WRITING SKILLS

GRADO EN DISEÑO
Professor: CARMEN HELENE DOMENIQUE VAN BRUGGEN
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Academic year: 19-20
Degree course: FIRST
Semester: 1º
Category: COMPULSORY
Number of credits: 3.0
Language: English

PREREQUISITES
There are no prerequisites for this course. On the contrary, following this course will provide students with basic writing skills, crucial for their further academic education.
SUBJECT DESCRIPTION
Writing is a core skill for the practice of design. It is necessary for researching, promoting, communicating and analyzing designs. Besides, instead of creating objects, more and more designers are producers of ideas, structures or services. Those less materialistic outcomes, often involve writing as a core activity. During this course, students will learn the basics of both academic writing and the kind of writing connected to the practice of design. A wide range of texts – from academic qualitative studies to newspaper reviews – will be studied and many short texts – reports, essays, notes or introductions – will be written.
OBJECTIVES AND SKILLS
METHODOLOGY

The best way to learn to write is to write. The course is therefore centered around the practice of writing. Both in weekly homework assignments as well as during some of the lectures, students will write short texts. These texts should not so much be seen as final, polished outcomes of the course. They are rather first attempts, in which the students are challenged to use new methods and styles.

Every week, a research method, writing style or design critic will be discussed. During the classes, a theoretical basis for these topics will be provided in a short lecture. Furthermore, during all classes group debates (corresponding to the categories ‘discussions’ and ‘group work’ below) will be held, either connected to the weekly assignment or to a topic presented in class.

The final project of this course consists out of a written paper in which the learned content will be applied.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching methodology</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Estimated time a student should dedicate to prepare for and participate in</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>20.0 %</td>
<td>15 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>13.33 %</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td>33.33 %</td>
<td>25 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>6.67 %</td>
<td>5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other individual studying</td>
<td>26.67 %</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100.0 %</td>
<td>75 hours</td>
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PROGRAM

SESSION 1
INTRODUCTION: WHY DO DESIGNERS WRITE?
Writing is a core skill for the practice of design. It is necessary for researching, promoting, communicating and analyzing designs. Besides, instead of creating objects, more and more designers are producers of ideas, structures or services. Those less materialistic outcomes, often involve writing as a core activity. During this class, we will discuss the relevance of writing for the practice of design. Also, an overview of the homework and evaluation criteria for this course will be given.

Weekly assignment: write a short description of something you own and explain why you (dis)like it. Do not mention your name in the document. Print it and bring it to the first class. This text will be used in an introduction game. The three very short texts from Reading Design, should be read in advance and can be used as a source of inspiration for the assignment.

SESSION 2
ACADEMIC CONVENTIONS: PLAGIARISM, CITATION AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES
Applying the rules for academic writing is precise work. During this class, you will learn how to master the basic conventions in academic writing in a correct and efficient way. Also, the background of those rules will be explained. They do not exist to make life more difficult, but to ensure quality, originality and to provide coordination in the complex world of texts. After this class, you are in the game. Professors and peers will from now on expect from you to take these rules into account for all of the texts you write during your studies.

Weekly assignment: make a bibliography in MLA- or APA-style of a text provided by the professor.
Other: MLA/APA examples

SESSION 3
GENRES IN WRITING I: ACADEMIC ARTICLES, MONOGRAPHS AND EDITED VOLUMES
This class is the first of three classes on different genres of writing. Academic publications usually appear in academic journals, as a monograph or as a book chapter of an edited volume. During this class, you will learn to recognize these different contexts and analyze their characteristics. Also, you will practice with writing an abstract.

Weekly assignment: find a monograph, book chapter and an academic article on the same topic at the IE Library. Write a short introduction on this topic, using those three sources and cite them correctly.

SESSION 4

19th June 2019
GENRES IN WRITING II: ESSAYS
The word ‘essay’ refers to the French ‘essayer’, which means ‘to try’. It is a less defined, more open form of writing in which the experience, arguments and the perspective of the author play a crucial role. During this class, we will talk about how to involve arguments and experiences in a serious text on design. Also, we will study and discuss examples of essayistic writings.

Weekly assignment: write a text about a museum or another building, using the guidelines provided by Alexandra Lange on p.69


SESSION 5
GENRES IN WRITING III: REVIEWS
Reviews exist in many formats. There are many stylistic differences between a customer review in a comment, a professional piece of criticism in The New York Times and everything in between. Central, however, is the focus on a specific design and the practice of judging. During this class, we will practice with, and learn more about design-centered writing.

Weekly assignment: pick a design you like. Describe it very precisely, without using any images. Include in your description both visual elements as well as descriptions of its function, meaning and context.

Other: A selection of design reviews from The Design Observer, The New York Times and The Guardian will be provided by the professor.

