

# Evolution of Information Design

## Sheridan

Section A: Monday 10:00 – 1:00, J 208

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### Prerequisites

FA/YSDN 2102 3.0 History of Design. Requirement: second year standing in the Department of Design.

### Course Description

This course provides an overview and builds appreciation for the origins and development of the visual presentation of information. It examines artifacts designed to provide clarity and enable understanding of complex data, seen and unseen processes, actual and virtual environments. It considers influencing factors of social, technological and historical developments on the representation of information, and in turn, their influence on the perception of those developments. Emphasis is placed on the role of Information Design artifacts and associated history and theory within the larger context of design disciplines.

This course will take as its basic premise that to study the evolution of information design is to consider the ways in which people have sought to make meaning through various visual forms and artifacts through the ages. We will approach the study of the quest to convey meaning through visual form through five categories: communication, navigation, explanation, integration and interaction.

### The main topic areas to be covered are:

- 1 The origins and ongoing, interdisciplinary development of a definition for Information Design
- 2 The origins of meaning making through form.
- 3 Seminal artifacts of information visualization and design, and their designers.
- 4 Social and technological influences on the development of information visualization forms and methods

### Course Structure

This lecture and seminar course meets three hours a week for eleven weeks. Classes will be divided between lecture and discussion. Assignments will be completed outside of class to meet the deadlines for each project.

This is a general outline only; it may be changed to suit the development of assignments and unforeseen circumstances such as weather cancellations or illness.

### Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Demonstrate a broad knowledge of the development of information design and related contemporary design issues.
- Demonstrate an appreciation for key concepts and factors in the development of Information Design
- Demonstrate abilities in research, analysis and critical thinking in relation to information design.
- Demonstrate the ability to recognize and consider seminal information design artifacts in their cultural contexts.

### Course Readings

Although there is no required textbook for this course, there will be required readings each week. They will be made available in pdf format in the course hand out folder `claire ironside>EvolInfoDesign>Course Handouts>Readings` on the Elara server. You should also refer to the Information Design Bibliography for additional references. Selected texts from which the course will draw are listed below.

Drucker, Johanna and McVarish, Emily. *Graphic Design History: A Critical Guide*. Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009.

ed. Jacobson, Robert. *Information Design*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.

Tufte, Edward. *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. Cheshire, Conn.: Graphics Press, 1983, 10th edition, 1993.

Tufte, Edward. *Envisioning Information*. Cheshire, Conn.: Graphics Press, 1990.

Tufte, Edward. *Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative*. Cheshire, Conn.: Graphics Press, 1998.

Visocky O'Grady, Jennifer and Ken. *The Information Design Handbook*. HOW Books, 2008.

Wainer, Howard. *Graphic Discovery: A Trout in the Milk and Other Visual Adventures*. Princeton University Press, 2005.

### Grading Distribution

Course notebook/binder	15%
Visual Essay	10%
Paper proposal	10%
Written paper	25%
Final Exam	25%
Participation	15%

### Course Notebook

For the duration of the course, you will maintain a 'well organized' 3-ring binder of all course materials including your notes and annotated readings. Accompanying each reading, you will include a one-page response to the reading. The response should address your thoughts about the relationship of the reading to our discussion and an evolving working definition of information design. The binder may also include sketches, photographs, found items/paper ephemera as examples of information design you encounter during the course. The binder will be collected at the end of the course for a grade.

### Grading System

A+	90 –100%	rare and exceptional work
A	80 –89%	excellent work
B+	75 –79%	very good work
B	70 –74%	good
C+	65 –69%	competent
C	60 –64%	adequate
D+	55 –59%	less than adequate
D	50 –54%	poor
E	just below 50%	very poor
F	well below 50%	inadequate

(For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar - [http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/pdfs/ug2004cal/calug04\\_5\\_acadinfo.pdf](http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/pdfs/ug2004cal/calug04_5_acadinfo.pdf))

### Procedure for Submitting Work

At York, under normal situations, the Design Office will NOT accept the drop-off of student work. In the rare case of illness of the instructor on a due date, special arrangements can be made (between the Course Director and the Office) with the office for the submission of student work.

### Lateness Penalty

All projects and exercises must be turned in on the date specified in the project brief. **Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized 10% per business day that the assignment is late.**

Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds etc., may be

entertained by the Course Instructor but will require supporting documentation (e.g. a doctor's letter). In case of emergencies, students must contact the instructors immediately.

### Attendance and Lateness

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class and students are expected to be punctual. Students are responsible for letting faculty know if they are going to be late for class. Students are reminded that absence from class will mean that they will miss key contact time with faculty and will reflect in their performance.

### Dropping the Course

**February 11, 2011** is the last day that a student may drop this course without receiving a grade. Financial penalties may be involved and could be assessed depending on the precise date that the course was dropped.

