ENC 4218: Visual Rhetoric – SEC 000

Course Syllabus

Department and Reference #: ENG 00000
Semester:
Day/Time:
Room:

Instructor:
Office:
Office Hours:

Virtual Office Online Meeting Available by Request; Other hours by appointment
Email:
Website:

Prerequisite: TBD

Required Texts:

> Kimball, Miles A. and Ann R. Hawkins. *Document Design: A Guide for Technical Communicators*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008. ISBN-10: 0-312-43699-8. List: $67.95.
> Tufte, Edward R. *Beautiful Evidence*. Cheshire, CT: Graphics, 2006. ISBN-10: 0-961-39217-7. List: $52.70.

Recommended Texts/On USF Library Reserve:

> Tufte, Edward R. *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. 2nd ed. Cheshire, CT: Graphics, 2001. ISBN-10: 0-961-39214-2. List: $40.00.
> Nielsen, Jakob. *Designing Web Usability*. Indianapolis: New Riders, 2000. List: $54.99.

OASIS Description: The study and production of visual rhetoric with special emphasis on print and digital document design and technical graphics.

Course Section Description: This section of ENC 4218 provides technical writing majors with an overview of the persuasive qualities of visual media in both print and electronic form, and facilitates practical experience designing technical documents, websites, and video content with persuasive

intent. We will concentrate upon perception and communication in a global culture becoming more visually-oriented each year, and analyze how the intersection of the verbal and the visual defines our notions of literacy both in technical and mass communications. The first half of the semester will consist of assigned readings allowing students to analyze and assess the various modes of visual rhetoric and to comprehend the theoretical basis of design, while the second half will allow students to employ this background in the production of an extensive print or new media team product and a final individual project, either print or Web-based, with effective visual and persuasive qualities.

About the Texts:
- **Kimball and Hawkins's** *Document Design* will be our primary text for the course. This book provides useful background on both visual theory and practical document design, and discusses a wide range of tools and techniques for composing in a visual workspace. We will use this book as both text and as a reference throughout the class.

- **Tufte's** *Beautiful Evidence* offers visually stunning examples of design theory in practice, and effectively expresses and updates the work he accomplished in his earlier groundbreaking studies. This book will facilitate discussion of visual theory and provide examples of rhetorically effective visual projects.

- **Tufte's** *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, first published by the author's own press in 1983, remains the standard overview of the graphical depiction of complex technical data. This book covers the grammar and style of visual rhetoric in much the same manner that Strunk and White covers the grammar and style of traditional written discourse in English, and students are encouraged to purchase this text both as a reference for the class and as a handbook to use throughout their technical writing career.

- **Nielsen's Designing** *Web Usability* examines Web design from the standpoint of practical user interaction, and is the standard text on designing persuasive Web content. The book contains a large number of effective Web design examples, and Nielsen explains each site in terms of the design theory he has developed over the past decade.

Course Objectives:
- Understand the principles and theory of visual rhetoric and contemporary document design
- Collaborate in a professional manner
- Create both a print document and a website demonstrating principles of effective visual communication
- Develop persuasive presentations of completed projects and other class material
- Learn strategies to continue career research into visual rhetoric and its practical application in the technical communications field
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of a variety of software tools used to create visual communication projects

Student Learning Outcomes and Methodology: The specific objectives of this course reflect the USF Department of English Professional/Technical Academic Learning Compact at

http://www.acad.usf.edu/ALC/alc.asp?id=110, and emphasize three significant areas of personal and professional development. When you complete this class, you will have developed or extended your ability to perform the following tasks relative to each skill area:

Content/Discipline Skills
- Produce competent and visually-persuasive technical documents in a variety of print and electronic media
- Develop and demonstrate proficiency in sophisticated use of the computer and the tools and technologies of contemporary visual communication
- Acquire or refine skills in visual composition of a level of competency to attain gainful employment as a technical communications professional, and learn to represent those skills in effective team and individual projects emphasizing both print and Web design

Critical Thinking Skills
- Revise and edit both your own visual projects and the collaborative efforts of your colleagues
- Perform thorough, critical, and efficient research in preparing visual projects
- Develop technical visual content with an appreciation for the diversity of a technical global audience

