J300

COURSE INTRO
(week one)
It’s the start of a new thing, so we will review policies, expectations, the skills you are bringing to the class and, of course, my life story.

Student Work: (only brownie points) grab your books, read the syllabus and get ready.

Are we done yet?

PHOTOGRAPHY
(week one)
Today’s most familiar visual storytelling is photography. Our phones and digital cameras make us instant photographers. Can we become better photographers and critics of the images around us?

To help us with other visual storytelling later in the course, we will investigate composition and bringing a visual concept from mental to tangible.

No fancy-schmancy camera is required here, but you will need some kind of camera, even if it’s as simple as the camera on a smartphone.

Student Work: (15 points total) A series of photos by you!

Are we done yet?

INFOGRAPHIC
(week fifteen through exam week)
This chart, the one you are holding right now, it is an infographic. To capstone this class, you will conceive and create your own infographic.

Student Work: (30 total points: your final exam) you will create an infographic with InDesign

Are we done yet?

ALL TOGETHER NOW
(week thirteen and fourteen)
Text + photos + color + grids + your InDesign skills = Your AMAZING PHOTO LAYOUT PROJECT. See how we’re bringing it all together? I will give you all of the photos that will inspire your page design. You will be the photo editor and page designer to make a finished page.

Student Work: (15 points) a photo layout using images I provide

Are we done yet?

FORM & SHAPE
(weeks five & six)
Following our talk of photo composition this discussion of geometric shapes and forms. Here you get to jump into design . . . and InDesign!

Student Work: (10 points) your first InDesign document: a simple document of shapes and lines

Are we done yet?

TYPOGRAPHY
(week nine & ten)
Know what font this is? Well, journalism seldom occurs sans words. Let’s learn more about type: selecting, manipulating and matching fonts.

Student Work: (15 points) a second InDesign project, this time a resume featuring type

Are we done yet?

COLOR
(weeks seven & eight)
Consider both photography and color. Photography is the marriage of art (composition, lines, expression) and science (lenses, pixels, computers). With color, there are scientific reasons that colors appear to the eye in the way they do. But there are also artistic concerns for choosing the color in your design work. So, this will be a bit of science and a bit of art.

Student Work: (10 points) our third InDesign project will require you to take a document template and change the use of color on that document

Are we done yet?
visual storytelling

this course, just like storytelling itself will have a
BEGINNING, MIDDLE, & END

BEGINNING: let’s start with us...

Instructor Eric Thomas
317 Stauffer-Flint Hall
(785) 864-7625, ericthomas@ku.edu
Office Hours: Tu/Th 2-3:30 p.m.
Also available by appointment, however I will not often be on campus Monday and Friday.

Graduate Assistant Devan Swiontkowski
dsswiontkowski@gmail.com
Office Hours: TBA
Also available by appointment

GOALS
• Practice the process of taking a mental concept and transforming it into a visual product

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how easily a reader or client can discard your well-researched story or well-written presentation because it “doesn’t look pretty” or “didn’t catch my attention.” For that reason, the smartest journalists and strategic communicators understand that their message must have thoughtful visuals, if not brilliant visuals.

This course aims to teach you to be a thoughtful critic and creator of visuals. At the very least, you should be able to evaluate the visual presentation of a product or publication and identify weaknesses and strengths. You should be able to say insightful and helpful things like, “The internal margin around that sans serif font doesn’t seem to match the 1-pica gutter around the rest of the page elements.” So, at the least you will sound smart, if a bit full of jargon.

At the most ambitious, you will be starting — or continuing — a path toward becoming a creator of visuals. Perhaps you will leap into InDesign, photography and infographics and make it your focus here at KU and your eventual career. You may become part of the legion of graphic designers and data visualization designers who have revolutionized our visual landscape.

So, remember: this is an intro course that will cover the theories, concepts and principles of visual communication and design production techniques. But it is meant to give you skills central to a career in a increasingly visual world of communication and journalism.

That — in 256 words — is why you should be signed up for this course.

