

Design Concepts/ Designing Documents

Welcome

Welcome to the online “Design Concepts/Designing Documents” course offered by Malaspina University-College. Have fun with it. If this is your first on-line class experience, be prepared for an entirely new type of learning and a different way of communicating with your classmates.



27 years ago my love of writing and interest in graphic design lead me to produce my first newsletter ... a small employee newsletter for a construction firm. In later years, while working as office manager for an architectural and interior design firm, I worked on many projects including newsletters, marketing brochures, advertising campaigns, and project proposals.

I grew up in Winnipeg, where I earned a degree in Social Work (1972). Later, after moving to Vancouver, I studied at BCIT part-time, and earned a degree in Human Resource Management (1993). Over the years I have worked for a number of large corporations and local government in the areas of accounting, law, human resources and communications.

I began teaching part-time at B.C. Institute of Technology in 1994. Over the course of ten years that teaching schedule grew, until I was teaching Scanning/Colour Correction, PhotoShop, Illustrator and InDesign. For five years I work extensively with the FAS/E Support Network of BC doing research, writing, and graphic design work, including the production of a quarterly 24-page newsletter. Several years ago I completed the design/layout of a 170-page book on fetal alcohol syndrome, and the research and writing of a 1,200 page technical manual on this same topic.

I moved to Gabriola Island seven years ago. I now focus on my work with the local newspaper (Gabriola Sounder), teaching, private tutoring, have a small client base who I design programs for, or brochures, posters or CD covers, or whatever else is required. I have worked for the local arts council and have also done some work for a local book publishing company.

The nature of the residents of Gabriola Island (“The Island of the Arts”) has presented me with many new opportunities... creating promotional material, brochures and posters for local artists. I look forward to teaching this and several other courses on-line, from the comforts of my home, surrounded by my always entertaining cats, Tigre, Calvin, Hobbes and Biscuit (ps. Most of my typing errors are as a result of working around a sleeping feline, or at least that is what I tell everyone.)

Getting started

During this course you will be asked to critique, review and create various types of documents. Start a paper file that contains things like newsletters, advertising brochures (i.e., travel brochures), posters, local newspapers, reports, training manuals, organizational charts, service bureau request forms, catalogues, menus, surveys, invoices, purchase orders, printed material of any kind that is especially well or poorly designed, or even books with interesting layouts.

Our Moodle classroom

Our Moodle space is our online classroom. Here you'll find the following:

News Forum – The news forum is a general discussion forum used for the delivery of class news and events. Check here for any date changes or news of general class interest.

Course Syllabus - You are currently reading the Course Syllabus. It will be posted in your online classroom to give you an overview of the online classroom setup.

Water Cooler - The Water Cooler is a discussion area used for non-course-related topics.

Lectures – delivered as pdf's, these should be easily viewable. If you have any problems, please let the instructor or administrator know.

Additional Reading - Over time students have asked for additional reading or expansion on certain topics. Please read this material if it is of interest to you, or if it is a required reading assigned by your instructor.

Web Page Links/Resources - Related links. Visit them for even more information.

Assignment and posting of assignment instructions – The Assignment area is where you will upload your completed assignments. If more than one file is required, you will need to zip them before uploading. They should also be posted in the appropriate forum. If you have more than one file you will need to post several times.

Sample files – There may be sample files included related to your weekly lesson or assignment.

Discussions – Be sure to visit the Discussion area for each week's lesson. Topics for discussion come from you. If you have questions please ask them. You will be expected (as part of your grading for the course) to contribute. For more information on what's expected here, see the 'Grading' area.

Course description

Course Title:	Design Concepts/Designing Documents
Instructor Contact Info:	Carol Ramsay via email only using Moodle class email.
Technical Support:	Online Development Team, Malaspina University-College, Nanaimo Email: online@mala.bc.ca Telephone: 250-753-3245 x2667 (Mary Ross) or x 2536 (Brent Lee)
Administrative Support:	Julie Clarke, Malaspina University-College, Powell River Email: clarkej@mala.bc.ca Telephone (toll-free) 877-888-8890 or 604-485-8032

This eight week on-line course offers a practical introduction to design concepts, with an opportunity to do some actual designing of many different kinds of documents. Students learn how analyze a document with a view to perfecting its design, how to decide which information is important and how to present it in the most effective manner and how to layout pages for a printed or online document. Software choices and delivery to a print service will also be discussed.

Good documents invite people back – no matter what the use. Whether it is a newsletter, brochure, training manual, project proposal, advertisement or a novel, good layout is important and plays a huge part in the final look of, enjoyment of and usability of the document.