Communication Skills
- Demonstrate ability to offer and to accept constructive feedback on visual design projects
- Deliver technical communication project overviews and progress reports to a diverse audience using both oral and computer presentation skills
- Work in collaboration with other technical writers in production of team documents in a variety of media

Assessment: Strategies to measure student learning outcomes will include the instructor's evaluation of:

- Individual and team projects and oral presentations, including electronic delivery of projects and the use of presentation software
- Collaboration, document revision, and class discussion using content management software such as Blackboard or Sharepoint
- Peer evaluations of project team members
- Peer assessment of the rhetorical effectiveness of the final individual project
- Quizzes and/or other assessments related to visual document formats, tools, and procedures

Your instructor may grade you on a 1 to 100% basis or on a letter grade basis. The Blackboard Grading Rubric will be used for the mathematical breakdown on a 100 point scale to a letter grade scale. To determine final grades, the individual grades will be converted to points according to the Grade Point Average grading system as follows:

A+ (96-100) 4.00	B+ (86-89) 3.33	C+ (76-79) 2.33	D+ (66-69) 1.33
A (93-95) 4.00	B (83-85) 3.00	C (73-75) 2.00	D (63-65) 1.00
A- (90-92) 3.67	B- (80-82) 2.67	C- (70-72) 1.67	D- (60-62) 0.67

For final grades, averages within the range between these points will go to the higher grade (e.g., 3.68-4.0 = "A"; 3.01-3.33 = "B+"; etc.).

You will have the opportunity to submit work both individually and in collaboration with fellow classmates. Your grade for each team project will be based upon the overall project grade, with adjustment made relative to feedback from you team peers. You will also receive a grade for your own peer reviews, so be candid and forthcoming in your assessment of your team members. The following percentages will be used to determine your final grade:

Team Assignments

Visual Design Team Presentation	5%
Visual Design Team Project	15%
Core Project Team Presentation	5%
Core Project	15%

Individual Assignments

Electronic/Web-based Résumé Design	4%
Visual Design Team Peer Evaluation	3%
Core Project Team Peer Evaluation	3%
Final Individual Project Discussion Forum Post	5%
Final Individual Project Presentation	5%
Final Individual Project	20%
Class Discussion – In Class & Blackboard/Sharepoint Forums	10%
Quizzes/Other Assessments	10%

Total	***100%***

The Attendance section of this syllabus outlines how attendance is audited and how attendance scores may influence your final course grade.

Late Assignments: Assignments are due on the dates indicated on this syllabus or by the alternate date announced in class. No late assignments will be accepted without a compelling reason for an individual extension. Students who cannot attend class on an assignment due date should arrange to deliver the assignment via email or another alternative method.

Incomplete Grade Policy: The grade of "I" (Incomplete) will be given for only very compelling reasons. For more information, refer to the USF Undergraduate Catalog's "I" Grade Policy: http://www.ugs.usf.edu/pdf/cat0708/acapol.pdf.

Quizzes and Exams: We will have quizzes and/or other regular assessments concerning our readings in Kimball and Hawkins along with similar assessments on other assigned resources. There will be no exams for this class.

Reading Assignments: All reading assignments must be completed **before** our first class meeting for the assignment week. For example, the readings listed under the Week Four heading "Reading Assignments for *This Week*" must be completed *prior to our first class meeting* scheduled for the 4th week of classes. You should always look at the upcoming week's assignments on our syllabus and stay current with your class readings.

*Supplementary Material***:** Additional reading and research material will be provided as appropriate.

*Attendance***:** Attendance is mandatory. This is not a lecture class. Class meetings will be spent engaged in activities that will directly and immediately address your needs as a writer.

- It is impossible to "make-up" missed days.
- Unexcused absences on any day that one of the three Writing Projects is due will result in one *whole* grade off per class day the paper is late.
- Missing a scheduled conference with your instructor will be treated the same as any other absence.
- Starting with the third tardy, every two tardies will count as one unexcused absence.

It is your responsibility to contact the instructor regarding information about missed work. If you must miss two or more consecutive classes, communication with the instructor is vital.

