English 392A: Information Design – Course Syllabus
Fall 2010
Monday, Wednesday 2:30-3:50, HH 150
Instructor: J. Andrew Deman
Office: STJ P5 – email: jademan@artsmail.uwaterloo.ca
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 1:00-4:00 (or by appointment)

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the theory and practice of the ways in which people package information for other people: space, weight, line, colour, typography, and representation. Students apply this knowledge by developing or revising documents.

Course Objective:

The objective of this course is to foster some understanding of the unique semiotic and rhetorical structures of texts which are specifically designed to convey information. Students will learn how to evaluate and assess information design as well as how to create it.

Required Texts:

*Information Design* by Kim Baer
Courseware Package (available in bookstore)

Assignments and Grading:

Final Project – 40%

This paper will be the culmination of the student’s work in the course. Due immediately prior to the student’s presentation, this project (completed in pairs or as individuals) will include a proposal, a creative brief, an information design artifact, a classroom presentation and a self-analysis. A detailed description of this assignment will be provided through the course website.

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Project Evaluation – 20%

On the last day of class, students will be required to submit a detailed 1000 word analysis of another student’s project. This analysis should draw upon course concepts and readings in order to provide insight to the successes and shortcomings of the project that is being evaluated.

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Assignments – 15%

Three small assignments relating to prominent questions of information design will be issued throughout the term. Due dates are indicated on the class schedule.
Discussion Groups – 15%

3 times throughout the year (indicated on schedule) I will divide you into groups, and provide you with a discussion question. Your task is to then facilitate an involved and productive discussion, resulting in a single written response for each group. Every group member will receive the same mark for this report.

Participation & Professionalism – 10%

A straightforward assessment of the student’s contribution to classroom hours. Students are expected to attend class regularly, actively and in a highly professional manner. A detailed description of how this mark is calculated can be found on the course website.

Late Penalties
All written work submitted late will be subject to a penalty of 10% per day, including weekends.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Federated University and Affiliated Colleges are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: All students registered in courses at St. Jerome’s University are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed following St. Jerome’s University Academic Discipline Procedure and UW Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. In such a case, contact the St. Jerome’s University Grievance Officer. Read St. Jerome’s University Handbook, Section 4, item 8, www.sju.ca/faculty/SJU_handbook/grievance_policy.html.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under St. Jerome’s University Academic Discipline Procedure or Grievance Policy if a ground for an appeal can be established. In such a case, contact the St. Jerome’s University Appeals Officer. Read St. Jerome’s University Handbook, Section 6.4, www.sju.ca/faculty/SJU_handbook/examinations_grades_standings_and_appeals.html.

Academic Integrity website (Arts): http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (UW): http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/
Weekly Schedule (Subject to Alteration):

*Italic* = Reading due. *Bold* = Assignment Due Date

September 13 – Introduction, overview of expectations, etc.
September 15 – The Basics. *Baer Chapter 1*
September 20 – The Basics. *Baer Chapter 2*
September 22 – The Basics. *Baer Chapter 3*
September 27 – The Basics. *Baer Chapter 4*
September 29 – **Discussion Group #1**
October 4 – Principles of Journalism. *Stein (CP) Assignment #1 due in class*
October 6 – Plain Language. *Williams (CP)*
October 11 – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – NO CLASS
October 13 – Typography. *Brinthurst (CP)*.
October 18 – Pragmatics & Discourse. *Cutting (CP). Proposal due*
October 20 – Multimodality. *Jewitt (CP)*
October 25 – **Discussion Group #2. Assignment #2 due in class**
October 27 – Eye Guidance. *Underwood (CP)*
November 1 – Content and Interface. *Tidwell (CP). Creative Brief due*
November 3 – The Rhetoric of Images. *Barthes (CP)*
November 8 – Investment of Images. *Kress & Van Leeuwen (CP)*
November 15 – **Discussion Group #3. Assignment #3 due in class**
November 17 – Information and Ambiguity. *Gasperini (CP)*
November 22 – **Presentations**
November 24 – **Presentations**
November 29 – **Presentations**
December 1 – **Presentations (if necessary)**
December 6 – Conclusions. **Project Evaluation Due.**