

# COMM345: INFORMATION DESIGN

**FALL 2023**

**INSTRUCTOR** — Nic Aguirre — [naguirre@clarkson.edu](mailto:naguirre@clarkson.edu)

**OFFICE HOURS** — Wed 3:00p – 4:00p @ 164 Snell Hall

**CLASS LOCATION** — CEC: 130 Snell Hall

## **SECTIONS**

COMM 345-01 (10222) — Meets Mon/Wed 11:00a – 12:15p

## Objectives

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In this course, you'll learn methods for designing effective, information-based texts (often visual but in some cases for other senses).

In this course, you'll learn to:

1. Analyze context, audience, and purpose for your design
2. Select an appropriate format (such as type of chart) for information based on that analysis
3. Use software such as Excel, Tableau, and Illustrator for information design.

## Work

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### **Use of Class Time**

This class is project-driven, and demands consistent effort inside and outside of the classroom. Classes are intended to be variable and may feature lectures, tutorials, in-class exercises, discussions and lab time. An effort is made to create a more interactive and less passive experience for students.

### **Projects (60 pts.)**

This class features four large-scale projects.

- Project 1 (10 pts.)
- Project 2 (15 pts.)
- Project 3 (15 pts.)
- Project 4 (20 pts.)

## **Homework (20 pts.)**

This class has homework assignments designed to test and reinforce knowledge from class. Homework assignments typically involve a shorter or less involved task.

## **Quizzes and Participation (15 pts.)**

A quiz consists of either (a) an unannounced quiz or (b) an in-class lab activity. Quizzes are designed to ensure that students are completing their readings, preparing properly, and following along with in-class technical activities.

Participation is an important element of this class. Being present (physically and mentally) will give you a better experience.

Many of our classes will focus on the completion of certain exercises, tutorials, and discussions. Most class days will feature a small participation exercise. They are to be finished during class and are generally graded on completion.

Students **must be physically present** to claim a participation assignment. Coming to class late, leaving early, or attempting to submit participation while not present are all grounds for losing points.

## **Professionalism (5 pts.)**

Students are expected to behave like adults. Unprofessional behavior will be met with a grade deduction in this category.

Unprofessional behavior includes (but is not limited to):

- Arriving to class late
- Leaving class early
- Failure to observe course policies
- Disrespect towards classmates or instructor
- Lack of consideration for classmates or instructor
- Distracting behavior
- Failure to practice academic integrity

- Excessive use of cell phone during class

## Final

There is no final exam for this class; you will present a final project instead.

## Grading

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### Points

There are a total of **100** points in this class. The grade is divided as follows:

Assignment	Points
Project 1	10
Project 2	15
Project 3	15
Project 4	20
Homeworks	20
Quizzes/Participation	15
Professionalism	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

## Course Grade

Your grade will be assigned as follows:

Grade	Range
A+	100% to 97.0%
A	< 97.0% to 93.0%
A-	< 93.0% to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0% to 87.0%
B	< 87.0% to 83.0%
B-	< 83.0% to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0% to 77.0%
C	< 77.0% to 73.0%
C-	< 73.0% to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0% to 67.0%
D	< 67.0% to 63.0%
D-	< 63.0% to 60.0%
F	< 60.0% to 0.0%

Grading criteria will be given for each individual assignment.

## Revisions

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When work is created in a professional environment, changes and revisions are common.

Factoring that creative development is an iterative process, students are **sometimes** allowed to revise and resubmit assignments. Re-submitting work is a **privilege** granted at the instructor's discretion.

If you are re-submitting work:

1. You must have submitted the work by its due date. Late work is not eligible for re-

submission.

2. The privilege to revise submitted work is only available for students who submitted substantial work; incomplete or dysfunctional work is not eligible for resubmission. This is at the instructor's discretion.
3. You may only recover partial points lost.

## Required Materials

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### Texts

This is tentative; please wait to speak with me before you purchase these:

Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic. [Storytelling with Data](#)

Joshua N. Milligan. [Learning Tableau 2022](#) \* Exercise file available on [GitHub](#)

### Software

Software is a focal point of this course, and an effort was made to ensure that free, cross-platform software will be used wherever possible.

We will use:

1. Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator
2. Tableau

The CEC has them installed.

Other requirements:

1. [Computer System & Software Requirements](#)
2. [Software Accessibility Policies in General](#)
3. [Software Privacy Policies in General](#)
4. [Contact Helpdesk](#)

### Minimum Technology Skills

1. Use a learning management system
2. Use e-mail with attachments
3. Create and submit files in commonly used word processing formats
4. Copy and paste

## 5. Download and install software

Digital Information Literacy Skills

Find help at the [Clarkson Library website](#)

## Hardware

You need access to a high-performance computer. The CEC computers will work.

