

# COMM 208 - Spring '12

## Layout and Design for Publications

Benedictine University, Lisle, IL.

"Learn the rules, so you can break the rules."

Does good page design even matter? To answer that question, I propose another: Have you ever noticed that you can always tell when a page is poorly designed, even if you don't know how to design a page yourself?

Welcome to COMM 208! We will spend the next semester together in order to answer the two questions above (does design matter and how to do it well.) This will be a hands-on class; you will be working on projects instead of lectures and tests.

We will do more than just learn how to build a page; we will spend a great deal of time talking about good page design. While the focus of the class is toward newspapers, magazines and web design, students should find this class beneficial even if their careers take them into non-media fields.

When the semester is over, you should have at least two portfolio-worthy projects that you could show a potential employer.

**Instructor:** Chris Birks (pronounced "Burks")

**Office:** KN 222

**E-mail:** [cbirks@ben.edu](mailto:cbirks@ben.edu)

**Phone:** (630) 829-6252

**Web site:** [www.classes.birksland.com](http://www.classes.birksland.com)

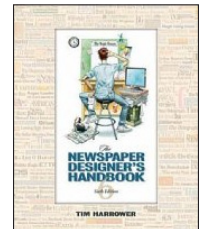
**Office hours:** M: 2-3pm, Tues: 1-3pm, Thur: 1:30-4pm

### Recommended material:

**Textbook:**

The Newspaper Designer's Handbook (6th Ed.) by Tim Harrower.

ISBN: 978-0-07-299669-2



**USB Jump drive:**  
500 MB or larger

## Grades

- Journal (5) - **50 points**
- Project I (Newspaper) - **150 points**
- Project II (Magazine) - **150 points**
- Deadline design - **80 points**
- Application quiz (2) - **50 points total**
- Attendance - **20 points**

Total = **500 points**

A = 450 - 500 points

B = 400 - 449 points

C = 350 - 399 points

D = 300 - 349 points

F = 299 and below

(THERE IS NO "ROUNDING UP" OF GRADES.)

# Assignments

**PROJECT I - NEWSPAPER PAGES:** For this project, you will create multiple newspaper pages. I will give you a group of photos, stories and/or graphics and you will create a section front and 2-3 inside pages.

**PROJECT II - MAGAZINE LAYOUT:** Students will build a magazine layout as part of a design team. Each student will create their own designs, but must use the parameters created by their team.

*\*\*You will present both of your projects in class. This is a chance to show off what you did and learn from others. Presentations should be <5 minutes.*

**DEADLINE DESIGN:** You will design one newspaper page on deadline. This experience is supposed to simulate what it's like in a newspaper's newsroom. You can use your Journal (highly recommended), the textbook, etc.

**QUIZZES (2):** Material to be covered will be from the text book readings and class discussions.

**JOURNAL (5):** Students will turn in a printout, tear sheet, clip out, etc., of a page they find interesting. The pages will correspond to our discussion at the time.

Along with the page, each student will write 1-2 paragraphs stating what they like about that design. It can be handwritten on the back of the printout or typed and stapled to the tear sheet (I prefer typed.)

One or two students will also present their journal pages to the class. Each presentation should only be 5 minutes or so.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

- Two or less classes missed - 20 points
- Three classes missed - 10 points
- Four or more classes missed - 0 points

*I do not differentiate between excused and inexcused absences. **Save your two "free" days for when you really need them.***

*There will be an attendance sheet for you to sign every day. The sheet is the arbiter on missed classes, so don't forget to sign in.*

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- Feedback on all major projects will be given via individualized video/audio recordings on the class feedback website: [feedback.birksland.com/yourname123.html](https://feedback.birksland.com/yourname123.html). Each student will be given a unique URL to listen to their feedback; please bookmark it. If you forget your URL, please send me an email.

## ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Mr. Birks (that's me) spent nearly 20 years as a newspaper journalist before deciding to teach. I've worked in newsrooms as a photojournalist, page designer, web designer, writer and department editor. I've worked for small dailies and large metros in Michigan, Kentucky, Florida and Illinois.

Besides teaching, I am also the advisor for The Candor. In my spare time I run (orienteering), read fiction and spend way too much time on the computer.