SESSION 6
RESEARCH METHODS I: QUALITATIVE VERSUS QUANTITATIVE STUDIES
When using scientific research as a source, it is important to recognize qualitative and quantitative research methods. During this class we will explore the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches. Besides, we will elaborate on the value of interviews for academic research.

Weekly assignment: interview a designer about his or her work. Take no more than 15 minutes for the interview. Include both your interview notes and a short summary of the interview in a document. Record the interview, if permission is given.


SESSION 7
RESEARCH METHODS II: ALPHA VERSUS BETA SCIENCES
From complex interpretations of medieval poetry to photographs of black holes in space - contemporary universities seem to host a wide range of alpha and beta research. Where in this scope can we situate the field of design? What can it learn from both sides?

Weekly assignment: write a short summary of one of the texts for this week.


SESSION 8
RESEARCH METHODS III: INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

Academic disciplines, such as psychology, philosophy or engineering, have evolved into independent fields of research and practice, since the 19th century. Specialization led to great inventions and high professional standards, but at the same time something was lost. Lately, more and more researchers and professionals seek collaborative approaches for tackling the problems of today’s world. In this class we will study the fruitfulness of such multi-disciplinary research and practice.

Weekly assignment: Find an IE student from another program. Discuss with him or her an important topic from one of your BID courses. Ask him or her if the study program he or she is in, would offer a different perspective on the matter. Write a brief report of the conversation.

B.C.: Ebook Architecture in the Anthropocene Open Access (Each student reads a different chapter)

SESSION 9

MIMICKING STYLE I: LEARNING FROM BRUNO MUNARI

This is the first of three sessions on a famous design critic. The idea is to study the writing style in several texts and to learn from it by copying certain strategies. Bruno Munari was both an artist, designer and author on design. His richly illustrated short essays have inspired many generations of designers.

Weekly assignment: Write a short text in which you motivate the reader to do or make something, using the guidelines provided by the professor.

B.C.: Bruno Munari excerpts from Design as Art

SESSIONS 10 - 11

INTERMEZZO I: USING THE SOCRATIC DIALOGUE FOR WRITING

Debates about the relevance of writing go back to an ancient quarrel between Plato and Socrates. During this double session, we will look at those ancient arguments and discuss the relevance of writing and dialogues for thinking. While walking along the riverside, we will practice Socratic dialogues, just as the Greeks did it. This class will take place partly in the Creativity Center and partly at the Campus.

R.A.: Heyland, Drew. Why Plato wrote Dialogues
B.C.: Plato. Phaedrus. 360 BC. (Optional)

SESSIONS 12 - 13

INTERMEZZO II: EXPLORING NARRATIVES IN NON-TEXTUAL MEDIA

Designers do not only convince with words and texts, but often use images as well. Could images just as words, be used for arguments, statements or explanations? What are the differences between the possibilities of writing and image making? In this class we will discuss images as forms of speech. Besides, we will study the genre of the photo or pictorial essay – a more and more emerging genre in writings on design.

M.D.: Photo Essay Sue Barr. Autostrade

SESSION 14

MIMICKING STYLE II: LEARNING FROM MICHAEL BIERUT

19th June 2019
This is the second of three sessions on a famous design critic. The idea is to study the writing style in several texts and to learn from it by copying certain strategies. Micheal Bierut, designer and design critic, is an expert in graphic design. His writings and work are read and seen all over the globe.

Weekly assignment: Write a short text on graphic design, using the guidelines provided by the professor.


SESSION 15

MIMICKING STYLE III: LEARNING FROM ALICE RAWSTHORN

This is the last of three sessions on a famous design critic. The idea is to study the writing style in several texts and to learn from it by copying certain strategies. Alice Rawsthorn is famous for her original design reviews in The New York Times. During this session, we will study her recent publication Design as an Attitude.

Weekly assignment: Write a short text on design as an attitude, using the guidelines provided by the professor.

Obligatory literature:

BOOKS (Chapters)


Rawsthorn, Alice. ‘What is Attitudinal Design?’ in Alice Rawsthorn. Design as an Attitude. JRP Ringier, 2018. (New Purchase)


Sagmeister, Stefan, et al. *Things I Have Learned in My Life so Far*. Updated ed., Abrams, 2013. (Available at IE, I only need one copy of this book for session 12 and 13 of this course, just to show during the class)


ACADEMIC ARTICLES


Recommended literature:

BOOK

Eco, Umberto. *How to write a Thesis*. MIT Press, 2015. (Currently (june 2019) there is only a Spanish copy in the Library)
EVALUATION CRITERIA

Every week, students will have to hand in a short written assignment, related to the topic of the corresponding class. At the end of the course, students will have to write a final paper. 40% of the grade will be determined by the effort shown in the weekly assignments. 10% of the grade, is based on in-class participation. 50% of the grade will be determined by the final paper.

