

241

# INFOGRAPHICS

WKU School of Journalism & Broadcasting

Date  
Room number

**INSTRUCTOR**  
Josh Meltzer  
Photojournalist-in-Residence

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## OFFICE HOURS

*I'll be happy to make an appointment with you if you cannot see me during the above hours.  
I'll also be scheduling one-on-one meetings with you during the term for intensive edits.*

## ATTENDANCE

It is vital to success in this class. Each class is equal to one week of regular classes. There will be discussions and critiques that cannot be redone. You must be on time. You **MUST** be present to have your assignments accepted for a grade.

## CELL PHONES

Do not use your cell phones at all in class. Please leave them in your bag or pocket. You will have a break each class to check them. End of story.

## MISSION

This course is focused to teach students the fundamentals of producing visual displays of information using charts, maps and diagrams.

## GOALS

1. Learn basics of using Adobe Illustrator to draw and produce charts and maps
2. Research skills to find and accurately analyze data
3. Critique existing infographics for accuracy and design flaws
4. Experiment with spatial and design layout of complex infographic information
5. Examine the benefits of different types of displays of information
6. Learn the basics of synthesizing data with Excel
7. Recognize the unethical use of inaccurate storytelling with data in journalism
8. Produce maps, charts and diagram to high design and journalism standards

## DEADLINES

All assignments are due at the beginning of class. End of story. Each assignment must be turned in as an Illustrator File (.ai) and as a (.pdf) in both the server and in print. You must also turn in the statistical information that you gathered in spreadsheet or some format so that I can see what data you are using. Sources for all infographics must be clearly displayed.

## QUIZZES & EXERCISES

You will periodically be quizzed on material from the readings in our textbook or from the video tutorials. These quizzes will be unannounced so make sure you are completing all the readings on time and going through all of the assigned Illustrator and Excel tutorials.

## ASSIGNMENTS

### *Assignment 1 - Charts and Maps*

You will create a statistical visual display based on data that you will research from a topic assigned in class. Your project must have several statistical graphics as well as at least one map.

### *Assignment 2 - Diagram Illustration*

You will create a step-by-step illustration that tells a story or explains a phenomenon of a topic announced in class. You may be required to take photos of your topic from which to make illustrations.

### *Assignment 3 - Final Project*

You will have to choose a topic of inquiry, research the data and present the data visually in the most appropriate form. You may use any of the techniques taught in class that are appropriate for this project. Your topic must be pre approved before you begin work.

**GRADE BREAKDOWN**

Quizzes & Exercises	100 points
Charts/Maps	250 points
Diagram	250 points
Final Project	350 points
Participation	50 points

**TOTAL 1000 points**

You will be able to earn 1000 points this semester. You start with zero, so remember you have to earn the points.

Participation in class is worth 50 pts. Coming late or missing class will not help you in this category.

**900-1000 pts = A**

**800-899 pts = B**

**700-799 pts = C**

**600-699 pts = D**

**0-599 pts = F**

**GRADING\***

Grading your assignments will be based on the following criteria.

- Storytelling content
- Creativity
- Technical superiority
- Use of type and color
- Fulfilment of the Assignment
- Written materials
- Accurate use of data

*\*Each assignment will have specific grading criteria.*

**IMPORTANT DATES:**

3/11-15 - Spring Break

3/18 - Last day to drop a class with a W

May 7 @3:45pm - Final project due

**CRITIQUES AND CLASS PARTICIPATION**

One reminder about critiques in class. I want involvement from everyone. The critiques need to be honest and constructive. You can be tough without tearing people apart. A thin line often separates what is perceived to be constructive versus destructive feedback. Find the balance, and when in doubt, take the higher road. Likewise, feedback that is full of hot air and praise does little to help one another grow. Speak positively when you really feel something is great, and critique when you have constructive feedback and suggestions. Participate, participate, participate. This will be part of your grade.

When receiving a critique, you need a similar balance. There is a fine line between defending your position and making excuses. Be a good listener. Don't be so connected to your work that you lose sight of how it could be better. You need to develop a thick skin and an open mind. We will use our time to focus on solutions instead of problems. I want you all to be successful.

Harsh and honest critiques aren't easy, and I understand that, but we have a limited time together and I want to use this time to make our work stronger and more compelling. Liken it to an athlete who has to suffer through training in order to perform at his or her best. My word is only one person's opinion (though I write your grade) so please don't take it as the only way.

**EQUIPMENT**

For some of the assignments you will probably need a camera to make images from which to produce diagrams. For this you may use any type of camera, including cell phone cameras. If you do not have a camera, you may check one out from the Technology Resource Center (TRC) on the 2nd floor of the MMTH building.

**Required Materials**

- Portable external hard drive to store and back up your projects for class. Saving your projects in two places is recommended to safely store them. *Failure to turn in work because of a corrupted or lost/stolen hard drive is not an acceptable excuse for lateness of work.*

**RECOMMENDED READINGS**

*List of articles from the textbook website*

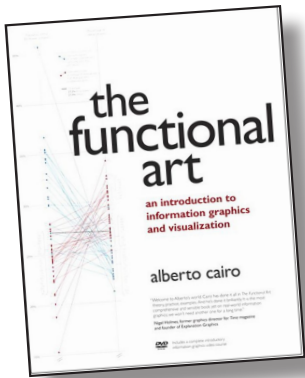
<http://www.thefunctionalart.com/2012/10/recommended-readings-for-infographics.html>

*By Stephen Few:*

[http://www.interaction-design.org/encyclopedia/data\\_visualization\\_for\\_human\\_perception.html](http://www.interaction-design.org/encyclopedia/data_visualization_for_human_perception.html)

*NY Times infographics*

<http://www.smallmeans.com/new-york-times-infographics/>

**REQUIRED TEXT**

*The Functional Art*  
By: Alberto Cairo  
Available at the bookstore  
or online.

**REQUIRED VIDEO TUTORIALS**

You are required to watch, complete and practice along with the video tutorials produced by our textbook author Alberto Cairo. These exercises will count towards your quiz portion of your grade. Though I will answer questions in class about the software, I will not teach the mechanics of the software during class time.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

This course is not intended as a purely artistic or design course, but rather a course deeply rooted in journalism and storytelling. That said, we will use graphics and design to tell these stories, but it is not a prerequisite to have a graphic design or artistic background to be successful in this course.

**PLAGIARISM**

To represent ideas or interpretations taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of a student must be his or her own. Students must give the author(s) credit for any source material used. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage after having changed a few words, even if the source is cited, is also plagiarism. Disposition of Offenses - Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal.

**PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES**

*Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC)*

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center, A-200. The phone number is 270 745 5004. Please **DO NOT** request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.