

# ENG 309, Computer-Aided Publishing

Bradley Dilger, Associate Professor of English  
Spring 2017 ~ TR 10:30–11:45am ~ Heavilon 227

## Contacting me

I'm eager to hear from you—office visits, emails, texts, and calls are all welcome. I don't use voice mail, though (it's not set up and I don't leave messages using it, either). So, if you call me and I don't pick up, please text or email me. I'll do the same. If you *really* want to leave a message, try 765-494-3730 (my program office).

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Phone/text: 309-259-0328 (before 8:00pm, ideally; no voice mail)  
Social media: cbdilger (Google Drive, Skype, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)  
Office: Heavilon 302A (hours tentatively TWR noon–2:00pm and by appt.)  
Web: <http://dtext.org/s17/309/>

## Course description

Between 1977 and 1997, the design world changed radically thanks to the rise of desktop computing and the creation of software and hardware which professional and amateurs alike could use to create documents, write computer programs, make consumer products, and even design buildings and infrastructure. Then again, between 1997 and 2017, the design world changed radically a second time, as computers became interconnected by electronic communication networks. These two changes, and others which are related (such as the emergence of video games) have had tremendous impacts on writing and design practices.

Networks have obvious effects, especially globalization and a refiguring of what global and local alternatively mean, though there are gaps between popular understandings of networks and reality. Also, focus on electronic networks often leads us to forget the non-electronic ones they enable and reinforce. Networks have fundamentally altered the way power works, and our understanding of it, raised questions about the way cultures interact, and provoked thinking about speed, technology, and identity as well.

Even though the impacts of networking are hard to underestimate, the changes in specialization which networked computing has affected on design practices and conventions may be more important. Today design and writing-oriented jobs which used to be highly specialized—writing, editing, design, photography, layout, production, multimedia, research, testing—and which required equally specialized tools—a library, colored pencils and sophisticated annotation practices, stat cameras, layout boards, clip art libraries, highly specialized cameras and software, darkrooms, dedicated video editing hardware, and a host of others—can all be performed by a single person using a single networked computer.

...at least in theory. Though there are marked signs of this shift—the journal *Copyeditor* changing its name to *Copyediting*; the emergence of “Digital producer” as a job title; changes in the amount and arguably the quality of professional journalism—specialization still remains very important, and it's still important to know when a project needs the expertise of designers, writers, and/or programmers.

So, what was once called “computer-aided” or “electronic” publishing but is now usually just called *publishing*. But change is complex. Smartphones are much more than phones... but they're still phones, and some of the ways they are used haven't changed since “Hello” became popular as a greeting around 1880. And because media can be remixed, “Hello” can become the sendmail command HELO, the “Hello world!” programming convention, or a host of other things. We'll consider the relevance of this remediation for design, too.

## Goals & objectives

This course is designed to give you practical skills, theoretical knowledge, and experience which helps you engage in design projects, broadly speaking, using both traditional and electronic tools. This introduction will include a strong practitioner emphasis, from texts to projects. We'll explore the connections of design and psychology, design and writing, and computing and design.

With that in mind, expect to learn the following this semester:

1. Design theory and practice, focusing on the use of type to create attractive, usable documents, but including a broader emphasis on graphic design and layout as well.
2. Methods to test the designs of web sites, generalizable for use in testing other documents and creative products.
3. Network theory which helps explain, understand, and predict the workings of complex systems.
4. Best practices for using electronic web and document creation design tools such as WordPress.com, the Adobe Creative Suite, and project management web applications such as Basecamp.

Our methods will be careful reading, re-reading, collaborative work and class discussion, the use of practitioner tools, and engagement with public discourses.

(Official description: "ENGL 30900: The development of the ability to write and design documents using electronic publishing technologies. Students will receive instruction in writing, graphics, and publishing software and will write, design, produce, and critique a number of publications.")

## Readings

We have three primary course texts, complemented by articles I will distribute electronically via my web site or Blackboard (the only reason I'll use the latter this semester).

1. Krug, S. (2010). *Rocket Surgery Made Easy*. Berkeley: New Riders. ISBN 978-0321657299.
2. Lupton, E. (2010). *Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press. ISBN 978-1568989693.
3. Weinschenk, S. (2011). *100 Things Every Designer Needs to Know About People*. Berkeley: New Riders. ISBN 978-0321767530.

