

Course Syllabus

ENC 4218 Visual Rhetoric for Technical Communication

Welcome!

Visual rhetoric is more than just designing well; it's designing effectively for specific rhetorical situations—for example, taking into consideration the goal or purpose of a design, the needs and expectations of the audience, and the context in which the design will circulate.

In this course, you will learn how to use principles of rhetoric and design to create persuasive visual documents. This class will help you to develop your skills by having you redesign an organizational document (such as a flyer, advertisement, etc.), creating your own self logo, and designing for social change.

I. University Course Description and Prerequisites

The study and production of visual rhetoric with special emphasis on print and digital document design and technical graphics. 3 credits. PR: ENC 1101 and ENC 1102.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- Evaluate, articulate, and respond to a defined purpose and audience for the creation and design of texts.
- Explain and apply theoretical perspectives from related disciplines that study the visual, including professional and technical communication, rhetoric, and design.
- Apply theories, principles, and elements of visual rhetoric to designed documents.
- Identify and use the appropriate, industry-leading creative technologies to compose and edit visual texts.
- Use visual rhetoric to mediate knowledge, values, and action in a variety of social and professional contexts.

III. How to Succeed in this Course

This is primarily a writing class, but students are also expected to read carefully, engage in meaningful in-class discussions, and conduct research for major projects. There will be both individual and collaborative work throughout this class. Students will complete three major writing projects (that include several deliverables each), complete reading and homework assigned, participate in class, and conduct regular document review.

III. Required Texts and/or Readings and Course Materials

Cost for class materials: Less than \$25

Textbook: Williams, R. (2015). *The Non-Designer's Design Book, Fourth Edition*. San Francisco: Peachpit Press. ISBN 9780133966343. Available in print at the USF Bookstore. New and used paperbacks available on Amazon for about \$25. E-text rental around \$16

Supplemental PDFs. PDFs of book chapters and journal articles will be provided in Canvas.

Software: [Download Adobe's Creative Cloud to your computer for free](#) from USF. If Adobe Creative Cloud won't run on your computer, you can use it at the [Digital Media Commons](#) on the first floor of USF's library (turn left when you enter).

IV. Grading Scale and How Grades are Distributed

Grading Scale (%)

94-100	A
90 – 93	A-
87 – 89	B+
84 – 86	B
80 – 83	B-
77 – 79	C+
74 – 76	C
70 – 73	C-
67 – 69	D+
64 – 66	D
60 – 63	D-
0 – 59	F

Students can access their grades at any time using the Grade function of Canvas. Please note that mid-term grades are unofficial.

V. Grade Categories, Weights, and Major Deadlines

Assessment	Percent of Final Grade
Project 1: (Re)Designing Organizational Documents (individual). Final deliverables due: Week 5, Sunday night 11:59pm	25%
Project 2: Self-Branding with Visual Rhetoric (individual). Final deliverables due: Week 10, Sunday night 11:59pm	25%
Project 3: Designing for Social Change (group). Final deliverables due Week 15, Sunday night 11:59pm	30%
Participation/Exercises: Includes all assignments that fall outside of other categories. Students who do not regularly and substantially participate in a professional	20%

and congenial manner cannot earn an A in this course. Due: Ongoing	
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There is **no final exam** in this course.

IV. Critical Assignments

Project 1: (Re)Designing Organizational Documents

Students will redesign three different types of print-based organizational documents applying elements, principles, and theories of design to achieve specific rhetorical goals. Then they will then justify their design choices using a precise vocabulary of established professional terminology.

Project 2: Self Branding with Visual Rhetoric

Students will create visual rhetorics for self-branding – applying elements, principles, and theories of design from Module 1 – to achieve specific rhetorical goals. They will use Adobe Illustrator to design a personal logo and logotype. They will also justify their design choices using: 1) a precise vocabulary of established terminology to describe the elements and principles of design established in Module 1, and 2) new technical terminology to describe color and typography.

Project 3: Designing for Social Change

In this project, students will work as a member of a team to create visual rhetorics that mediate knowledge, values, and action. They will use Adobe Fonts, Adobe Color, and two new Adobe CC programs—Lightroom (for photos) and InDesign (for layouts)—to craft a poster and brochure that promote social change. They will also construct deliverables by applying elements, principles, and theories of design to achieve specific rhetorical goals. These deliverables will promote equity by being accessible and accounting for how issues of power and language impact design choices. They will justify their design choices using a precise vocabulary of professional terminology established in Modules 1 and 2 and critique the ethics of their designs.