## Policies

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### Attendance

Students should make a serious effort to attend every lecture. While attendance is not taken, I believe **attendance is the strongest guarantor of success** in this course.

Course material is cumulative in nature and class periods are used to develop skills and work on projects. You will also miss out on quizzes and participation activities if you miss class.

### Deadlines

Deadlines are strict and non-negotiable. Late assignments will be accepted for the first three calendar days after a deadline. I will remove 15% for each day past the deadline (Example— If you got 85 on an assignment but submitted it two days late, you're getting a 55).

Assignments may not be submitted after three calendar days have elapsed (Example— Deadline is September 8th, you cannot submit after September 11th)

The only **exception to this rule** is the final project, which cannot be submitted late.

### Absences

Whether or not an absence is excused is **entirely at the discretion of the instructor**.

If you miss a quiz or participation exercise and have an **excused absence**, you have **one week** to make up that assignment at office hours. If you cannot attend scheduled office hours, it is your responsibility to reach out and schedule another meeting time.

If you know you are going to be absent or late on a certain day, please tell me ahead of time.

## Lost Data

You are responsible for keeping backups/duplicates of your files. You can use Google Drive or GitHub to maintain copies of your files. Losing your files is not an excuse for late or incomplete work.

## Email

When you e-mail me, **your subject line should include the course number and section** e.g.– "[COMM345 MW 11:00am]"

Example of a poor email subject line: "its not working"

Example of a good email subject line: "[COMM345 MW 11:00am] Custom fields in Tableau"

If you need help with a project, you need to give me a way to access these files (e.g., GitHub repo, Google Drive shareable link)

**It can be difficult to diagnose technical problems via e-mail.** I'll do my best, but you should consider talking with me after class, or coming to office hours if you're struggling with an assignment.

Students should know that an e-mail response may take **up to 72 hours** depending on the time of the semester.

## Food and Drink in Class

Sorry, they are not permitted.

## Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity, based on the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility, is a fundamental principle of scholarship in higher education. Clarkson's Academic Integrity Policy prohibits: plagiarism (using another person's writing or copying any work without proper citation), falsification, unauthorized collaboration during a test or on an assignment, or substitution for another student to take an exam, course or test, and other forms of academic dishonesty.

If you are to benefit from this class and be properly evaluated for your contributions, it is important for you to be familiar with and follow [Clarkson University's Academic Integrity policy](#). Please review this policy online (Undergraduate section IV – Academic Integrity, Graduate section IV – Academic Integrity). Work that violates this policy will not be tolerated. Students

who are found responsible for a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy will have both a university process sanction and an academic outcome, that could include a failing grade on the assignment or exam, or a failing grade for the course.

## **Proper Attribution for Referenced Works**

If you use others' work, you must:

1. Get my permission.
2. Cite your sources.

## **Using assets**

Sometimes you'll want to use pre-existing assets— 3D models, brushes, icons, scripts etc.

This is permitted as long as you:

1. Get my permission to use it in your project
2. Make sure that the assets are available for re-use (check the license!)
3. Make sure the creator is aware that their assets are being used

## **Generative AI**

You can use generative AI.

However, there are several reasons you should approach it with caution:

1. Excessive use inhibits your ability to learn and memorize patterns independently
2. It can stifle human creativity
3. It is still prone to errors
4. It doesn't fully understand the context in which it is generating content

It is not acceptable to have a substantial amount of your work generated by AI.

Please refer to Clarkson Library's [Guide to Plagiarism](#) and the [guide to Citing Sources](#) for assistance on avoiding plagiarism and properly citing sources.

## **Students with Disabilities Requesting Accommodation(s)**

The University strives to make all facilities and programs accessible to students with permanent, ongoing, and temporary disabilities by providing appropriate and reasonable academic accommodations, as necessary. Disabilities that may benefit from reasonable accommodations



include, but are not limited to, broken wrist, ADHD, surgery recovery, Learning Disability, concussion, visual impairment, etc. For more information and/or to request accommodations, contact the Office of Accessibility Services at [oas@clarkson.edu](mailto:oas@clarkson.edu) or 315-268-7643.

[Students with Disabilities Policy](#)

[Office of Accessibility Services Website](#)

## **Other Policies of Note**

[Discrimination & Harassment](#)

[Religious Accommodations](#)

## **Syllabus**

This course is rich in content and skill levels vary widely among students. The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus to better match the needs of a given class.

## **Final Grade**

The instructor reserves the right to adjust your final grade based on effort, participation, or conduct. This is uncommon.