COURSE DESCRIPTION.

This course is designed to help you explore complex spaces where the seeable and the sayable collide. We'll think about typography, cartography, and semiotic theory. We'll examine relationships between poets, painters, and found objects. We'll talk about data visualization, and we'll ask some questions about how adopting visual note taking styles might impact our relationship to “more traditional” texts.

While the “problem” of words and/as/vs. images (or language and/as/vs. representation) has a long history in literary studies, we won’t be attempting a comprehensive survey. Instead, we’ll look closely at and around a handful of examples. We’ll talk about historical context as well as aesthetic content. We'll look at ways in which technology shapes possibility, and we'll keep in mind the social lives of artistic artifacts. You'll produce texts that are experimental as well as analytical, visual as well as verbal. I'll ask you to bring examples from your everyday life to share with the class. The diversity of this work will (hopefully) aid us in the semester-long project of developing capacious, generous, personalized definitions of our course’s (deceptively simple) key terms: words and images.

W CREDIT.

As a writing intensive class meant to help you work on the mechanics of your writing, this class entails public engagement with the processes of creation and revision. You’ll be expected to share your work and comment on the work of others – both in class and outside class. Workshops and discussions will take up a significant portion of our in-class time. I hope there will be a lot of respectful disagreements and a lot of thoughtful observations about how others have chosen to put things together. We'll have to see how it goes.
**Grading Breakdown.**

*Participation, including in-class writing and presentations—35 points*

**Participation.** In short, participation means sharing your knowledge and insights in whatever form is appropriate. Those of you who are quieter will be glad to note that listening and reading are just as important as speaking and writing in relation to this portion of your grade. Everyone should note that---in the context of this course---participation includes coming to class prepared and on time, taking part in class discussions, draft workshops, and other activities. It includes asking questions. It also includes doing the required reading and writing for each class and doing it well.

*Weekly Assignments.* You will turn in a three-page document at the end of each week. Every week’s assignment will be slightly different, and I’ll provide detailed instructions as necessary. This will generally look like two creative experiments, at least one with non-text visual components (usually begun in class, but probably requiring some additional work outside class) and a one-page reflection (single spaced) on whatever we’ve been up to in-and-between classes. At end of term, everyone will choose pieces of at least two projects to revise, expand, or reimagine (due week six).

You should turn in each week’s assignment as a single .pdf file before 11:59PM on Saturday. You’ll need to create a folder on Box and share it with me in order to turn in your work. You may need to become adept at using online file combination software. In terms of visual elements, scans of (neatly) hand drawn work are fine (there are pretty good scanners in the library). Photos are also fine, but they must be neatly cropped with well adjusted colors, and text/details must be clear. You may need multiple photos to represent a visual object well. Producing something slightly longer than three pages and/or featuring unusual page sizes (not 8.5x11) is okay if you strongly believe that the assignment will be better for it, but focus on quality over quantity.

*Total available points: 100*

Both risk taking and technical proficiency will be taken into account. All six weekly submissions must be completed to pass this class. As long as the original was submitted on time, you may choose to re-submit one project during the term for re-evaluation---you must email me within two days of receiving feedback to request a resubmission; I will give you a new due date. This policy is meant to encourage experimentation.

Final grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

A = 92 – 100 points  
A- = 90 – 92 points  
B+ = 88 – 89 points  
B = 83 – 87 points  
B- = 80 – 82 points  
C+ = 78 – 79 points  
C = 73 – 77 points  
C- = 70 – 72 points  
D = 60 – 69 points  
F = below 60 points
COURSE TEXTS. Many short readings will be made available to you via Box. We’ll use these three book extensively, and I’ll expect you to have access to them in/outside class:

* Symbol: The Reference Guide to Abstract and Figurative Trademarks
  Agnes Hyland and Steven Bateman (Laurence King Publishing, 2011)

* The Book of Trees: Visualizing Branches of Knowledge
  Manuel Lima (Princeton Architectural Press, 2014)*

* You Are Not Dead
  Wendy Xu (Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 2013)

* Because printing and reproduction quality are part of the subject matter of this course, you should purchase The Book of Trees as a hardcopy. Sharing is okay. As are any versions of the other two.

