

TECM 3100: Visual Technical Communication
University of North Texas
Fall 2019

Instructor and Course Information

Time	Tuesday/Thursday: 11-12:30
Place	AUDB 313
Instructor	Dr. Erin Friess
Office	AUDB 303
Email	Erin.friess@unt.edu (I will respond to email that requires a response within 48 business hours)
Office hours	Tuesday 12:30-1:30 and by appointment

Course Description

The purpose of this course is twofold:

1. Identify the best practices of document design and visual technical communication in print and online documents and describe their strengths and weaknesses using industry-standard terminology.
2. Produce strong examples of visual technical communication that demonstrate proficiency with industry-standard technology.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- 1) Describe how documents adhere to or violate the best practices and conventions of document design and visual communication.
- 2) Use knowledge of best practices and conventions of document design and visual communication to produce high-quality documents in a variety of genres that could be shown to potential employers.
- 3) Work as part of a team to produce high-quality documents that could be shown to potential employers.

Required Readings

- 1) Hagan, R. and K. Golombisky. *White Space Is Not Your Enemy*. New York: Focal Press. 2017.
- 2) Other readings that I give you.

Required Materials

- 1) Internet Access, particularly to your email and Canvas
- 2) A storage system.
- 3) Adobe Creative Cloud. You have access to this software in our classroom. If you would like to work on projects outside of the classroom on your personal machine, you will need to purchase a license to Adobe Creative Cloud through the UNT bookstore (\$20 a month for 12 months). You can also use the Technical Communication Lab to complete your assignments.

Optional Materials

- 1) Something to help you learn InDesign and PhotoShop. For books, I like Adobe's *Classroom in a Book* Series. For videos, I like Lynda.com.

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance in this course is not optional. You are expected to attend every class period. I understand that unforeseen circumstances happen. You will be allowed three absences. Each absence beyond the first three will result in a loss of a letter grade.

Labs will have a separate attendance record, but will affect your grade similarly. You have three free absences from the labs. After that, your grade for 3100.001 will be dropped one letter grade for each additional absence. If you know you will need to miss a lab, it *may* be possible for you to attend the alternative lab session for that week only.

Tardiness and Early Dismissals

If you are more than 15 minutes late, you will be counted absent for the day. If you leave more than 15 minutes early without getting approval from your instructor, you will be counted absent for the day.

Assignment Submission

All assignments in this class will be submitted via the Canvas learning management system unless otherwise indicated. Homework will not be accepted late (even if you are absent). In-class assignments cannot be made up (if you are absent during an in-class assignment, your absence will neither improve nor hurt your grade).

Major assignments may be submitted late. Late is considered anytime (even just 5 minutes) past the due time. You will lose one letter grade per day the assignment is late (weekends count in the late submission). Assignments are due even if you are absent.

You may not use program templates (e.g. Word templates) to format any of your documents. These don't encourage you to learn the programs and result in dull, unpersuasive documents.

Email

The only email address I will use will be your my.unt.edu address. I will use this address to send out announcements and updates. You must check your email regularly.

Classroom Behavior

This course takes place in a computer lab; however, you should use the computer to supplement your educational experience. If you are checking email, surfing the internet, or working on an assignment while I am lecturing or while you are supposed to be doing a class exercise, you will be asked to leave the classroom and will receive an absence for the day. This rule applies to computers, phones, and tablets equally.

Additionally, students are expected to familiarize themselves with the UNT Student Code of Conduct to know appropriate classroom behavior.

ADA

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I will work with the Office of Disability Accommodation to help reasonably qualified students with disabilities. If you have such an issue, please advise me in writing of your needs no later than the second week of class.

Religious Holidays

In accordance with State law, students absent due to the observance of a religious holiday may take examinations or complete assignments scheduled for the day missed within a reasonable time after the absence. Travel time required for religious observances shall also be excused. Please see the UNT Student Handbook for information on which holidays or holy days are covered by this policy. State law also requires that students notify their teachers at the beginning of the semester if they expect to miss class on a religious holiday during the semester but want to make up the work missed. Students will be allowed to make up the work provided they have informed their teachers in writing within the first 15 days of the semester. Once again, all assignments and scheduled work must be turned in before the date of the excused absence. University policy requires that students provide their teachers with an official notification card issued by the university if they want to make up any in-class work they missed while they were involved in a university authorized activity.

Academic Dishonesty and Integrity

It is your responsibility to become familiar with UNT's Policy of Academic Dishonesty (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/academic-integrity>).

This policy includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data or citations, and facilitating academic dishonesty in others. All instances of academic dishonesty in this class will result in a 0 on the assignment and appropriate judicial action, which includes a report of academic misconduct to your college Dean.

You are NOT to work with any other student on a project or assignment unless I explicitly give you permission to do so. You may always get feedback from other students on your work, but you should not "co-create" work unless it is part of a group project.

Projects

All projects will be explained in more detail later in the semester.

Week	Topic	Major Project Due
1	Introductions/ Why Design Matters	
2	Mini Art School	
3	Layout Sins	
4	Layout Best Practices	
5	Typography	
6	Color	
7	Exam	Exam
8	Images	Long Document Design Due
9	Infographics	
10	Logos	Scavenger Hunt
11	Charts and Graphs	
12	Documents to be read on screen	
13	Group Project Work	
14	Group Project Work	Group Project
15	Wrap-up and Evaluations	Lab Notebook and Portfolio
16		

Daily Work 15%

Lab Notebook 20%

All of the labs you complete this semester will be compiled into a professional-quality pdf portfolio.

Exam 15%

At the completion of the first section of the course, you will have an exam on the design principles.

Revision of a multipage document 15%

You will find a multipage document, write a justification as to why it needs revision, and then revise the document.

Group Project 10%

You will work with a group to create a set of marketing materials for a client.

Scavenger Hunt 10%

You will complete a scavenger hunt to locate typographical elements.

Portfolio 15%

You will design a portfolio that could be of interest to employers. The screen-based pdf portfolio will include specific genres of documents.

Additionally, the success of this class is dependent upon your participation, particularly when it comes to crits. If you fail to participate in ways that I expect, I will give you one warning via email. Subsequent infractions will result in lowering of your semester grade by one point per infraction.