

North Dakota State University
English 357: Visual Culture and Language (3.0 credit hours)
Course Policy and Syllabus, Fall 2020
NDSU – South Engineering 314 – MWF 10:00 – 10:50

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Office Hours: 9:30-10:-00, MWF

Required Texts and Materials:

- ❖ Gitner, Seth. *Multimedia Storytelling*. Routledge, 2016.
- ❖ Jenkins, Henry, et al. *Spreadable Media*. New York University Press, 2013.
- ❖ McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. William Morrow Paperbacks, 1994.
- ❖ McLuhan, Marshall & Quentin Fiore. *The Medium is the Massage*. Ginko, 1967.

Bulletin Course Description:

This course will “cover the rise of visual culture and the impact this historical shift has made on print culture and writing. Students will produce information graphics, photo essays, and other genres.”

Specific Course Description:

This course will cover the rise of visual culture and the impact this historical shift has made on print culture and writing. Students will produce information graphics, photo essays, videos, analytical essays, and other genres. This course is intended to help students learn the vocabulary of visual language, and in turn help them learn how to read and produce visual communications. This course will be writing/design intensive: students will do very little traditional kinds of writing assignments, but will regularly be asked to communicate in a visually and verbally effective way.

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- ❖ Explain visual culture and language to friends and family, as well as explain it to the instructor.
- ❖ Analyze print and screen forms of communication with precision, drawing on the vocabulary and frameworks introduced in the course.
- ❖ Produce effective visual communication in print and on the screen related to personal, professional, and/or educational goal.

General Education Outcomes:

English 357 has been approved for General Education credit in the Communication Category. This course can meet NDSU students' requirement to take an upper-division writing-intensive class, although many majors will require a specific course be taken in order to meet their own graduation needs.

GE Outcome 1: Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and modes, using a variety of communication skills.

- ❖ Communicate effectively in assigned written, visual, and hybrid genres (written-visual).
- ❖ Develop a meta-language for being able to talk about and analyze visual language.

GE Outcome 6: Integrate knowledge and ideas in a coherent and meaningful manner.

- ❖ Provide written analysis of visual language artifacts.
- ❖ Demonstrate understanding of the history of visual culture and language.

English Department Outcomes

While this course is designed to appeal to, and be appropriate for, students from all majors at NDSU, English majors taking this course will produce work that can meet three departmental outcomes. English majors in this class should save all work for possible inclusion in their capstone portfolio.

- ❖ *Outcome 1:* English majors will be able to write and speak effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences in a variety of genres and media.
- ❖ *Outcome 2:* English majors will be able to read (analyze, interpret, critique, evaluate) written and visual texts.
- ❖ *Outcome 6:* English majors will be familiar with visual language and communication as culturally and historically embedded practices.

Help and Technical Requirements

- ❖ The NDSU Help Desk is available to help with technical problems. http://www.ndsu.edu/its/help_desk/
- ❖ There are subject matter librarians available to assist with research projects. <http://library.ndsu.edu/subject-librarians-directory>
- ❖ The Technology Learning & Media Center is available for using media tools, the media studio, and offers many other resources. <https://www.ndsu.edu/its/training/tlmc/>
- ❖ If you have questions about the course or assignments, please contact me at david.binkard@ndsu.edu

Grading Policy and Breakdown:

Grade Breakdown

90.0 – 100.0% = A

80.0 – 89.99% = B

70.0 – 79.99% = C

60.0 – 69.99% = D

<59.99% = F

Late Policy

I expect assignments to be handed in or submitted prior to the due date. Assignments handed in late will be penalized on a scale of how late they are submitted. An assignment handed in late will be graded as normal, but have a late modifier that will alter the final grade for that assignment:

<12 hours late: Can earn up to 80%.

<24 hours late: Can earn up to 60%.

<36 hours late: Can earn up to 40%.

<48 hours late: Can earn up to 20%.

>48 hours late: No credit.

Redoing work

If you are not satisfied with your grade for a project, you may redo it for higher credit. Each project/essay may be redone once for higher credit. The redo must be done within one week of the time it was handed back. All changed content must be highlighted or otherwise marked in some way to demonstrate the changes you have made to improve the work.

Plagiarism

Please see the English Department Policy on Plagiarism further in the syllabus.

