

# ENGW 2329, Unit 1: Poster Design

## (Worth 10% of your grade; due on September 22)

### Overview

You may be just beginning your academic study of the principles of information design, but that doesn't mean you don't have a strong sense of what makes documents effective or ineffective. In fact, most people have an instinctive understanding of good information design, even if they lack the vocabulary to talk about it or the technical skills to produce sophisticated documents. This assignment is designed to help you formalize your natural instincts into a design philosophy that you can describe and defend. In addition, this project will familiarize you with some of the software tools used by professional document designers and technical communicators.

Using the information contained in the "Scenario" section of this document, you will create three different small posters for a single event. The three posters will be designed for different audiences and contexts, so you will need to determine what information to include on each poster. All three posters should be "cut from the same cloth," which is to say that they should use similar colors, typography, and imagery. At the same time, each poster should be uniquely designed for its intended audience and context. After you have created the three posters, you will write a short memo that explains your design process, justifies the choices you made for each poster, and honestly addresses the challenges you faced during this project.

### Assignment Details

- Each poster should be printed on one side of an 8.5x11-inch paper.
- You are free to choose the paper color and thickness, as well as the use of color or black-and-white printing.
- In class, we will use Adobe InDesign and Photoshop to work on this project. However, you can select another software program for your posters, if you are more comfortable with it. (Warning: Microsoft Word is an unwise choice for this assignment.)
- Rough drafts of your posters are due at the beginning of class on September 15. We will hold a peer critique session during class on this date.
- Your memo should be roughly 400–600 words, single-spaced, using memo formatting. Think of this as a letter from you to me about your work on the project.
- Printed copies of your posters and your memo are due at the beginning of class on September 22. In addition, you should upload electronic copies of your files to my Dropbox before you come to class on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. (I will explain how to do this before the due date.)

### Evaluation Criteria

I will evaluate your essay using the following criteria:

- **Content.** Do the posters contain adequate information about the event without overwhelming the reader with extraneous information?
- **Consistency.** Do the posters use the same typefaces, colors, etc., to achieve a unified visual appearance across all three documents?

- **Adaptation for Audience and Context.** Does each poster target its specific audience and acknowledge the context in which it will be used?
- **Technical Proficiency.** Do the posters show a basic level of proficiency with the software programs chosen by the designer?
- **Correctness.** Do the posters and the memo adhere to the conventions of standard written English (spelling, punctuation, and grammar)?

## Scenario

You are the social committee chair for the Zeta Theta Kappa fraternity (or sorority) at Mount Pinion University, and your annual Homecoming Carnival is coming up on Saturday, October 15, 2011. The carnival begins at 8:00 a.m. and goes until midnight, with different events scheduled throughout the day. Traditionally, the Homecoming Carnival has targeted students on campus, but this year the university president has challenged all Greek organizations to reach out to alumni and community members to make the carnival “more inclusive and family friendly.” At the same time, the Greek Council doesn’t want to alienate the college students that spend a lot of money at the Carnival, especially in the late evening hours. The carnival is Zeta Theta Kappa’s biggest fundraiser, and since all Greek organizations split the carnival proceeds evenly, you really want to bring as many people as possible to this event.

After discussing the changes to this year’s carnival with your friends, you decide to make three different posters for the event:

1. A poster targeting college students that emphasizes the many food booths at the carnival and the live performances by several bands that run from 7:00 p.m. to midnight.
2. A poster targeting alumni that emphasizes their connection to campus and the free afternoon events (2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.) designed specifically for those who haven’t been back to campus in a while (hot air balloon rides, tours of the newly completed athletic facility, etc.)
3. A poster targeting local families that emphasizes the open nature of the carnival and the new morning-time (8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.) games and activities at this year’s carnival (face painting, clowns, bounce house, etc.).

You have no budget for this event, but the Greek Council has an account at the university’s Copy Center, which can print on various colors of paper and using black-and-white or color printing. You plan to print 200–300 copies of each poster.