

Project: The X-Files Protocol - Rhetoric, Law, and Design for High-Security Environments

Lesson Overview

In this cross-curricular unit, students adopt the persona of FBI Special Agent (and MD) Dana Scully to design a comprehensive communication suite for a music school's entry point. This project bridges English (persuasive rhetoric), Design (visual semiotics), Legal Studies (privacy and trespass law), and Psychology (deterrence). Students will move beyond simple sign-making to create high-level technical notices that command respect, deter unwanted behavior, and establish a "professional forensic" atmosphere.

Materials Needed

- Graphic design software (Canva, Adobe Illustrator, or Affinity Designer) or high-quality drafting materials.
- Access to ACARA v9 English and Civics/Citizenship standards.
- A "Case File" folder (physical or digital) to collect research.
- Sample security camera footage or images of high-security signage for analysis.
- Legal research access (AustLII or similar) for Trespass and Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) research.

Learning Objectives (ACARA v9 Aligned)

- **English (Level 10-12):** Analyze how language features, devices, and visual elements are combined to create sophisticated meaning and influence audience response.
- **Design/Media Arts:** Apply design thinking to solve complex communication problems involving specific physical environments and security constraints.
- **Civics & Citizenship/Legal Studies:** Evaluate the legal rights and responsibilities of property owners regarding surveillance, privacy, and "implied license" to enter.
- **Psychology/Criminology:** Explore Environmental Criminology (CPTED - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) to deter disruptive behavior.

Success Criteria

- The notices successfully mirror the clinical, authoritative, and skeptical tone of Agent Dana Scully.
- The designs use visual hierarchy to ensure key security warnings are seen before the doorbell is pressed.
- The text incorporates precise legal or technical terminology to discourage "porch pirates" and vandals through intellectual intimidation.
- The student provides a "Rationale Document" explaining the rhetorical choices made.

Part 1: The Hook - "The Truth is In Here (By Appointment Only)"

Scenario: You are not just a music student or teacher; you are the lead investigator of your own professional space. The entrance to your school is a portal that requires a high-level clearance. Disruptions (knocking, stalking, unannounced visits) are "anomalies" that interfere with the clinical precision of musical education. Your mission is to create a series of notices that use *The Scully Method*: clinical, detached, scientifically authoritative, and legally unassailable.

Discussion: What characterizes Dana Scully's voice? Is it aggressive? No. It is precise. It is factual. It relies on the weight of evidence. How does that differ from a standard "Please be quiet" sign?

Part 2: I Do (Modeling the Rhetoric)

The instructor demonstrates the shift from "Low Stakes" to "Scully Level" communication:

- *Standard:* "Please don't knock loudly, use the doorbell."
- *Scully Level:* "Acoustic disruptions compromise the integrity of ongoing sessions. Audible alerts are restricted to the electronic doorbell interface. Immediate digital logging of all facial metadata is currently active."

Key Concept: Implied License. In Australian Law, there is an "implied license" for the public to walk to your door. We will learn how to legally "revoke" that license through specific signage language (e.g., "Notice of Revocation of Implied License to Enter").

Part 3: We Do (Collaborative Design Breakdown)

As a group (or student-mentor pair), analyze the visual elements of a "High-Security Notice":

- **Typography:** San-serif fonts (Helvetica, Roboto) suggest modern, federal authority.
- **Color Palette:** High contrast (Black/Yellow for caution; Blue/White for instructional; Red/White for prohibition).
- **The "Blue File" Logic:** How to phrase a warning to "porch pirates" that suggests they are being caught in a forensic net rather than just a "nanny cam."

Part 4: You Do (Independent Project)

The student will create three distinct notices for the music school door/gate:

Task 1: The "Digital Sentry" Notice

Designed for the security camera doorbell. It must instruct the visitor on *how* to use the bell and inform them of the 24/7 recording in a way that sounds clinical and FBI-adjacent. (Focus: Media Arts/Visual Rhetoric).

Task 2: The "Acoustic Integrity" Notice

Designed to stop repetitive or "obnoxious" knocking. This notice should explain the "scientific" reason

why knocking is prohibited (e.g., decibel interference with recording/rehearsal). (Focus: English/Persuasion).

Task 3: The "Anti-Anomaly" Perimeter Warning

Designed for the perimeter/gate to deter vandals and "stalkers." This must use legal terminology regarding "Private Property" and "Continuous Surveillance." (Focus: Legal Studies/Civics).

Extension: University Pathways & Enrichment

- **Pathways to Law:** Research the *Privacy Act 1988*. Write a 500-word brief on whether a doorbell camera violates the privacy of a "porch pirate" in an Australian residential/commercial context.
- **Pathways to Criminology:** Investigate "Rational Choice Theory." How do signs that mention "Digital Archiving" change the cost-benefit analysis of a potential vandal?
- **Pathways to Design:** Create a "Brand Identity" for the music school that looks like a government research facility (e.g., "The [Name] Institute of Sonic Research").

Assessment & Feedback

Formative Assessment: Check-in during the drafting phase. Does the tone sound like Scully, or is it too "angry"? (Scully is never angry; she is simply right).

Summative Assessment: A portfolio consisting of:

1. The three printed/digital notices.
2. A 2-page "Project Rationale" citing ACARA v9 standards in English and Design.
3. A "Legal Compliance Checklist" ensuring all signs meet local requirements for surveillance notification.

Differentiation

- **Scaffolding (Struggling Learners):** Provide a "Scully Word Bank" (e.g., *integrity, protocol, metadata, acoustic, authorized, evidentiary, surveillance*) and templates for sign layout.
- **Extension (Advanced Learners):** Integrate QR codes into the signs that, when scanned, link to a professional "Digital Check-in" form or a legal disclaimer page, simulating a modern corporate-security interface.

Conclusion: Closing the Case

Review the final designs. **Ask the student:** "If a stranger approached this door, what is the 'story' they tell themselves about who lives here? Does this sign make them feel like they are being watched by a person, or by a system?" Final takeaway: Professionalism and clear boundaries are the best defense against disruption.