For each unexcused absence after three on a three-times-a-week schedule, one-third grade will be taken off your final grade. (For four unexcused absences, a "B" becomes a "B-"; for five, the "B" becomes a "C+"). Although the final decision is up to your instructor, deductions for absences during a twice-per-week and once-per-week class are based on weekly equivalents and will adversely affect your final course grade.

You should let the instructor know in advance by email if you expect to be absent for any class, and you should have a compelling reason for that absence. Excused absences typically are granted for personal medical issues, military or jury duty or the death of an immediate family member. Please be prepared to consult a classmate for information about the content of any class you miss.

Tardy students cause a distraction in class, and persistent unexcused tardiness, especially arrival 10 minutes or later than the established class starting time, may be considered a disruption of the academic process and penalties will be assessed according to the terms of USF's policy for academic disruption. Once you have entered the classroom, you should not leave until class has been dismissed, unless you have made arrangements with the instructor in advance. Leaving the classroom early is equally as distracting as tardiness, and persistent early departure similarly may be considered a disruption of the academic process.

Policy on Religious Observances: Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class due to the observation of a major religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to the instructor, in writing, by the second class meeting.

All excused absences (due to illness, emergency, religious holiday, etc.) need to be cleared with your instructor.

Disruption of Academic Process: Disruption of academic process is defined as the act or words of a student in a classroom or teaching environment which in the reasonable estimation of a faculty member (a) directs attention from the academic matters at hand, such as noisy distractions, persistent, disrespectful or abusive interruptions of lecture, exam or academic discussions; or (b) presents a danger to the health, safety or well being of the faculty member or students.

Penalties for disruption of academic process will depend on the seriousness of the disruption and will range from a private verbal reprimand to dismissal from class. In the case of student dismissal, a final grade of "W" will be assigned if the student is passing the course as of the date of dismissal, and a grade of "F" will be assigned if the student is not passing at the time of expulsion from the class.

Computer Skills and Access: Students enrolled in a class related to technical communications at University of South Florida should already have basic computer skills and access to a computer for class assignments. You should be familiar with Blackboard or agree to become familiar with Blackboard during the first few weeks of class, and you must be prepared to collaborate with classmates and with the instructor using the designated Blackboard or SharePoint site. You must also be willing to communicate with the instructor using your USF email account, and you must regularly check your USF email throughout the semester for important notices related to the class. *Your emails must clearly include your full name, along with the course number and section.*

Access to USF email and to Blackboard is managed through your USF NetID. Students who do not already have a USF NetID may obtain one by visiting the [Academic Computing Net ID Sign Up Page](https://una.acomp.usf.edu/) at https://una.acomp.usf.edu/. Please see me if you are unable to obtain a USF NetID or are unsure about meeting this computer skills and access requirement.

> **Use of classroom PCs and notebook/laptop computers during class meetings is encouraged but restricted to researching topics directly related to our course material. Casual Web browsing or work on assignments for other classes is prohibited. Again, you are expected to be fully engaged in the day's assignments during our class time together.**

Plagiarism/Academic Honesty: Plagiarism is the intentional appropriation of another person's work without proper reference to the source material. Plagiarists commit the highest form of academic dishonesty by representing the research or thoughts of another scholar or researcher as their own work. Plagiarism may consist of appropriating information from the Web, copying information from published books or articles or representing another student's work as your own. Be sure you understand and employ the methods of proper attribution and documentation in all your references to other source material; we will discuss these methods in some detail during the course. Please consult with me if you are unsure of proper documentation format for any given reference.

The University of South Florida has an account with an automated plagiarism detection service allowing instructors and students to submit written assignments for analysis. Assignments are

compared automatically with a database of journal articles, Web articles, and previously submitted papers, and the instructor receives a report analyzing appropriated material for proper attribution and citation acknowledgment. Your enrollment in this class is an implicit agreement to submit assignments as electronic files as requested by the instructor. You also agree to allow me, the instructor, to submit your work to SafeAssignment for evaluation or to request that you, the student, submit drafts to SafeAssignment for relevant feedback as you compose an essay.

Confirmed instances of plagiarism committed by students in this class for any assignment will result in a failing grade for the assignment or for the course. Subsequent instances of plagiarism will result in a grade of "FF" for the course, an indication of academic dishonesty.