IMPORTANT NOTE: this course must be completed with a C (2.0) or better in order to move on in the journalism curriculum

COURSE RATIONALE
Communication with a 21st century audience demands visual skills. Consider

13 June 2000 :: John Hershberger has worked The Wacky World Fun House for eight of the amusement’s 40-year-old life. The ride will be at the Converse (Ind.) Fair this week along with other amusements, stands and livestock shows. ERIC THOMAS PHOTO
• Learn the words and phrases needed to communicate visual ideas
• Learn the basics of good design, typography, color theory, photography and infographics.
• Learn how to use photography to tell a story.
• Gain a basic understanding of the most widely used document creation software in journalism and strategic communication: Adobe InDesign
• Learn how to constructively critique visual messages by evaluating your work, professional work and classmates' work.
• Think about the relationship between media and audiences and learn how to meet the needs of diverse audiences

MIDDLE: the stuff we will do...

ASSESSMENT
Learning outcomes in this class will be evaluated through an exam, photography, design projects and quizzes.

MATERIALS
• Design Elements, A Graphic Style Manual, 1st edition by Timothy Samara. ISBN: 9781592532612 Book can be purchased online and at the KU bookstore.
• Selected readings assigned on the classroom website
• Course packet: distributed on the first day
• Optional: an individual license of Adobe InDesign Creative Cloud or Adobe Creative Suite including InDesign. To complete the InDesign Projects for this class, you will need access to a computer with Adobe InDesign loaded on it. Adobe has recently converted to a version of InDesign that requires either month-to-month licensing or longer term licenses. Through KU’s computer labs and the journalism department’s labs, you should have plenty of access to InDesign. But if you would like it on your personal computer, please visit Adobe’s website to download either InDesign or a package that includes InDesign. (I would recommend taking advantage of student pricing and using a 30-day free trial is possible.)
• Please be sure to bring a pencil and eraser to class each day. We will do a bunch of sketching.
• Video tutorials from JSchoolTech.org: these videos have been produced specifically for you, the J300 student by our technology department in the journalism school. While they will not cover the entirety of InDesign, they will aim at the main software skills needed to complete the InDesign projects. I would recommend having InDesign open in one window and then watching the videos at the same time on another device (or in another

DISTRIBUTION OF ASSIGNMENTS OVER 135 TOTAL POINTS FOR THE SEMESTER

POP QUIZZES (3 TOP SCORES = 15 POINTS TOTAL)
12-WEEK EXAM (20 POINTS)
INFOPHOTOGRAPHIC FINAL PROJECT (30 POINTS)
NARRATIVE PHOTO SERIES (15 POINTS)
FOUR INDESIGN PROJECTS (10-15 POINTS EACH) (50 POINTS TOTAL)
INFOGRAPHIC FINAL PROJECT (30 POINTS)
window). Simply watching the videos without tinkering with InDesign won’t take you far. Instead, be sure to pause the videos to practice (even for 10-15 seconds every minute) the skills she is demonstrating.

- The class website for this class is http://www.j300.journalism.faculty.ku.edu/ Please bookmark the website and use it often. The website lists assignment details, due dates and slideshows from class lectures. Chances are, if you are looking for a resource for this class, it can be found on the class website.
- Blackboard will be used for this class for only two main functions: keeping in touch through email blasts and tallying up your grade as the semester progresses.

CLASS WORK

Lectures will expand on readings. You will want to take good notes that go beyond the main points of slides. Material from the lectures will be on the exam and in-class writing, while also being applied to design work.

NOTE TAKING

I would like to have some completely digital-free class periods this semester along with some explicitly digital encouraged lectures.

During the digital-free lectures, I will ask you to simply bring you and a few pencils/pens/erasers/notebooks to class and leave your technology packed away. My hope is that on days when I provide visual inspiration in my presentation that you will be focused on only those visuals along with your sketches, thoughts and design. (Yes, digital-free means leaving aside our cell phones.)

During the digital days I will be asking you to take advantage of any digital resources you have (laptops, iPads, cameras, smartphones, recorders and so on) to gather ideas, reference current events and share.

If you have concerns about leaving technology aside for an hour, please let me know. There are exceptions to every rule.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- InDesign Projects:

  The main software for this course will be Adobe InDesign Creative Cloud (CC). We choose this software because it allows use to work with form, shape, color, typography and images in an easy way. It is also the software used by most publications in their design of newspapers, magazines, advertising and strategic communication materials.