The evaluation criteria for the weekly assignments, in-class participation and final paper are as follow:

Weekly assignments
The weekly assignments will be grades with 0, 1 or 2 points. Students have the opportunity to miss out on one assignment or to eliminate the assignment with the lowest score.
- 0 points: the assignment is missing or not carefully executed
- 1 point: the assignment fulfills the basic requirements, but contains some preventable flaws
- 2 point: the assignment is correctly done and shows a high level of commitment

In-class participation
Behavior that will positively impact the participation score:
- Collaboration: being able to listen to (and rephrase) arguments of your peers
- Qualitative questions: not the frequency, but the quality of your questions will be noted
- Informed questions and comments that show serious preparation of the lectures

Behavior that will negatively impact the participation score:
- Not following the code of conduct (find it below)
- Not paying attention in class
- A lack of preparation of the class material
- Repeating disturbing behavior, after a warning

Final paper
The final paper will be marked according to Structure (25%), Style (25%) and Content (50%) which also includes the appropriate and correct use of sources. In each of this criteria, the following points have to be observed:

Structure:
- the general plan of the essay
- the connection between ideas exposed
- the inclusion of a conclusion
- the existence of paragraphs corresponding to ideas or concepts.

2. Style:
- the absence of grammatical mistakes,
- the proper use of academic English corresponding to college level;
- the adequate use of sources and quotations,

3. Content:
- the level of originality in the essay,
- the argumentative level of the essay;
- the relevance of the information contained in it, without being a mere summary;
- the adequacy of the content to the question proposed;
- the logical connections between presentation of ideas and final conclusions
- the relevance of such conclusions without being a mere tautology.
## PROFESSOR BIO

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Assignments</td>
<td>40 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>50 %</td>
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19th June 2019
Professor: **CARMEN HELENE DOMENIQUE VAN BRUGGEN**  
E-mail: cvanbruggen@faculty.ie.edu

Carmen van Bruggen’s academic expertise lies in the fields of art and philosophy, which she both studied at the University of Groningen (The Netherlands). Currently, she is working as a freelance lecturer, writer and organizer of small cultural events in Madrid. Carmen has a wide experience working in and for educational institutions, and she has been involved in introducing critical reflection to various professional areas. For the IE School of Architecture and Design, Carmen also teaches a course on Design and Criticism. Besides, she teaches an advanced seminar on art and social criticism.

*Carmen holds a Bachelor in Arts, Culture and Media, a Bachelor in Philosophy and a Research Master in Literary and Cultural Studies.*

**OTHER INFORMATION**  
Email: cvanbruggen@faculty.ie.edu

Office hours will be scheduled in relevant weeks and announced during the course.
CODE OF CONDUCT IN CLASS

1. **Be on time**: Students arriving more than 5 minutes late will be marked as “Absent”. Only students that notify in advance in writing that they will be late for a specific session may be granted an exception (at the discretion of the professor).

2. **If applicable, bring your name card and strictly follow the seating chart.** It helps faculty members and fellow students learn your names.

3. **Do not leave the room during the lecture:** Students are not allowed to leave the room during lectures. If a student leaves the room during lectures, he/she will not be allowed to re-enter and, therefore, will be marked as “Absent”.

   Only students that notify that they have a special reason to leave the session early will be granted an exception (at the discretion of the professor).

4. **Do not engage in side conversation.** As a sign of respect toward the person presenting the lecture (the teacher as well as fellow students), side conversations are not allowed. If you have a question, raise your hand and ask it. If you do not want to ask it during the lecture, feel free to approach your teacher after class.

   If a student is disrupting the flow of the lecture, he/she will be asked to leave the classroom and, consequently, will be marked as “Absent”.

5. **Use your laptop for course-related purposes only.** The use of laptops during lectures must be authorized by the professor. The use of Social Media or accessing any type of content not related to the lecture is penalized. The student will be asked to leave the room and, consequently, will be marked as “Absent”.

6. **No cellular phones:** IE University implements a “Phone-free Classroom” policy and, therefore, the use of phones, tablets, etc. is forbidden inside the classroom. Failing to abide by this rule entails expulsion from the room and will be counted as one absence.

7. **Escalation policy: 1/3/5.** Items 4, 5, and 6 above entail expulsion from the classroom and the consequent marking of the student as “Absent.” IE University implements an “escalation policy”: The first time a student is asked to leave the room for disciplinary reasons (as per items 4, 5, and 6 above), the student will incur one absence, the second time it will count as three absences, and from the third time onward, any expulsion from the classroom due to disciplinary issues will entail 5 absences.