Please consult the USF catalog for further information concerning academic dishonesty and the penalties for intentional appropriation of another person's work: http://www.ugs.usf.edu/catalogs/0607/adadap.htm

For more information about SafeAssignment and plagiarism, click on Plagiarism Resources at http://www.c21te.usf.edu.

Public Writing: As a student enrolled in ENC 4218, you will be asked to engage in public writing, including online class discussions using Blackboard or the designated discussion lists on the SharePoint site for this class. The goal of public writing, in part, is to prepare you for contemporary literacies, including electronic collaboration, publishing, editing, and online archiving. As a citizen of our digital world and as a professional technical writer, you need to be able to locate, critique, and author content online.

Never publish anything on Blackboard, SharePoint, or any other website that you are uncomfortable sharing with strangers, and generally avoid disclosing personal information that could comprise your safety or identity.

*Archiving***:** You will be required to submit electronic copies of your work to the Digital Dropbox area of Blackboard or to a designated area of the SharePoint site maintained for this class. In this manner your work will be archived automatically by the very nature of the submission process. However, each student is responsible for ensuring access to all assignments completed for the course, and consequently you should maintain a separate archive of your work on a diskette, CD, flash drive, website, or in printed format.

*Academic Assistance***:** Students who require additional assistance throughout the term should take advantage of my office hours or arrange to see me at an alternate time. Additional assistance is also available from The Writing Center, located in CPR 257. Contact the Center at 974-9572 for appointments and additional information.

*Special Accommodations***:** Any student requiring special accommodations should be encouraged to meet with the instructor privately during the first week of class to discuss specific needs. (See Student Responsibilities: http://www.sds.usf.edu/Students.htm). Each student must bring a current **Memorandum of Accommodations** from the Office of Student Disability Services that is

prerequisite for receiving accommodations. Accommodated examinations through the Office of Student Disability Services require two weeks notice. All course documents are available in alternate format if requested in the student's **Memorandum of Accommodations**. (See faculty responsibilities: http://www.sds.usf.edu/faculty.htm).

Important Campus Resources for Students:
USF Counseling Center: http://usfweb2.usf.edu/counsel/
USF Advocacy Program: http://usfweb2.usf.edu/advocacy/

Audio Taping & Course Notes: Taping of lectures is not permitted without prior approval from the instructor. Class notes prepared by any student must remain the student's property and cannot be sold to another individual nor to any organization intending to resale the material.

Cell Phones: You are required to turn off your cell phone before the start of each class meeting.

Syllabus Agreement: You will be asked to post a formal statement of agreement to the terms and conditions of this syllabus in a designated Blackboard discussion forum during the first week of class. Students who do not post a formal agreement by the due date must instead discuss any questions or concerns with the instructor at some point during the first week of class.

Proprietary Rights: Software products researched by this class and mentioned in the course schedule below generally are trademarks of their respective development companies or owners. This class endeavors to respect those trademarks and to honor all licensing requirements.

Course Schedule

This agenda is subject to change with appropriate notice. Supplementary reference material and reading assignments will be added as required.

Week One
Day 1: Introduction to Course
   *Reading Assignment for **Next Class***:
- Kimball & Hawkins Chapter 1: What is Document Design?

Day 2: Introduction to Visual Rhetoric

Milestone: **Drop/Add Ends & Last day to drop for a full refund: 00/00/00**

Week Two
   *Reading Assignment for **This Week***:
- Kimball & Hawkins
  - Chapter 2: Principles of Design (20-37)
  - Chapter 3: Theories of Design (38-69)

Day 1: Visual Rhetoric Theory and Practice I
Day 2: Visual Rhetoric Theory and Practice II

Week Three
*Reading Assignment for **This Week**:*
- Kimball & Hawkins Chapter 4: The Whole Document (71-113)
- Tufte: The Fundamental Principles of Analytical Design (122-139)

Day 1: Analysis of Effective Visual Design I
Day 2: Analysis of Effective Visual Design II

Assignment Due: **Electronic/Web Résumé Design**

Week Four
*Reading Assignment for **This Week**:*
- Kimball & Hawkins Chapter 10: Projects (309-339)