Projects/Assignments

❖ Daily participation

- Present and on-time for class. Attendance will be taken each class.
- Prepared for class. Read your assigned homework and bring the text to class.
- Participate in class. Ask questions, answer questions, participate in discussions.
- Participate in group activities. Do your fair share of the work.
- Participate in in-class writings. Produce material when directed.

❖ In-Class Writings

- Occasionally, we will conduct in-class writings to discuss topics related to the course and readings.
- In-Class writings are to be submitted/handed in at the end of class.
- In-class writings are worth 10 points.

Projects/Assignments (Continued)

- ❖ Design/Artistic Statement
 - The Design/Artistic statement is a statement of your personal philosophy toward design or art.
 - The Design/Artistic statement is worth 50 points.
- ❖ Timeline Project
 - The Timeline Project will analyze a particular trend, technology, product, or process relevant to the rise of visual culture.
 - This project will incorporate research and a presentation to the class. The medium of presentation is your decision (Slideshow, Poster board, etc)
 - This project will focus on presenting information with a strong visual component.
 - Project must include a full works cited and citations for images and researched information.
 - Timeline Project is worth 200 points.
- ❖ Photo Project
 - The photo project will focus on presenting visuals to create an argument, a proposal, or providing an insight.
 - You may incorporate external visuals, but you must produce the majority of the visuals yourself.
 - You may alter the visuals by incorporating text, touching up, drawing on, or assembling them how you wish.
 - You must include a full works cited and citations for images and researched information.
 - Photo Project is worth 200 points.
- ❖ Remix Project
 - Although words are powerful tools of communication, we must acknowledge the communicative power of the image, particularly the moving image.
 - Television, film, and video games enthrall and dominate the attention span of our culture. This project will utilize some or all of these components.
 - Use video editing software to produce a remix assignment that communicates through images and sound, but not words.
 - The topic may be controversial, argumentative, or informative. Use the associative power and logic of images to build connections in constructing your remix.
 - The Remix Project is worth 250 points.
- ❖ Analysis Essays
 - For each of the above projects, we will write an analysis essay that examines a model relevant to the project.

Projects/Assignments (Continued)

- In analyzing a model relevant to the project, you will focus on the form and content of the model, strengths and weaknesses, and techniques used.
- The analysis essays will enable you to master the concepts and ideas discussed in class. You will also strengthen your analytical skills.
- The Analysis Essays are worth 100 points apiece.
- ❖ Digital Portfolio
 - The Digital Portfolio will be a showcase of your work for a prospective employer, application to graduate school, an internship, or for another purpose.
 - While you will develop your Digital Portfolio over the course of the semester, you will increasingly focus on it as the semester goes on. The last two weeks of the semester will focus on revision, editing, and contextualizing your work. While you may include work from other courses, your digital portfolio must include two projects from this course – that is what you will be graded on. It must also include a revised design/artistic statement.
 - Your Digital Portfolio may be completed using any web development software, coding, or programs you would like (Wordpress, Wix, etc), but it must be accessible online.
 - The Digital Portfolio is worth 250 points and is required to pass this class.
- ❖ Totals:

○ Design/Artistic Statement	50
○ Timeline Project:	200
○ Photo Project:	200
○ Remix Project:	250
○ Digital Portfolio	250
○ Analysis Essays (3)	300
○ In-Class Writing	10 x # of in-class writings*

*: The total number of in-class writings can change over the course of the semester. If a student misses an in-class writing, they will have the opportunity to make it up. Please contact me directly if this happens.

Participation:

Because this is a small, discussion-centered class, I expect you to come prepared and *on time* to class in order to participate in a meaningful way: This means completing close and careful readings of assigned texts and bringing hard copies of your writing as requested. Every member of this class is important in determining what happens in this class. We are all, individually and collectively, responsible for how this class proceeds; therefore, you will be expected to attend class regularly, to be on time, to complete reading and writing assignments (in and out of class), and to participate in all discussions and activities.

Writing Program Attendance Policy:

According to NDSU Policy 333 (www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/333.pdf), attendance in classes is expected.

Attendance is required in all NDSU writing program classes. All sections adhere to the following policy regarding attendance:

- A student may not miss more than 3 weeks of class due to unexcused absences.
- A student may not miss more than 4 weeks of class total due to a combination of unexcused and excused absences.
- If a student exceeds the limits delineated above, he/she will automatically fail the class.

In this section of English 357, the above policy translates to missing no more than 9 days of class for unexcused reasons, and no more than 12 days of class for a combination of excused and unexcused reasons. Exceeding these limits will result in automatic failure for the course.