# UNIVERSITY POLICIES

1. The search for truth and the dissemination of knowledge are the central missions of a university. Benedictine University pursues these missions in an environment guided by our Roman Catholic tradition and our Benedictine heritage. Integrity and honesty are therefore expected of all members of the University community, including students, faculty members, administration, and staff.


Actions such as cheating, plagiarism, collusion, fabrication, forgery, falsification, destruction, multiple submission, solicitation, and misrepresentation, are violations of these expectations and constitute unacceptable behavior in the University community. The penalties for such actions can range from a private verbal warning, all the way to expulsion from the University. The University's Academic Honesty Policy is available at <http://www.ben.edu/AHP> and students are expected to read it.

2. A student whose religious obligation conflicts with a course requirement may request an academic accommodation from the instructor. Students must make such requests in writing by the end of the first week of the class.

3. If you have a documented learning, psychological or physical disability, you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations or services. To request accommodations or services, please call extension 6512. All students are expected to fulfill essential course requirements. The University will not waive any essential skill or requirement of a course or degree program.

If you need help:  
Email me and/or stop in my office

## CLASS POLICIES

- All assignments must be turned in on the day they are due and at the beginning of class. **Late work will not be accepted and there are no extra credit assignments.** Assignments not turned in when they are due will result in a score of zero points for that assignment.
- Turn OFF all cell phones, beepers, .mp3 players, etc. If you are waiting for an emergency phone call, see me before class. **Do not check messages during class time**, but before class is fine. 
- Please do not bring laptops/netbooks into class. Do not surf the Internet during class time. If you need to take notes on a computer, please clear it with me first.
- Respect your fellow students and teacher. Disruptions (such as talking with friends during class, doing homework during class, reading newspapers during class, etc.) will not be tolerated.
- Do not be tardy to class. If you cannot make the start of class regularly, see me. There will be an attendance sheet for you to sign. Remember to sign in each class period.
- **You are responsible for the material if you miss a class**; either get the notes from a fellow student or see me during office hours. Do not email me something like: "Did I miss anything important?"
- Your campus email address will be the official way I contact you with course and/or academic performance information. Check your email often. **"I didn't get your email," is not an excuse for missed work and/or information.**
- Check D2L, the Twitter feed and the class website often. Your grades will be posted on D2L.
- Feedback on your projects will be posted to the class feedback website; check the Twitter feed for updates.

# Class calendar - COMM 208

## Week 1

Jan. 16 - MLK day  
Jan. 18 - Intro / history

## Week 2

Jan. 23- Picture editing, Chapter 4  
Jan. 25 - PhotoShop

## Week 3

Jan. 30 - Basics of design I, Chapter 1  
Feb. 1 - InDesign basics I

## Week 4

Feb. 6 - Basics of design II  
Feb. 8 - InDesign basics II

## Week 5 - Journal 1 presentation

Feb. 13 - Newspaper design, Chapter 2  
Feb. 15 - Newspaper design

## Week 6 - Journal 2 presentation

Feb. 20 - Newspaper design, Chapter 3  
Feb. 22 - Newspaper design

## Week 7

Feb. 27 - Quiz / Newspaper design, Chapter 5  
Feb. 29 - Newspaper design work day

## Week 8

March 5 - Project I due / Class presentations  
March 7 - Ethics / law

## Week 9 - Journal 3 presentation

March 12 - Web design, Chapter 9  
March 14 - Web design

## Week - Spring break

March 19 - Spring break  
March 21 - Spring break

## Week 10 -

March 26 - No Class  
March 28 - Magazine design, Chapter 6

## Week 11 - Journal 4 presentation

April 2 - Magazine staff meeting, Chapter 7  
April 4 - Magazine design - Cover

## Week 12

April 9 - No Class, Easter  
April 11 - Magazine design - Cover

## Week 13 - Journal 5 presentation

April 16 - Magazine design - Center spread  
April 18 - Magazine design - Center spread

## Week 14

April 23 - Quiz / Magazine design - Inside pages  
April 25 - Deadline design test

## Week 15

April 30 - Career Day  
May 2 - Magazine design work day

## Week 16 - Finals

Project II due / class presentations

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*Schedule subject to change, please check class web site for updates*

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