**Please purchase the textbooks immediately.** If you buy your books online, use priority shipping. Plan to keep your books, and use them accordingly in the future. Don't rent. The \$20 you'll save from renting or reselling them just isn't worth it in the long run. I ordered the books late, so we'll use some other texts and PDFs to keep us busy for a little while.

I also recommend you purchase the latest edition of the publication and style manual relevant for your discipline: APA, MLA, IEEE, CSE, etc.

In our detailed schedule, find useful information about the ways readings will be used in class, so you'll know when you need to carefully read and retain information, or just become familiar with it for later reference.

## About me

After eleven years at Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois, I moved here in July 2014 with my bride Erin Easterling and my grrrls Madelyn (11) and Amelia (8). Erin is now a digital media producer for the College of Engineering. Before moving to Illinois, we lived in Gainesville, Florida, where I earned my PhD in English from the University of Florida in 2003. Before and during graduate school, I worked at two small advertising agencies, two newspapers, worked as a technical writer for Florida's Department of Agricultural Engineering and was co-owner of a software company specializing in internationalization.

I study writing networks, writing programs, and writing transfer, which is the motivation of skills, knowledge, and experience from one context in a second. Recently, I began an administrative appointment as Director of Introductory Composition, supervising the TAs and lecturers who teach English 106 and 108. I'm lucky to enjoy my work very much, but I also like running, cycling, and watching college football. I'm very happy to be at Purdue and I hope you are too.

## Assignments

A few minor assignments will complement these. See the course web site for detailed assignments. Total points for each assignment are noted.

**Change March 9:** We will still be attending Showcase but participation is no longer a required assignment. You can redirect the 50 points for that project to your design project or your second swipe file evaluation.

1. **Document redesigns. (300 points).** Redesign a small portfolio of found documents using hard copy and electronic tools. Annotate your designs to describe your thinking.
2. **Design project. (400 points).** Create an integrated portfolio of document and/or web design, attending to both design and principles of markup.
3. **Class participation (150 points).** Discuss readings, participate in group work, and complete other activities using our Basecamp. Evaluated twice: weeks 1–5 (50 pts), weeks 6–15 (100 pts).
4. **Swipe file. (100 points).** Evaluated twice: weeks 1–5 (33 pts), weeks 6–15 (67 pts).
5. ~~**PW showcase participation. (50 points).** Present one of your projects at the PW showcase on April 13, 2017. Work as an individual or in a group.~~

## Guide to success

1. Talk to me. If you write or call and don't hear back, try again.
2. Get help from me, others, and/or the Writing Lab if you need it.
3. Use the detailed course schedule to plan your work and better engage the readings.
4. Read carefully, early, and often. Always bring your texts to class.
5. Take notes in class and on the readings.
6. Use a laptop or your phone in class as needed—but keep your focus.
7. Participate as often as you can.
8. Be nice, honest, and respectful in class and when working in the community on class projects.
9. Be on time for class and appointments. If you have to be late, enter class as quietly as possible.
10. Begin work on the projects immediately.
11. Ask if you need more time for an assignment—in advance if possible. Be aware I may say “no.”
12. Keep everything (drafts, notes, redos). Be prepared to show your work.

## Policies

For convenience, live links are available on the course web site and in the PDF version of the syllabus.

1. **Academic honesty is required.** All academic honesty violations will be reported and will result in a failing grade for the assignment and likely the course. See <https://www.purdue.edu/odos/academic-integrity/>.