In addition to the requirements above, a student's final grade will be affected as follows for unexcused absences:

- Absences 6 – 9 will cause the final grade to drop by 3% per day.

If you anticipate that absenteeism will be a problem for you, please consider taking a section of this course that will better work for your schedule, i.e., a section with a different daily schedule, an online, section, or a section in a later semester.

Excused vs. Unexcused Absences

The writing program differentiates between excused and unexcused absences as follows:

- *Excused absences* are covered by NDSU University Senate Policy, [Section 333: Class Attendance and Policy and Procedure](#). These absences include university sanctioned events, pregnancy, religious observations, and legal or military/veteran obligations or duties. Work missed during an excused absence may be made up within a reasonable amount of time.
- *Unexcused absences* include all other absences. Work missed during an unexcused absence may not be made up.

For excused absences:

- Students must notify me of known excused absences within the first three weeks of the semester. If unexpected excused absences occur, students must notify me as soon as possible, preferably prior to the absence.
- In the case of all excused absences, students must establish with me, as soon as possible, amended due dates for missed coursework. While I will provide accommodations whenever possible, please note that the university policy recognizes that “sometimes an assignment is impossible to make-up.”

For an absence to be excused, you must follow the process below:

- You must notify me of an excused absence (or set of absences) within the first three weeks of the semester, or as soon as you know about the absence. If notification does not occur in advance and was foreseeable, the absence will be counted as unexcused.
- You must notify me of your absence in person when documentation is required, and also via email. I will reply to your email to confirm that I received your notification and to provide instructions/deadlines for missed work. If you do not receive a reply, please resend your email.
- For excused absences based on university-sanctioned events/activities, legally mandated activities, and military/veteran duties or requirements, you must provide documentation to me in advance in order to verify your participation.
- To receive credit for in-class writing/process work during excused absences, you must email me or meet with me at least one class day prior to your absence to determine the work you must complete and how it should be submitted.
- To receive credit for all other course requirements, you must email me or meet with me at least one week prior to your absence to determine the work you must complete and how it should be submitted.
- In general, all work for this course must be submitted on the day when it is due for the rest of the class. Some exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.
- If work is not completed according to the deadline we agreed upon, penalties will be applied as described elsewhere in this syllabus.

For unexcused absences, I encourage you to contact me or your peers to find out about what you must do to stay caught up in the course. While some coursework may not be made up, I will still do my best to help ensure that you are on track to succeed in this course if you reach out to me. No matter your reason for missing class, communicating with me (in person or via email) is always the best way to stay engaged in the course and increase your chances of succeeding.

Why the Writing Program Values Attendance

You may wonder why the NDSU writing program places so much value on attendance. The NDSU writing program operates on the following principles regarding attendance:

- Regular attendance correlates positively with student success in our courses.
- Regular attendance helps students achieve the goals of our courses.
- Regular attendance is a first step for true participation and engagement in our courses.
- Regular attendance helps foster a positive classroom community, particularly in small classes such as ours where regular interaction with one's peers is expected.
- Regular attendance is professional. Students who attend class regularly are learning to adopt the habits of mind that will enable them to succeed in the professional world.

In addition, research has shown that writing is a process-based, social activity. Our classes aim to create the kind of learning environment that will provide students the benefits of going through a writing process to produce larger written texts and interacting with peers to learn from one another.

Writing is a process. Writing development occurs, in part, through regular writing practice—and all acts of writing are not the same, so it's important to practice different writing concepts or skills over time. We provide many opportunities for writing practice in class. Subsequent homework, essays, or later class activities will presume that you have had that initial in-class practice with a key concept or skill. Missing class can set you back or confuse you when you are asked to draw upon previous in-class practice. Final written texts may not be as strong without knowledge of, and practice in, the key writing concepts or skills introduced in previous class sessions.

Writing is a social act. Writing development occurs, in part, through interaction with others. Talking through ideas for writing can help one develop ideas, identify new avenues for exploration, and recognize the benefits or limits of a particular line of thinking. Students in a writing class learn from each other and gain practice at being thoughtful readers of writing. Our classes include many small-group activities and opportunities for peer review, which cannot

easily be replicated outside of class. Missing class can affect the overall quality of final written texts, because they do not benefit from developing in response to the perspectives of other readers/writers.

