EFFECTIVE DOCUMENT DESIGN

ENG112
Prof. Katherine Delhagen

*No sound – read every slide of the presentation carefully

Using Visuals to Inform and Persuade

Effective technical communication integrates
textual and *visual* elements:

- Format and Layout
  - Communicates document genre
- Headings
  - Help document navigation, introduce and describe ideas in document sections, place emphasis on important ideas
- Graphics
  - Communicate technical information: graphs, charts, tables, etc
  - Add visual appeal, attract viewers' interest

Format and Layout

- Different genres have different purposes, different reader expectations
- Format and layout begins your message; be professional and consider what is appropriate for your specific type of document and intended audience
- Headings draw the reader's eye; should be descriptive, clear, and concise

Layout

- Basic graphic design principles:
  - Proximity - convey meaningful relationships between images and text
  - Alignment - spacial layout of elements on a page in discernable patterns. Try to align objects with edges of other elements to establish pattern and relationship.
  - Repetition - shows meaningful connections among types of content; keep design elements consistent
  - Contrast - sharp differences in color, typography, or other elements can be used to highlight or prioritize information

Layout

Some layout tips for advertisements
(helpful for your Module 3 assignment!)

- **Ogilvy layout** - viewers tend to look at visuals, caption, headline, copy (detailed info), signature (contact info) in that order; following that order can be effective
- **Z layout** - viewers tend to follow a Z shape with the eye; place items you want viewers to see first at the top, and the call to action at the end of the Z
- **Single Visual** - one strong image with a headline is often more effective than using many pictures
- **Top Heavy** - place the image in the top 2/3 of the document, with information below
- **Illustrated** - demonstrate use of a product, in a serious or humorous way

Typography

Fonts, typefaces, and point size enhance readability of information

- Fonts are classified as serif and sans serif
  - Serif fonts have small strokes at the ends of some lines: Times New Roman (works well as a body font)
  - Sans serif fonts do not: Arial (works well as a heading font)
- Reserve special typeface (bold, italics, underline) for headings, titles, and other special elements
- Use font size to draw the eye to important information, but don't use so many different sizes that a viewer gets confused

Color Theory

- Suggests people have common emotional reactions to certain colors
- Groups colors to create combinations that are visually complementary instead of chaotic or confusing
- Following color theory creates "color harmony"

Color Wheel

- Analogous colors; any 3 colors next to one another
- Complementary colors; two colors directly opposite one another
- Some colors are harder to read/view than others. Be aware of this when designing.
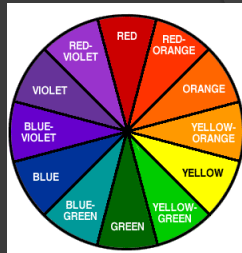
Warm Colors

- Red - fire, violence, warfare, love, passion, importance, power; can raise blood pressure and respiration; can be a strong accent, but can be overwhelming if overused.
- Orange - vibrant, energetic, autumn, earth; more friendly and inviting than red, but commands attention.
- Yellow - happiness, sunshine, bright, vibrant, hope; can be energizing or calming depending on the hue.
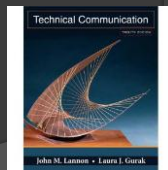
Cool Colors

- Green - earthy, growth, renewal, jealousy, wealth, stability, nature; can have a balancing and harmonizing effect.
- Blue - calmness, responsibility, sadness, peace, friendly, spiritual; lighter hues tend to be more relaxed, while bright blues can be refreshing, and dark blues indicate strength and reliability.
- Purple - royalty, luxury, wealth, romance; darker hues suggest richness while lighter hues are more romantic and creative.

Graphics

- *How* you use graphics in your communication is just as important as the textual content
- Every image should serve a purpose
- Don't overload your document with graphics - keep it focused
- Real/realistic images are more effective than clip art

See Chapters 12-13

- For more detailed information on Document Design, carefully read and annotate chapters 12-13 before beginning your group document design project!
- Additional resources are also found on the last page of this presentation

More Resources

- Detailed explanation of color theory:
http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2010/01/28/color-theory-for-designers-part-1-the-meaning-of-color/

- 50+ examples of great print ads:
http://aext.net/2010/06/creative-print-advertisement-designs/

END