FACULTY of LIBERAL ARTS and PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Writing Department

Professional Writing Program

Course: PRWR 3910 — Principles of Style & Design [3 credits]

Term: Fall 2023 // Location: McLaughlin College 001

Prerequisite / Co-requisite: PRWR 2006

Course Instructor: Matt Bucemi [mbucemi@yorku.ca]

Time: Wednesdays, 2:30 PM to 5:30 PM

Office Hours: Please email me and we can make an appointment to chat!

Office Location: Ross S309

Expanded Course Description

This course is designed to introduce the protocols and practices involved in the design of books and related print and online formats, and to explore relevant theoretical and experiential bases for page, text, and book layout. Students will learn and apply methods of rhetorical analysis to a variety of publications. The course then offers students the opportunity to adapt and apply these protocols, principles and theories with the use of industry-standard software for their own personal projects.

Course Learning Objectives

The purpose of this course is to expose students to the essential concepts concerning the components of visual rhetoric as it relates to book and media design, and the practices and important theories involved in media production today. Students will be able to:

- Understand and articulate rhetorical modalities as related to content and design;
- Identify and put into use the elements of visual rhetoric;
- Learn, recognize and apply proven strategies and practices in elements of page design: i.e., typography, spacing, layout, image-use and integration;
- Critically examine and analyze various texts and books, supported by the knowledge of sound editorial principles and practices;
- Discern between content and design requirements in major categories of media;
- Understand and interpret, through discourse and application, fundamentals of design for print and online reading and viewing;
- Work with style sheets, grids, and templates in the preparation of documents;
- Learn to assess requirements and objectives of various stages of the media production process.

Course Text / Readings

I'll assign or recommend several readings during the semester, but you don't need to purchase any textbooks.

Organization of the Course

This is a hands-on, active learning course. That means that most of our class periods involve a heavy amount of discussion, activities, workshopping, and other in-classroom practice with the technologies used throughout the semester. As such, coming to class prepared (i.e., completed readings, coming to class with questions, bringing in drafts, etc.) is essential for success in this course. Most class periods will begin by taking any questions or comments about that day's required materials, followed by an in-depth discussion and practical activities to put these theories into practice. In short: showing up is not enough, as active participation is a key element of the course structure.

Late Policy

I will accept late work from students without a penalty, with an important condition: let me know about any issues that you have with an assignment at least five days in advance. We will plan out an alternate day and time to turn in your work. Otherwise, late assignments will receive a deduction of 10% for each day that the assignment is late.

Accessibility at York

I'm 100% committed to making sure that the course is accessible for all students. York's goal is to provide an accessible and welcoming environment for faculty, staff, students, and visitors, both on campus and online. Please visit https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/ for more information on York's diversity policies. Please let me know if there's anything that I can do to assist you or if there is any important information that I need to know.

Evaluation

The final grade for the course will be based on the following items, weighted as indicated:

Personal Style Reflection — 5%

YouTube Thumbnail — 15%

Typeset Page — 10%

Book Cover Remix — 15%

Presentation Remix — 15%

Style and Design Analysis/Critique — 15%

Style Deep Dive Exercise Polish — 15%

Participation — 10%

Note: All assignments and tests will be returned to students **one to two weeks** after due dates and/or submission dates.

Drop deadline (last date to drop a course without receiving a grade): November 8

<div align="center">

SCHEDULE

</div>

<u>Week 1</u> (September 6)

Introduction

- What are we going to do this semester?
- Syllabus review and class policies
- Assignments, projects, questions

What is style, anyway?

- Style choices and how to make them
- Style examples: images, typefaces, fashion, writing
- What's your style?

Style Deep Dive: *Barbie* and *Blade Runner 2049*

<u>Week 2</u> (September 13)

Visual Rhetoric and Composition

- Common trends in a visual culture
- Ideology and visual rhetoric
- Shot selection primer

Style Deep Dive: YouTube thumbnails

Required Readings

In Their Own League: Defining the Male Gaze

Recommended Readings

The New Yorker: How the Marvel Cinematic Universe Swallowed Hollywood

<u>Week 3</u> (September 20)

Typefaces and Fonts

- Choosing the right typeface for the right job
- Practical and aesthetic considerations
- Examples for book covers, book text, etc.

Style Deep Dive: Romance novel covers

Required Readings

The Walrus: That Old Flame

Recommended Readings

Tor: Designing the Future—Deconstructing Five Sci-Fi Book Covers

Week 4 (September 27)

Color Theory and Typesetting

- Mixes and matches, complements and clashes
- Complements and clashes
- How to typeset a book page

Style Deep Dive: Jeff Wall

Required Readings

Jeff Wall career retrospective

Recommended Readings

The Guardian: Why photographs don't work in art galleries

The Guardian: Photography is art and always will be

Personal Style Reflection due

Week 5 (October 4)

Packaging: Books and Beyond

- Telling a story/catching the eye
- Visual hierarchies in design
- Creative impulse vs. Need to make a sale

Style Deep Dive: City pop

Required Readings

Pitchfork: The Endless Life Cycle of Japanese City Pop

Recommended Readings

Fanlabel: 5 Factors of Stream-Worthy Cover Art

Week 6 (October 11)

Fall Reading Week—have a great break!

Week 7 (October 18)

No Class!

Student E-Mail Conferences

YouTube Thumbnail due

Week 8 (October 25)

Technical Documents and Presentations

- Organizing large amounts of data
- Introductions, headings, outlines
- Communicating with the reader/audience

Style Deep Dive: Game manuals

Required Readings

Harvard Business Review: Yes, Virtual Presenting is Weird

Recommended Readings

The Atlantic: The Psychology of Zoom Fatigue

Typeset Page due

Week 9 (November 1)

Project Workshop

Style Deep Dive: Collectible card games

Book Cover Remix due

Week 10 (November 8)

Professional Branding

- Branding your own style vs. Corporate branding style
- Typefaces, color schemes, specific iconography
- Cutting through PR business lingo to find what's useful

Style Deep Dive: Taylor Swift

Required Readings

Upwork: Corporate Branding—What You Need to Know

Recommended Readings

Entrepeneur: The 10 Biggest Mistakes in Personal Branding

Week 11 (November 15)

Website Design

- Making things clear and avoiding common mistakes
- Monitors vs. Mobile optimization
- Anticipating bad user decisions

Style Deep Dive: York University

Required Readings

Nothing to read — just make an account on WordPress!

Recommended Readings

UX Magazine: Why Web Design is Dead

Style and Design Analysis/Critique due

Week 12 (November 22)

Project Workshop

Style Deep Dive: Fashion catalogues and advertising

Presentation Remix due

Week 13 (November 29)

Course Wrap-Up

Style Deep Dive Exercise Polish due