Technology in the Classroom:

Using cell phones during the class session is disruptive to our learning environment. Cell phones must be placed on silent and kept off your desk and out of your hands. **If you use your cell phone during a class session, your participation grade for that day will be lowered.** If you continue to use your cell phone, I may ask you to leave the classroom and you will be considered absent that day. Excessive cell phone use will result in a lowered final participation grade.

If you feel you have an emergency situation and need access to your cell phone, please let me know at the beginning of the class session. Put your phone on vibrate and quietly exit the classroom if you need to make or take an emergency call.

If you bring a laptop or tablet to class, I expect you to use it for class-related purposes only. **If you use your laptop or tablet for activities not related to our class, your participation grade for that day will be lowered.** If you continue to use your laptop or tablet inappropriately, I may ask you to leave the classroom and you will be considered absent that day. Excessive inappropriate laptop or tablet use will result in a lowered final participation grade.

Academic Integrity:

In all writing, ideas and words taken from any source should be documented. Failure to credit ideas or material taken from sources constitutes plagiarism, a violation of the University's academic regulations, and is subject to disciplinary action. **All writing you do for this course must be your own and must be exclusively for this course.** Please pay special attention to the quotes, paraphrases, and documentation practices you use in your papers (note: if you are referring to work previously submitted for this course, then you should cite yourself).

Work submitted for this course must adhere to the Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct: "The academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. [NDSU Policy 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct](#) applies to cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion. Student academic misconduct records are maintained by the [Office of Registration and Records](#). Informational resources about academic honesty for students and instructional staff members can be found at www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty."

All written and oral presentations must "respect the intellectual rights of others. Statements lifted verbatim from publications must be cited as quotations. Ideas, summaries or paraphrased material, and other information taken from the literature must be properly referenced" (*Guidelines for the Presentation of Disquisitions*, NDSU Graduate School, 4).

Accessibility and Special Services:

Any students with disabilities or other special needs, who need special accommodations in this course, are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and contact the [Disability Services Office \(www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices\)](#) as soon as possible.

Veterans and student service members with special circumstances or who are activated should notify the instructor as soon as possible and provide Activation Orders if requesting any accommodations.

Course Revision:

I reserve the right to modify/change the course any time during the semester. I will communicate any changes with you by email.

Schedule:

KEY:

SM = Spreadable Media

MS = Multimedia Storytelling

UC = Understanding Comics

August			
	Mon	Wed	Fri
Week	26 No Class	28 Intro to Class	30 Work on Personal Artistic Statement

September			
	Mon	Wed	Fri
Week	2 No Class	4 Read Chapter 1, Understanding Comics	6 Read Chapter 2, UC Personal Artistic Statement Due
Week	9 Read Chapter 3, UC	11 Read Chapter 4, UC	13 Read Chapter 5, UC
Week	16 Read Chapter 6, UC	18 Read Chapter 7, UC	20 Peer Review, Timeline
Week	23 Read Chapter 8, UC	25 Read Chapter 9, UC	27 Timeline Project Due, Presentations
Week	30 Presentations		

October			
	Mon	Wed	Fri
Week		2 Presentations Introduction, SM	4 Presentations Introduction, SM
Week	7 Presentations Introduction, SM	9 Introduction, SM	11 Chapter 1, SM
Week	14 Chapter 1, SM	16 Chapter 1, MS	18 Chapter 1-2, MS
Week	21 Chapter 2, MS	23 Medium is the Massage	25 Medium is the Massage
Week	28 Medium is the Massage	30 Chapter 3, 5, MS	Nov 1 Chapter 3, 5, MS

November			
	Mon	Wed	Fri
Week			1
Week	4 In-Class Workshop - Photo Essay	6 In-Class Workshop Photo Essay	8 Photo Essay Due Chapter 5 MS
Week	11 NO CLASS	13 Chapter 4 MS	15 Chapter 2, SM
Week	18 Chapter 2-3 SM	20 Chapter 3, SM	22 Chapter 3-4 SM
Week	25 Chapter 4 SM	27 Chapter 6 MS	29 NO CLASS

December			
	Mon	Wed	Fri
Week	2 Chapter 6 MS	4 Peer Review	6 Remix DUE 11:59 PM Presentations
Week	9 Presentations, Work on Portfolio	11 Work on Portfolio	13 Portfolio Due December 15 th , 11:59 PM
Week	16	18 8 AM Final Exam time - Present Portfolio	20