### Academic Honesty

Please refer to the Sheridan Student Handbook and the York Senate Policy on Academic Honesty for information on academic honesty and definitions of breach of academic honesty.

Penalties for breach of academic honesty may include:

- A failure in the course,
- Failure in the course plus a notation of breach of academic honesty on the official transcript, or
- Suspension from the York/Sheridan Institute Honours Bachelor of Design.

Students are required to maintain high standards of academic integrity and are subject to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty. Refer to <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/legislation/senate/acadhome.htm>.

There is also an academic integrity web site with complete information about academic honesty. Students are expected to review the materials on the Academic Integrity web site at <http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity/students.htm>.

### Access/Disability

It is the student's responsibility to register with disability services at York and Sheridan as early as possible to ensure that appropriate academic accommodation can be provided with advance notice. You are encouraged to schedule a time early in the term to meet with each professor to discuss your accommodation needs. Failure to make these arrangements may jeopardize your opportunity to receive academic accommodations.

Additional information is available at Sheridan, [www1.sheridaninstitute.ca/services/disability/and](http://www1.sheridaninstitute.ca/services/disability/and) at York, [www.yorku.ca/disabilityservices](http://www.yorku.ca/disabilityservices) or from disability service providers:

**Office for Persons with Disabilities:** N108 Ross, 416-736-5140, [www.yorku.ca/opd](http://www.yorku.ca/opd)

**Learning and Psychiatric Disabilities Programs - Counseling & Development Centre:** 130 BSB, 416-736-5297, [www.yorku.ca/cdc](http://www.yorku.ca/cdc)

### Religious Observance Accommodation

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for an in-class test or examination pose such a conflict for you, contact the Course Director within the first three weeks of class.

Similarly, should an assignment to be completed in a lab, practicum placement, workshop, etc., scheduled later in the term pose such a conflict, contact the Course director immediately. Please note that to arrange an alternative date or time for an examination scheduled in the formal examination periods (December and April/May), students must complete an Examination Accommodation Form, which can be obtained from Student Client Services, Student Services Centre or online at [www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/exam\\_accomodation.pdf](http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/exam_accomodation.pdf).

### Student Conduct

Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy and mutual respect and to refrain from actions disruptive to such a relationship. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the instructor to maintain an appropriate academic atmosphere in the classroom, and the responsibility of the student to cooperate in that endeavour. Further, the instructor is the best person to decide, in the first instance, whether such an atmosphere is present in the class.

A statement of the policy and procedures involving disruptive and/or harassing behaviour by students in academic situations is available on the York web site [www.yorku.ca/secretariat/legislation/senate/harass.htm](http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/legislation/senate/harass.htm).

York University's Code of Conduct is available online at: [www.yorku.ca/scdr/CodeofConduct.html](http://www.yorku.ca/scdr/CodeofConduct.html).

Please note that this information is subject to periodic update. For the most current information, please go to the CCAS webpage (see Reports, Initiatives, Documents): [www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate\\_cte\\_main\\_pages/ccas.htm](http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate_cte_main_pages/ccas.htm).

# Evolution of Information Design

## FA/YSDN 2108 3.0 Course Schedule Winter 2011

### 1. January 10 Introduction

Defining information design, exploring its relationship to other design disciplines and proposing the study of its history through key categories.

**Readings for the following week:** Drucker/McVarish, *Graphic Design History: A Critical Guide*, Prelude, Chpt 1, Chpt 2, in Elara course hand out folder.

### 2. January 17 Communication

From early mark making to convey meaning to codification of communication through writing systems.

**Paper assignment given.**

Reading for the following week: Malcolm Barnard, *Graphic Design as Communication*, Chapter 2.

### 3. January 24 Communication, cont.

Development of communication theories and their relationship to information design.

*The remaining readings will be announced in class and made available in the Elara course hand out folder. Each week's readings should be completed in preparation of the class meeting along with your written response to each reading.*

### 4. January 31 Navigation

Maps as conceptions of the world. Early forms of spatial representation.

**Paper proposal due.**

### 5. February 7 Navigation, cont.

Navigation as component of spatial orientation and wayfinding, development of signage systems and role of information design.

### 6. February 14 Explanation

Visualization of unseen processes, their conception and attempts at understanding through explanation.

**Visual essay due**

### 7. February 21 Explanation, cont.

Development of visualization of scientific data and its uses and expanding applications.

### 8. February 28 Integration

Information design as systems, role of information design in corporate identity/branding/wayfinding systems

### 9. March 7 Interaction

Interactive exhibition design, origins of user-centered focus

**Paper due**

### 10. March 14 Interaction, cont.

Digital environments as contexts for information design

### 11. March 21 Integration, cont.

Convergence, acceleration

### 12. March 28 Review +++

### 13. April 4 Final Exam

Written exam including short answer and essay.

**Course notebooks are due at the beginning of the exam period.**

*\*Please note that this schedule is subject to change over the course of the term.*