work and to access unit calendars, assignment prompts, and course notes.

You will also need to sign up for a Tumblr account: <https://www.tumblr.com>

## assignments.

### 1. curation (15%)

Throughout the semester, you will collect & curate well-designed documents: flyers, infographics, ads, newsletters, websites, etc. We will use a course Tumblr where you can share your documents and provide a caption of 1) what it is, 2) why you chose it, and 3) how it connects to our class discussions. 10 total. ([tumblr.com/blog/wrtg3305](http://tumblr.com/blog/wrtg3305))

### 2. presentation (10%)

Twice in the semester, you will sign up to informally present a document, sharing what interests you about the design and how it connects to our class discussions or readings. This is just to jumpstart conversation, so don't stress.

### 3. creation (75%)

#### module 1: four icon challenge (10%)

Kyle Tezak is a graphic designer who devised the four icon challenge, a mix of icon design and storytelling (<http://kyletezak.com/four-icon-challenge.html>). This module requires you to choose a movie and boil it down to four distinct icons. You can either download the icons or create your own. You will write a 2-page reflection on your choices and present your final product in class. **(due 9/9)**

#### module 2: presidential logo rebrand (15%)

With the announcement of the 2016 presidential hopefuls comes branding: websites, bumper stickers, buttons, logos. Logos must be easily recognizable and memorable, must evoke an emotional response, and must be adaptable. For this module, you will identify a candidate logo in need of rebranding and use Adobe Illustrator to redesign it. You will also write a 1-page creative brief analyzing your candidate and describing your purpose and a 2-page reflection on your choices and the genre conventions that you followed. **(due 9/25)**

#### module 3: résumé remix (15%)

For this module, you'll experiment with résumé design and produce two remixed documents. For the first one, you can change **only** the typeface (i.e., the visual appearance of your fonts—the weight, style, spacing). For the second, we will rebuild your résumés in Adobe InDesign, experimenting with typography, color, and graphics. You will submit the original résumé, the two revised résumés, and a 2-page reflection of your choices. **(due 10/16)**

**module 4: extreme makeover: instructions edition (15%)**

There are lots of bad instructions out there: the text or images are confusing, the steps are redundant, the process is too long. For this module, you will redesign an instruction set of your choosing. You will make choices about whether or not the genre is appropriate for the content and will produce either a print-ready PDF or an accessible video. You will submit the original instructions, revised instructions, and a 2-page reflection. **(due 11/6)**

**module 5: accessible digital portfolio (20%)**

For the final assignment, you will create a professional portfolio that showcases the work that you've produced this semester while making design choices about how to arrange these texts. The portfolio must include 1) a selection of the documents you curated on our course Tumblr, 2) the modules that you completed, and 3) a detailed (3-5 pages, double-spaced) reflection of how your design aesthetic and/or understanding of the composing process has evolved as you have engaged with new theories, ideas, and technologies. **(due 12/9)**

**grading policy.**

A	90-100%	Your work is impressive. The final product has both excellent content and document design. Your work is thorough, coherent, and organized in a useful fashion. It demonstrates a superior understanding of audience, purpose, and rationale.
B	80-89%	Your work is satisfactory. The final product meets the standards of writing and demonstrates a step forward in your learning process. It is sufficiently developed, organized, and supported, and you have demonstrated a solid understanding of audience, purpose, and rationale.
C	70-79%	Your work is okay. The final product may have clear but undeveloped ideas. It likely contains some errors in logic, mechanics, or grammar.
D	60-69%	Your work needs substantial revision. The final product may have incomplete information, lack clear organization and design, and have serious grammar or mechanical issues.
F	59% and below	Your work is unacceptable. Your final product does not fit the assignment parameters, is underdeveloped, or is mechanically and grammatically incomprehensible.

## course policies.

**Accessibility.** I am committed to creating a professional learning environment that is inclusive to different learning and composing styles. Accessibility is a collaborative effort, and if we can do something to make the classroom more accessible, please let me know at any point throughout the semester.

**Feedback.** I will provide written feedback on each major assignment that you submit. Please read that feedback carefully prior to emailing me about your grade. **I will not respond to grade inquiries the day I return an assignment.** If you have questions about my feedback, please email me to set up a meeting or stop by my office hours.

**Late Work.** Assignments are due by the beginning of class (12pm), unless otherwise specified on our course schedule. We will be working with a variety of technologies and design software that may be new to you, which can be overwhelming. That's okay! But you need to let me know if you're struggling to complete a module. Late modules will be reduced by one letter grade per business day. In-class work cannot be made up.

NOTE: If you have an emergency or require an extension, I'm happy to work with you as long as you notify me before the project is due.

**Professionalism & Respect.** You are expected to behave professionally in your contributions to discussions, feedback given to your peers, interactions with the instructor, and the work you do on class assignments. **You do not have to agree with someone (or their aesthetic) to treat them, their ideas, and their work respectfully.**

**Technology.** Technology is an integral part of the writing process, and we will be exploring a range of design technologies to give you hands-on experience with the professional technologies and software used to design documents. We will use Google Classroom to submit all work and to access calendars, readings, assignment prompts, and course notes.

You should bookmark our course Tumblr:

<http://wrtg3305.tumblr.com>

You will be expected to check your email daily and to respond promptly (just as you will expect me to do). All email messages to me regarding this class should include "3305" in the subject line and should be respectful and professional.

### File Format

pdf

### File Naming

3305\_LastName\_Module#

example:

3305\_Hitt\_1

## UCA policies.

**Academic Integrity.** The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the *Student Handbook*. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy. (<http://uca.edu/integrity/>)

**Writing Department.** If a student in a Writing Department course turns in a paper that includes an extended passage that has been a.) written for him or her by someone else for pay or as a favor, or b.) copied from a print or electronic source written by another author, even if some of the words have been changed, that student will immediately be dropped from the course, receiving a WF grade.

The Writing Center has developed a useful handout for how to avoid plagiarism: <http://uca.edu/writingcenter/files/2012/06/TS-AvoidingPlagiarism.pdf>

**Accommodations.** The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Support Services, 450-3613. (<http://uca.edu/disability/eligibility-for-services/>)

**Attendance.** If a student in the Department of Writing misses two weeks' worth of classes—i.e., six classes of a MWF course, four classes of a TTH or MW course, or two classes of a one night a week course—and/or a student in a MWF or TTH class misses a week's worth of classes consecutively without contacting the instructor, the instructor may drop the student from the course.

**Building Emergency Plan.** An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for Thompson Hall will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

In the event of an evacuation order, classes that meet in Thompson 105 will exit through the east door and reconvene at the Harding Centennial Plaza fountain to await further instructions from campus police.

In the event of a shelter in place order, classes that meet in Thompson 105 will lock doors and stay away from windows.

In the event of a tornado, classes that meet in Thompson 105 will shelter in first floor stairwells, restrooms, or kitchen.

**Disruptive Behavior.** Any student whose behavior regularly interferes with the instructor's ability to conduct class and foster student learning (or who severely impedes the conduct of class) may be dropped from the class. Students dropped for disruptive behavior will receive a grade of WF, and a record of this disciplinary action will remain on the student's university file.

**Student Evaluations.** Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the thirteenth week of instruction (11/9/2015) through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button in the top right.

**Title IX Disclosure.** If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to "student-on-student" or "employee-on-student"), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs, and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on the specific set of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: <https://uca.edu/titleix>.