LATE/MISSING WORK. The highest grade you are eligible to receive on any given assignment drops a full letter grade for each day the assignment is late. If you expect to have trouble meeting a deadline, talk to me before the assignment is due. **Deadlines are not negotiable after you have missed them.**

ATTENDANCE. Attendance is mandatory. This policy is not all about you. Because this is a small, discussion- and workshop-based class your classmates’ experiences are directly impacted by whether or not you show up prepared. Come to class on time, ready to ask questions and take part in conversation. **If you arrive significantly after class has begun or if you arrive without drafting materials on a workshop day or if you’re clearly texting/socializing online during class, you will be counted as absent.**

If you do miss a class, you must arrange for the day’s assignments to be submitted on time, either via email or a classmate. **Because this is a condensed summer class, having more than ONE absence is grounds for automatic failure.** That said, I understand that we’re all human beings with lives that go on outside the classroom, and I’m a pretty reasonable person---if you expect to get into trouble with this policy, once again, please talk to me before there’s an issue, not after.

COMMUNICATION: OFFICE HOURS/EMAIL. Office hours provide us with an opportunity to talk one on one. Mine are Wednesdays 3-5pm; my office---617-A---is located on the sixth floor of the cathedral. You may drop in during this time at any point in the semester to ask questions or to talk about your progress in the course. I weirdly enjoy talking about what you think of readings, assignments, and the way class is running, and I am always happy to offer individualized tech support or advice on projects. However, initiating these types of conversations is your responsibility---not mine.

I am also available by appointment, in case my office hours aren’t compatible with your schedule, and I am happy to answer questions via email. You can assume that I will check my email at least once a day on most weekdays, but you should not assume that I will always be able to reply instantly (especially if your message reaches my inbox at 2AM the night before an assignment is due). As the need arises, I may send important announcements or updates about assignments to your Pitt email account. If you use another account (i.e. gmail), get in the habit of checking your Pitt account too.
**Technology Etiquette.** I expect that you'll shut off your phone's ringer and that you won’t text during class---this is part of you having respect for your classmates (which is a thing I care about a lot). When we’re in the lab, I expect that you’ll only be logged onto a computer if our work together necessitates it. When we’re elsewhere, the same goes for your laptop. In my experience, your active, conversational engagement in class is worth a lot more than taking down the perfect set of notes. **You should plan to bring a jump drive to class each day.**

**Academic Integrity.** The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as follows: “plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source.” We’ll talk about how to handle other people’s creations responsibly, but it is important to note now that changing a few words or lines in a quotation does not constitute avoiding plagiarism. All instances of plagiarism will result in an automatic 0 on the assignment and a report to the Dean.

**Additional Assistance/Resources**

**The Writing Center.** Located in 317-B Student Center, 4024 O’Hara St., the Writing Center is an resource that allows you to work on your writing with an experienced consultant. Although you should not expect consultants to “correct” your work for you, they can assist you in learning to organize, edit, and revise your essays. They can also provide fresh eyes and invention help. Consultants can work with you on a one-time basis, or they can work with you throughout the term. Their services are free, but you should call ahead (412-624-6556) or make an appointment online at www/english.pitt.edu/writingcenter/

**Other Services.** Pitt offers a number of services to help students who are struggling either academically or personally.

I’m committed to accommodating students with disabilities in appropriate ways; please speak with me after class or in office hours. If you are a student with a disability, you may wish to contact **Disability Resources and Services** in 216 William Pitt Union or at 412-648-7890. Providing information from DRS helps me and other instructors know how we can help you.

Pitt also offers free counseling at the **Counseling Center**, located in 334 William Pitt Union (412-648-7930), for students who are experiencing personal or emotional difficulties.