  You will create four InDesign projects before the final project for the class: an infographic. Rather than use an expensive — and not terribly useful — textbook to teach the software, we will use videos aimed at the specific assignments. These videos were created by the amazing jschooltech.org and KU’s Heather Lawrenz.

  The earlier projects — especially Project #1 — have many more videos to review than later projects. There is much to learn about the structure of InDesign before creating even the most basic design. However, the videos are short and manageable if you give yourself time.

  Please note that the InDesign project descriptions on the J300 website (http://www.j300.journalism.faculty.ku.edu/assignments/inDesign-projects/) link to much longer descriptions of each assignment, including some detailed instructions for Projects #1 and #3. Please be sure to read those instructions before jumping in to designing.

  Also, please know that Projects #1 and #3 are intentionally assignments that test your InDesign skills rather than your creativity. We are not looking for aggressive and adventurous design here, simply completion of the tasks described in the lesson.

  Finally, please understand how difficult it can be to help with technology problems over email or the phone. Please plan ahead to attend office hours or schedule time with us. We are happy to help when we have adequate notice.
InDesign Project 1: Form & Shape :: For this assignment you will show basic understanding of InDesign with little stress on creativity or detail. You will be simply creating shapes, filling them with colors and creating some lines and columns. (10 points)

InDesign Project 2: Resume :: For the purpose of redesigning your resume and to learn about type styling, we will design a new document showcasing your educational, professional and personal achievements. (15 points)

InDesign Project 3: Color :: Much like the first lesson on form and shape, this lesson will focus on InDesign skills rather than creativity. You will be supplied an InDesign document and you will make changes to the color appearance of that document in a prescribed way. (10 points)

InDesign Project 4: Photo Layout :: Using photos provided, you will lay out a single page design showcasing the photos with a headline, subhead, captions and copy. No need to do the reporting, just the design. (15 points)

• Photo Narrative Series. As our first visual assignment, you will create a set of three images that tells a story with a beginning, middle and end. (15 points)

• Infographic: To complete the semester and show off all of your InDesign and visual skills, you will create an infographic. This project is in substitute for your final and will be due during the scheduled final exam time (30 points)

• 12-Week Exam: It’s not a mid-term. And it’s not a final. But this exam will be a multiple choice Scantron test over the first 12 weeks of the semester, both from reading and from lecture. I do not give make-up tests without a verifiable excuse. (20 points each total)

• Pop Quizzes. During four unannounced class periods each semester I will provide pop quizzes. The highest three scores that you earn on these four quizzes will count, with the lowest (or redundant) score tossed out. I do not give makeup quizzes without a verifiable excuse. (5 points each: 15 points total)

END: finally, the details...

RULES TO LIVE BY
• All assignments (especially InDesign assignments) are due at the start of class. Expect technical difficulties and do not wait until the last minute to print work.
• Assignments turned in after the start of class (yes, this means even a minute or two late) will lose 10 percent credit.
• Assignments not submitted at the end of the class period (5:15 p.m.) will lose 50 percent credit.
• No assignment will be accepted 24 hours after it was due without a verifiable excuse.
• Late & excused work is allowed if:
  • a signed physician note (not from Watkins Health Services) documents the absence
  • a KU-sponsored athletic event in which you are participating conflicts with a quiz and you have notified me in advance
  • you notify me in advance of the conflict and convince me of its necessity
• No electronic or emailed versions of the InDesign projects or the infographic will be accepted. Only printed version are accepted for credit.
• If you would like to submit an assignment early due to absence, you can submit it at an earlier class. Or, you can ask the journalism resource center staff to place it in my mailbox.

CLASS ETIQUETTE
• For email, please remember that I get a lot of it. Please write “YourName: J300” in the subject line. If you miss class, the responsibility is on you to gather notes. Please don’t email me seeking materials you missed.

ORIGINAL WORK
The expectation when you come to this class is that you’ve come to learn, to be creative, to stretch your imagination, and expand your skills. Therefore, all the work you do in this class must be original. That means no “recycling” of assignments or papers from other classes, in the j-school or outside the j-school.

