

MJ 721: Usability and Multimedia Design Fall 2015

Instructor

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Office hours

Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon—Call my cell phone or find me on the MJ 721 Google Hangout. (See my contact information above.)

I'm flexible and will talk via phone, Skype, Facebook or Google as needed. Please email me to set a meeting time. For all other correspondence, emails are the best way to reach me. I will answer within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours on weekends. If you have an emergency or urgent problem, please call me on my cell phone, 202.288.3420.

Course Description

Whether creating an animated graphic, an interactive kiosk or an entire mobile Web presence, excellent usability and design are central to a communicator's success. Usability and multimedia design combine the basics of information organization, visual layout and several media including still photos, video, audio, graphics and text. The results can be extremely powerful.

This course is about being a knowledgeable communicator, an informed designer and an innovator. Passions for clear, accessible and ethical communication, as well as creativity and design, are essential to your success. These immersive forms of presentation open many possibilities, many of which we are yet to discover. The goals of this course, therefore, are to familiarize you with multimedia design concepts and allow you opportunities to experiment, create and explore.

Class dates, Fall 2015 semester

Tuesday, August 18 through Wednesday, December 2, 2015. Exam days, December 4-December 11th) Final projects will be presented via videoconference.

Sakai

All course materials and links will be available on the Sakai course site at <http://sakai.unc.edu>.

Course goals and objectives

- To explore information design and apply best practice methods for digital media
- To analyze, test and practice how to design user-centered communication using interaction and multimedia
- To share ideas and to work collaboratively using a design thinking model
- To execute and evaluate a comprehensive project that demonstrates proficiency in information design, multimedia, usability and innovation

Textbooks

Required

Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability, Revisited (third edition)

Steve Krug
New Riders, 2014
978-0321965516

Optional

Rocket Surgery Made Easy

Steve Krug
New Riders, 2010
978-0321657299

Instructional Approach

This course structure uses a variety of instructional methods including videos, readings from textbook and online sources, a class discussion board for idea sharing and project critiques, and other digital tools for working collaboratively and for providing online instruction.

Discussions

As part of the course, you will be graded on your participation in required discussions. It is important that you share ideas, respond to others, and participate regularly in class discussions. These can be exciting and enriching.

There will be eight class discussions throughout the course. A student team will moderate each discussion.

As discussion moderators, your responsibility is to lead us in discussion and understanding of the readings for that week. You will also moderate the discussion and keep classmates on-point.

As the course instructor, my role is to facilitate your discussions with each other. I will ask follow-up questions and provide additional information as needed but I will not step in to direct the discussion. Please email me with any pertinent questions.

At the end of the discussion, the team moderators will write a synopsis of the week's takeaways from the discussion board and weekly readings. The synopsis must be no longer than three pages and be posted within that week's discussion folder by the following Wednesday at 11:55 p.m. after the discussion ends.

Software

This class requires a working knowledge of Adobe Illustrator. Other free software and tools made also be used.

UNC provides free access to Lynda.com tutorials that we will use to build further Illustrator and digital design skills especially related to Web and mobile design.

Grading

This course uses the graduate grading scale of H (high pass), P (pass), L (low pass), and F (fail).

Your overall grade for this course will be based on the following components:

- Discussion (10%)
- Projects x 4 (75%)
 1. User Experience and Interface Design project (15%)
 2. Multimedia Storytelling project (15%)
 3. Innovation project (15%)
 4. Final project (30%)
- Usability Testing (15%)

Schedule

Week 1: Intro to Information Design for Interactive Media

Week 2: The User, Process and Product

Week 3: Research and Conceptual Development

Week 4: Design and Presentation

Week 5: Intro to Multimedia Storytelling

Week 6: Audio, Image and Storyboards

Week 7: Production

Week 8: Design Thinking // Final Project Idea Meetings

Week 9: Design Thinking

Week 10: Collaborate and Create

Week 11: User Testing

Week 12: User Testing

Week 13: User Testing

Week 14: Final Project

Week 15: Final Project

Week 16: Pitch

Honor Code

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean Charlie Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

Seeking Help

If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

Diversity

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>. UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Special Accommodations

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Accessibility Services website at <https://accessibility.unc.edu/>

ACCREDITATION

The School of Media and Journalism's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on the last six bullet dots under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above.