2. **Accommodations for special learning needs are gladly arranged.** Please contact me to make an appointment to discuss any accommodations. If possible, please do this immediately. As per Purdue policy and Federal law, you must initiate contact with me and the Disability Resource Center; I cannot do so. See <https://www.purdue.edu/studentsuccess/specialized/drc/>.
3. **Active participation is required.** Reading course texts and participating continually is required. You must buy the assigned texts, do the readings, and come to class ready to talk about them. If you come to class without required texts, you will be marked absent.
4. **Attendance is expected.** If you miss more than four classes, your final grade will be reduced by one-half letter for every subsequent absence. Absences for bereavement (as per Purdue policy), or for other circumstances which I agree are unavoidable, will not count against this total. However, if you miss more than eight classes, for whatever reason, I will recommend you drop the course. See <http://www.purdue.edu/advocacy/students/absences.html>.
5. **Class cancellations and emergencies sometimes happen.** Please check Basecamp before heading to class. If I cancel class, I'll notify in advance if I can. If class has to be cancelled due to weather or another emergency, or if an emergency occurs during classes, we'll follow Purdue's procedures and notifications from Purdue ALERT. We will discuss emergency procedures several times in the first weeks of classes. See <http://www.purdue.edu/emergency/>.
6. **Ethical and professional conduct is required.** I expect academic honesty, collegiality in class, and professionalism when working with others—especially in community engagement work. Purdue's non-discrimination policies apply to all classes and course activities. Everyone in our class should be treated with respect, grace, and common decency. See [http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea\\_eou\\_statement.html](http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.html).
7. **Feedback about the course is welcome any time.** Just drop me a line. If you want to be anonymous, put a note in my mailbox in Heavilon Hall 324. Or contact Professional Writing director Dr. Michael Salvo if you feel better speaking with someone else about a course-related issue.
8. **Grading uses a power of ten scale.** A=100–90, B=89–80, etc. Keep all graded assignments, and track your own grades. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have a question about a grade I assign. See "Grading" below for more.
9. **Mind all deadlines.** I don't accept late work, unless you have prior permission, or unless extreme circumstances warrant. In-class work cannot be made up; we'll have enough it that occasionally missing or botching it won't hurt your grade. For major assignments, if you need extra time to meet a deadline, please ask. I'm usually happy to give you more time—if you ask in advance when possible and explain how extra time will be mutually beneficial.
10. **Your privacy is important to me.** I don't want to know your PUID or Social Security numbers. Please don't put them on your assignments or in emails. In compliance with relevant privacy laws (FERPA), Purdue requires that I discuss grades with you in confidence, which means I may ask you to move a conversation from email or the hallway to a more private medium.
11. **All Purdue policies apply.** See [http://www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/student\\_conduct/](http://www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/student_conduct/).

## Grading

1. I keep an electronic gradebook on Blackboard. Even so, please track your own grades. If you think I've made a mistake, or evaluated your work unfairly, please let me know. I am happy to re-evaluate your work.
2. You will receive a final grade of F if you do not complete all parts of the two major assignments.
3. Academic honesty violations will result in an F grade (1%) for the assignment. Severe violations will result in a final course grade of F as well. All suspected violations are reported.

4. Grades of “Incomplete” are only given in the case of military service, documented medical emergency, or documented death in the family.
5. The table at below left shows the points per assignment. Drop a zero to see the percentage of your final grade each assignment represents (e.g. 100 pts = 10%). This works for milestones, too.
6. The table at below right shows how I figure grades:
  - a) I use the “Normal %” to figure the points you earn for an assignment of a given “Letter” grade. For example, a “B+” on a 50 point assignment earns you 44 points (88% of 50).
  - b) For drafts, I often assign pass-fail grades based on engagement with assignment objectives.
  - c) “Point range” shows how final grades are assigned. I do not assign D+ or D– grades.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>
Document redesigns	300
Design portfolio	400
Class participation	150
Swipe file	100
PW Showcase Add to swipe file or final design portfolio	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Normal %</b>	<b>Point range</b>
A	95	1000-930
A-	91	929-900
B+	88	899-870
B	85	869-830
B-	81	829-800
C+	78	799-770
C	75	769-730
C-	71	729-700
D	65	699-600
F	50	599-0

## Course calendar (overview; will change)

My web site includes an [up to date, detailed schedule](#) with specific prompts about the readings and details about course activities—for example, which readings you can skim, and which you need to really work hard to master. Please use it to keep up with changes and make class most effective for you.

<b>Wk</b>	<b>Begins</b>	<b>Activities &amp; assignments</b>
1	1/9/17	Introduction, syllabus
2	1/16/17	
3	1/23/17	
4	1/30/17	Document redesign draft
5	2/6/17	First class participation evaluation First swipe file evaluation
6	2/13/17	Document redesign final
7	2/20/17	
8	2/27/17	Review week I Portfolio prospectus
9	3/6/17	Studio week I
10	3/13/17	Spring break; no class or assignments
11	3/20/17	Revised portfolio prospectus
12	3/27/17	
13	4/3/17	
14	4/10/17	PW Showcase Full portfolio draft due
15	4/17/17	Review week II
16	4/24/17	Studio week II Second class participation evaluation Second swipe file evaluation
Fx	5/1/17	Complete and submit final portfolio

Syllabus updated 2017-03-09. See <http://dtext.org/s17/309/> for most up to date version.