Don’t recycle. Don’t recycle old high school assignments. If you designed a spread for a publication or an earlier class, you cannot revise that slightly and resubmit it as a new assignment in this class. Likewise, I expect the photos/images that you create to be created during this semester for submission to this class.

I assume the work you do for this class is original to this class. Any efforts to recycle material will be regarded as academic dishonesty. You may receive zero credit for the assignment and have a letter entered into your academic file.

ABOUT PLAGIARISM
In general, any student who turns in work that is not their own on any assignment will receive a zero on that assignment. You may also be subject to Journalism School penalties on cheating and plagiarism, which can include expulsion from the School of Journalism.

For InDesign
When you are working on your InDesign projects and on the infographic, the work should be your own. What I mean is this: your hand should be on the mouse, making the mouse clicks and doing the InDesign work. It is fine to enlist help from friends, teaching assistants and others. But your hands should be making the key strokes and the mouse clicks. And each student should be working from his/her own document.

I am not bragging here: but not one semester has gone by so far without a student in my section of J300 receiving a zero for plagiarism. Please do your work.

Policy on Plagiarism & Fabrication/Falsification: Adopted May 7, 2004:
The William Allen White School of Jour-
nalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence. Penalties for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification can include a failing grade for this course and expulsion from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the instructor of this course.

The following definitions are from Article II, Section 6, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations, revised FY98.

Plagiarism

Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.

Fabrication and Falsification

Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

STUDENT WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The University of Kansas is committed to helping all students learn. If you have a special need that may affect your learning, please contact me as soon as possible. Please be aware that the KU Office of Student Access Services coordinates accommodations for all students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted this office, please do so as soon as possible.

Information about services can be found at https://disability.ku.edu/. Or you can visit the office on the first floor of Strong Hall. The phone number is 785-864-4064. The email is achieve@ku.edu

Please contact me privately regarding your needs in this course.

CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE

From the journalism school's policy:

"No student may add a journalism class after the 20th day of a semester.

"Students must attend their classes and laboratory periods. Instructors may take attendance into account in assessing a student's performance and may require a certain level of attendance for passing a course. Instructors may choose to drop students from a course, based on attendance, without consent.

"The School of Journalism reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of students who fail to attend the first class or laboratory meeting."

"The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid.

"Students who receive any form of financial aid should learn all requirements including minimum hours of enrollment and grades to qualify for and retain that aid."

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND SPECIAL NEEDS

In the event of inclement weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials. To determine whether snow or icy conditions have canceled classes, call 864-7669 (864-SNOW).

The Office of Disability Resources (DR), 22 Strong Hall, 785-864-2620 (v/tty), coordinates accommodations and services for KU students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in KU classes and have not contacted DR, please do so as soon as possible. Please also contact me privately in regard to this course.

COPYING OR RECORDING

Course materials prepared by the instructor, as well as content of all lectures presented by the instructor, are the instructor's property. Video and audio recording of lectures without instructor consent is prohibited. On request, the instructor usually will permit students to record lectures, on the condition that these recordings are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless the instructor gives explicit permission, recordings of lectures may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

GRADING SCALE

The grading scale for this course is shown below. Students’ grades within .50 percent of the next highest letter grade will be rounded up to grant the higher letter grade. Grades will not be rounded any more than that.

A = 100-93 // A- = 92-90
B+ = 89-88 // B = 87-83 // B- = 82-80
C+ = 79-78 // C = 77-73 // C- = 72-7
D+ = 69-68 // D = 67-63 // D- = 62-60
F = 59 and below

FINAL EXAM TIME

The university has scheduled the following time for our final exam: Thursday, May 12 from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Students are required to attend this time.

CHANGES TO SYLLABUS

As the instructor of this course, I reserve the right to modify the syllabus and the daily schedule, if necessary. Those changes may include the alteration of point values for specific assignments. Of course, I will notify you in advance if changes are needed.

THANKS

I appreciate you reading all the way until the end. I am ready for a great semester and to see your inspired visual work.

Yours in Visual Storytelling,