Day 1: Managing Visual Design Projects I
Day 2: Managing Visual Design Projects II

Event: **Career Networking Fair – 00/00/00 – Sun Dome** Network for internships, co-op positions, and fulltime jobs; bring résumé & USF ID.
This is NOT a class meeting, and you are not required to attend. However, you may find this experience rewarding, and your attendance is encouraged. For more information, see <http://www.career.usf.edu/students/index.htm>

Week Five
*Reading Assignment for **This Week**:*
- Kimball & Hawkins Chapter 5: Pages (114-150)
- John Morkes and Jakob Nielsen, "Concise, Scannable, and Objective: How to Write for the Web" at
                <http://www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/writing.html>

Day 1: Page Design & Preliminary Core Project Requirements
Day 2: Page Design & Preliminary Core Project Requirements

Week Six
*Reading Assignment for **This Week**:*
- Kimball & Hawkins Chapter 6: Type (151-198)

Day 1: Typestyle in Visual Design
Day 2: In-Class Work on Core Project

Week Seven
Reading Assignment for ***This Week****:*
- Kimball & Hawkins Chapter 7: Graphics (199-246)
- Tufte: Mapped Pictures: Images as Evidence and Explanation (12-45)

Day 1: Graphics in Visual Design / In-Class Work on Core Project
Day 2: Technology Presentations / In-Class Work on Core Project

Week Eight
Reading Assignment for ***This Week****:*
- Kimball & Hawkins Chapter 8: Color (247-273)
- Tufte: Sparklines: Intense, Simple, Word-Sized Graphics (46-63)

Day 1: Color in Visual Design
Day 2: Technology Presentations / In-Class Work on Core Project

Week Nine
Reading Assignment for ***This Week****:*
- Kimball & Hawkins Chapter 9: Lists, Tables, & Forms (274-308)
- Tufte: Words, Numbers, Images—Together (82-121)

Day 1: Lists, Tables, & Forms in Visual Design
Day 2: Technology Presentations / In-Class Work on Core Project

Week Ten
Reading Assignment for ***This Week****:*
- Kimball & Hawkins Chapter 11: Production (340-371)
- Tufte: The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint: Pitching Out Corrupts Within (156-185)

Day 1: Document Production / Preparation for Individual Project
Day 2: Technology Presentations / In-Class Work on Team & Individual Projects

Milestone: **Last Day to drop with "W"; no refund and no academic penalty: 00/00/00**

Week Eleven
Reading Assignment for ***This Week****:*
- None

Continue Work on Final Individual Project

Day 1: Core Project Team Presentations – Day 1
Day 2: Core Project Team Presentations – Day 2

Assignment Due: **Team Core Project – Electronic & Hard Copy**
Assignment Due: **Core Project Peer Evaluation (one from each team member)**

Week Twelve
*Reading Assignment for **This Week**:*
- Tufte: Links and Causal Arrows: Ambiguity in Action (64-81)

Continue Work on Final Individual Project

Day 1: Avoiding Visual Ambiguity / In-Class Work on Individual Projects
> *Assignment Due:* **Individual Project Discussion Forum Post**

Day 2: In-Class Work on Individual Projects

Week Thirteen
*Reading Assignment for **This Week**:*
- Tufte:
    - Corruption in Evidence Presentations (140-155)
    - Sculptural Pedestals: Meaning, Practice, Depedestalization (186-195)
    - Landscape Sculptures (196-214)

Continue Work on Final Individual Project

Day 1: Reading Discussion
Day 2: In-Class Work on Individual Projects

Week Fourteen
*Reading Assignment for **This Week**:*
Supplementary Material and Class Discussion – See Assignment Announcement

Day 1: Individual Project Presentations – Day 1
Day 2: Individual Project Presentations – Day 2

Week Fifteen
*Reading Assignment for **This Week**:*
Supplementary Material and Class Discussion – See Assignment Announcement

Day 1: Individual Project Presentations – Day 3
> *Assignment Due:* **Individual Final Project – Electronic & Hard Copy**

Day 2: Summary and Wrap-up / Course Assessment

> *Milestone:* **Last day of classes: 00/00/00**