VI. Course Schedule

	Title	Course Learning Outcome Alignment (#)
Weeks 1-5	Project 1: (Re)Designing Organizational Documents	1, 2, 3
Weeks 6-10	Project 2: Self Branding with Visual Rhetoric	1, 2, 4, 5

Weeks 11-15	Project 3: Designing for Social Change	1, 3, 4, 5
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*Note: This schedule is subject to revision

VIII. Standard University Policies. Policies about disability access, religious observances, academic grievances, academic integrity and misconduct, academic continuity, food insecurity, and sexual harassment are governed by a central set of policies that apply to all classes at USF. These may be accessed at: <https://www.usf.edu/provost/faculty/core-syllabus-policy-statements.aspx>

IX. Diversity Statement

This course is an inclusive classroom space. We are committed to a learning atmosphere that acknowledge and appreciate the diverse students at USF and their views on race, ethnicity, ability, gender, religion, and socio-economic status. Please let me know what name you want to be called and what pronouns you use (if you're comfortable doing so).

In this class you will have the opportunity to express and experience that cultural diversity through the varied voices of your classmates as it relates to the content of the course. The diversity that students bring to this class will be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit, and it will enhance students' learning needs.

I expect every member of our classroom community to treat each other with equal respect, to strive for understanding, and to allow everyone to express their views without fear of ridicule or ostracization. Our class will foster an environment that honors the identities and backgrounds of all individuals. I invite any students who see or experience instances of bias, exclusion, or derogatory language or actions to report these instances directly to me.

X. Course Policies about Showing up and Turning Assignments: Attendance, Late Work, and Incompletes

Attendance

I do not mark attendance; however, I do expect that you will prepare for and engage with the material we cover. This is a face-to-face class, but I realize that life is unpredictable. Each one of us has a different comfort level with being in a face-to-face environment because of the past few years.

Engagement is strongly encouraged—you will need to demonstrate active involvement in the course activities by keeping up with reading responses, project deliverables, and other coursework. You will also need to respond to emails from the instructor as well as fellow students promptly to ensure that good communication flows in all directions. Students are responsible for any work missed during an absence.

Engagement comes in many forms, not just attendance. Holistically, engagement includes:

- Preparation (reviewing readings and materials before class)
- Focus (avoiding distraction during in person or online activities)

- Presence (engaged and responsive during class discussions)
- Asking questions (in class, out of class, online, offline)
- Active Listening (hearing what others say, and also what they're not saying)
- Specificity (referring to specific ideas from readings and discussions)
- Synthesizing (making connections between readings and discussions)

Engagement (in all of its forms) is worth 10% of your grade.

Late Work Policy:

You'll receive credit for all the work you do for our class as long as you follow proper protocol for submission and submit your work on time.

Grades of "Incomplete":

The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course.

An "I" grade may be awarded to a student only when a small portion of the student's work is incomplete and only when the student is otherwise earning a passing grade. The time limit for removing the "I" is to be set by the instructor of the course. For undergraduate students, this time limit may not exceed two academic semesters, whether or not the student is in residence, and/or graduation, whichever comes first. For graduate students, this time limit may not exceed one academic semester. "I" grades not removed by the end of the time limit will be changed to "IF" or "IU," whichever is appropriate.

XI. Course Policies: Technology and Media

Email. I check my university email and Canvas email every workday (M-F) and respond within 24 hours.

Canvas. This course will be offered via USF's learning management system (LMS), Canvas. Expect to log in at least once every week. If you need help learning how to perform various tasks related to this course or other courses being offered in Canvas, please consult the Canvas help guides under Student Support. You may also contact USF's IT department at (813) 974-1222 or help@usf.edu.

Technology Requirements. Students are required to have regular access to a computer, the internet, a word processor, Canvas, **Adobe Creative Cloud**, USF email, and a printer. All software we'll use is available to be [downloaded to your computer for free](#) from USF. If Adobe Creative Cloud won't run on your computer, you can use it at the [Digital Media Commons](#) on the first floor of USF's library (turn left when you enter).

In the event of a USF service disruption that affects all students, instructors will notify students how to submit assignments.

Recordings: Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal, educational use. A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab sessions, student presentations (whether individually or part of a group), class discussion (except when incidental to and incorporated within a class lecture), clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member is prohibited.

Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the USF Student Conduct Code (<https://usf.app.box.com/v/usfregulation60021>).

XI. What do I do if I am struggling in some aspect of my life?

There are lots of taboos that we never talk about. Things like money, food, and shelter because it seems we should all have these things, especially if we're in college. That's not necessarily true. We also don't talk about our mental health enough, and it's really easy to let things pile up mentally to where you start to suffer from the weight of it all.

If you are a parent and have a childcare issue, children are welcome. If you have car problems or consistent transportation issues, talk to me so we can work out alternative arrangements so that you can still manage things. If you have another problem or concern that is not listed here, please come and talk with me. My door is always open, and I'll find ways to get you the help that you need.