Fundamentals of Document Design

Designed for both aspiring and experienced technical writers and editors, this course provides an introduction to the basic elements of document design, including layout, color, and typography for print documentation. Students gain experience and performance feedback while working individually to develop a user manual.

Who should take this course?

This course is designed for aspiring and existing technical writers and editors. Participants will individually develop a user manual or similar technical document to demonstrate mastery of course objectives.

Course Objectives

- Apply the four principles of design to a technical document.
- Execute a page mock-up from a layout grid.
- Apply appropriate type fonts in a technical document.
- Use color and graphics to support text content in a document.
- Recognize appropriate printing methods based on purpose, audience, and budget.

Course Details

- Length: 15 hours
- Classroom Type: Lecture
- Prerequisites: None

_The above prerequisites are considered to be the basic skills and knowledge needed prior to taking this class. Instructors will assume your readiness for the class materials and will NOT use class time to discuss prerequisite materials._
Course Contents

Apply the four principles of design to a technical document.

• Use contrast to draw user attention to different elements in the design.
• Use repetition of visual elements throughout the design to create organization and strengthen unity.
• Use alignment to deliberately place and align document elements.
• Use proximity to group related items together to organize information, reduce clutter, and show the document’s structure.

Execute a page mock-up from a layout grid.

• Identify page elements to be considered in page design.
• Develop a customized grid for use in a two-page design assignment.
• Use lorem ipsum text to display design content.

Apply appropriate type fonts in a technical document.

• Describe the basic concepts of typography.
• Use text as a design element.
• Select appropriate type fonts.
• Analyze readability of a document design.

Use color and graphics to support text content in a document.

• Describe colors and color theory, as well as basic color terminology.
• Identify color differences on computer monitors and printed materials.
• Discuss the meanings of color in different cultures.
• Describe appropriate graphics types for different document purposes.
• Recognize appropriate printing methods based on purpose, audience, and budget.
Course Contents, continued

Recognize appropriate printing methods based on purpose, audience, and budget.

- Identify printing processes and suggested uses.
- Select appropriate binding.
- Describe how to prepare a document for in-house, outside, or offset / web-press printing.