ENGL 309, Digital Design & Production

Bradley Dilger, Associate Professor of English
Spring 2020 ~ TR 9:00–10:15am ~ Heavilon 227

This course provides an introduction to critical elements of design thinking which involve computing: user-centered design, type design, page design, and design through testing. You'll get practical skills, theoretical knowledge, and diverse experiences to help you engage in design projects, broadly speaking, using both traditional and electronic tools. Our introduction will include a strong practitioner emphasis, from texts to projects. We'll explore the connections of design and ethics, design and writing, and computing and design.

Goals & objectives

Expect to learn the following this semester:

1. Design theory and practice, including the use of type and page design to create attractive, usable documents, but with a broader emphasis on design thinking and best practices.

2. Elementary principles of user-centered design: the art and craft of iteratively developing documents and/or products with their users at the forefront.

3. Methods to test the designs of web sites, generalized for use in testing other documents and creative products.

4. Ethical principles associated with design and computing.

5. Best practices for using electronic web and document creation design tools such as the Adobe Creative Suite.

Our methods will be careful reading, re-reading, collaborative work and class discussion, the use of practitioner tools, and iterative design modeled after real-world practice.

Readings

Two primary course texts are complemented by numerous articles I will distribute electronically via our course web site or Google Drive. 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. Reading is an extremely important part of designers' work, and it will be crucial for this class as well.

1. Kleon, A. (2012). *Steal Like an Artist.* New York: Workman. 978-0761169253. $11.

2. Krug, S. (2010). *Rocket Surgery Made Easy.* Berkeley: New Riders. 978-0321657299. $17.

3. Lupton, E. (2010). *Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students* (2nd ed). New York: Princeton Architectural Press. 978-1568989693. $17.

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

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; text me instead.

Email: dilger@purdue.edu

Phone/text: 309-259-0328 (calls after 8:00p? nah)

Social media: cbdilger (Google Drive, Twitter, etc.)

Office: Heavilon 302A (hours tentatively MT 10:30a to noon, & by appt.)

Web: http://dtext.org/s20/309/

Assignments

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

1. **Redesign portfolio. (300 points).** Redesign a small portfolio of found documents using hard copy and electronic tools. Annotate your designs to describe your thinking.
2. **Semester project. (50 points).** Complete a theoretical project which examines issues in computing and design in relevant research, or an implementation project which engages them through problem-solving.
3. **Class participation (100 points).** Discuss readings, participate in group work, and complete other activities. Evaluated twice: weeks 1–5 (33 pts), weeks 6–16 (67 pts).
4. **Reading responses. (100 points).** Write brief responses to the readings which show your careful engagement and prepare you for coursework.

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. Take care of classroom spaces.
9. Be on time for class and appointments. If you have to be late, enter class as quietly as possible. If you have to miss an appointment, please let me know.
10. Begin work on the projects immediately.
11. Ask if you need more time for any assignment—in advance if possible. Be aware I may say "no," especially late in the semester.
12. Keep everything (drafts, notes, redos). Be prepared to show your work.

Policies

1. **Academic honesty is expected.** 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/osrr/academic-integrity/index.html.

2. **Accommodations for special learning needs are gladly arranged.** Please contact me to make an appointment to discuss any accommodations. You must initiate contact with me and the Disability Resource Center; I cannot do so. See https://www.purdue.edu/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. **Class cancellations and emergencies sometimes happen.** Please check your email 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 in the first weeks of classes. See http://www.purdue.edu/emergency/.

5. **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 https://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.php.

6. **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.

7. **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.

8. **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.

9. **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 they cannot be emailed. Also, I may ask you to move a conversation from class or the hallway to a more private location.

Grading

1. 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. Grades of "Incomplete" are only given in the case of military service, documented medical emergency, or documented death in the family.

3. I use the "Normal %" at right 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).

4. "Point range" shows how final grades are assigned. I do not assign D+ or D– grades.

Letter	% %	Point range
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

Overview calendar

See the course web site for an up to date, detailed schedule with specific prompts about readings, activities, and assignments.

Week	Tue	Summary	Activities
1	Jan 14	Introductions	Purchase texts; begin readings & responses.
2	Jan 21	Principles of design	
3	Jan 28	Grid design	Redesign portfolio catalog & SFD.
4	Feb 04	Type & design	
5	Feb 11	Designing with personas	Redesign portfolio draft; First participation evaluation.
6	Feb 18	Introduction to testing	
7	Feb 25	Testing in depth	Semester project prospectus.
8	Mar 03	Designing with prototypes	
9	Mar 10	Studio week I	Semester project SFD.
10	Mar 17	Spring break	No assignments or activities.
11	Mar 24	Review week I	Readings TBD.
12	Mar 31	Testing & reporting	Semester project draft & testing plan.
13	Apr 07	Type & design II	
14	Apr 14	Ethics of design	
15	Apr 21	Review week II	Semester project testing report & update.
16	Apr 28	Studio week II	Second participation evaluation.
EX	May 05	Exam week	Final semester project & memo of transmittal; final redesign portfolio & memo.