Lecture notes from the instructor and reading and assignments taken from “The Non-Designer’s Design Book” will help the student learn clear and concrete ways to create a better looking document, one that presents attractively and demands respect. You’ll also learn more about page anchors such as headers/footers, table of contents, appendices, glossaries, overviews, summaries, and lesson plans. Learn how to select and integrate text and graphics such as photos, charts and tables, clip art, and international symbols and icons. Learn about styles and style sheets to help maintain consistency and learn how colour and typography affect readability and ones’ perception of the document overall.

Text & materials

The instructor will provide a lecture for each topic, and will assign additional reading and assignments from *The Non-Designer’s Design Book, Second Edition*, by Robin Williams as well as a list of books and web resources that students may find helpful.

Goals & objectives

1. To introduce students to the intricacies of document development including effective layout and the pre-press (printing) world including how to work with graphics, resolution, and colour. By course end students should be able to comfortably assemble a document of any type, meet deadlines and submit for printing.
2. To provide students with an opportunity to develop a document layout within a safe, judgement-free atmosphere. The instructor will guide and support students as they “learn by doing” various types of documents such as brochures, training materials, project proposals, newsletters, brochures, advertisement spreads, posters, etc.
3. To provide students with the tools and self-confidence to take on the development of any document (or the revamping of an existing one), along with information on writing and editing of copy, the use of graphics, and the printing process.

Grading criteria & components of a grade

Each student will be graded by earning points for class participation, for assignments, and for the final examination. Grades will be assigned as follows:

97 - 100 points = A+

93 - 96 points = A

90 - 92 points = A-

87 - 89 points = B+

83 - 86 points = B

80 - 82 points = B-

77 - 79 points = C+

73 - 76 points = C

70 - 72 points = C-

65 - 69 points = D

Less than 65 points = Fail

Point distribution

Participation in class discussions: 10 points possible

Students should participate in class discussion by posting their comments or questions and by responding to at least one other classmate each week. The instructor expects each student to contribute at least one thoughtful, quality posting per week (including the response to a classmate). Just logging on and reading other people's postings is not considered participation, nor is mere agreement with others' postings.

Quality of participation is more important than their sheer frequency, length or grammatical form. Quality includes, but is not limited to:

Point distribution... cont'd

- a) commentary on the lecture for the current topic;
- b) detailed sharing of a student's experience or research relative to the week's topic;
- c) opinions on the topic that are backed with compelling facts and reasoning;
- d) raising questions that help the class better understand the topic, particularly by proposing; and explaining implications that might have been overlooked in the lecture, or in previous discussion.

Quality participation also means conveying your experience, research, opinions, questions or commentary in a professional manner. Comments on projects produced by other students is an important part of the learning process. Comments must be made in a respectful and constructive manner. Disagreements among students are expected and often valuable, but they should be expressed tactfully, not in a confrontational tone.

Assignments: 70 points possible

Points per assignment are found in the Assignments section of Moodle. Assignment instructions will be found in the assignment instructions found in each weekly outline. Completed assignments should be posted in the appropriate forum (e.g. Week 1 Assignments - post here) and also in the Assignment area. Please do not send completed assignments to the instructor's email box. Use either (preferred) pdf (Acrobat Reader format), html (save as web page), rtf (save as rich text format) as the format for your completed assignments. Other formats may also work but check with the instructor prior to submitting. Some formats do not work well (Word documents) as they do not transfer well to other computers and are best saved as .pdfs. Publisher documents must be saved as pdf's.

Late assignments will automatically have one point subtracted for each day late, unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor for late submission due to extenuating circumstances.

Final examination/Assignment: 20 points possible

Instructions for the Final Exam/assignment will be posted in the Week 8 lecture, and are to be submitted through the Final Exam Assignment area by the due date listed in the Final Exam instructions.

Final grade in class

Your unofficial grade in the class will be available to you no later than one week after the class ends, either posted in the 'Grades' area on your course site or emailed to you directly by the instructor.

Feedback Schedule

The instructor will provide feedback and points on graded assignments within one week of the due date of that work, unless otherwise noted in the assignment instructions. Late submissions may take longer. Feedback and points will either be posted online via the 'Grades' area, or emailed to you directly by the instructor. Your official final grade will be sent to you via 'snail mail'.

The instructor does not normally participate in real-time chat discussions, but students are welcome to use this feature on their own.

The instructor normally logs on at least once daily, every day of the week, although she may log on more often than once a day. Exceptions will be posted as an announcement on the Homepage, and will advise of time away from her home office or when working out of town.

The instructor's office hours are anytime via her Moodle email.

Student Conduct

Malaspina University-College students are expected to behave in a responsible manner respectful of the learning environment inside the classroom, whether attending in person or online. This policy applies to all Malaspina University-College campus and off-campus locations where Malaspina University-College sponsored activity is occurring. For further information, link to Malaspina University-College's Student Conduct Code pages.