

MEJO 187.3 FA16

Introduction to Interactive Media

Tuesday & Thursday 5:00 p.m. - 6:45 p.m. | Carroll Lab: 59

Instructor

Scott Dixon
Adjunct Lecturer
dixon@unc.edu

Office Hours

By appointment, immediately before or after class.

Course Description

Multimedia authoring tools provide communicators with some of the most powerful and effective storytelling options available. Understanding these tools is essential for anyone who plans a successful career in the media industry. However, the ability to resourcefully and proficiently use these tools is an even greater asset. The goal of this class, therefore, is to help you gain knowledge of both these aspects. You will examine and understand the value of multimedia in the journalism industry and begin to develop the skills to execute your ideas.

Prerequisites: While this is not a prerequisite for this course, Visual Communication majors are strongly recommended to take MEJO 182: Introduction to Graphic Design prior or concurrent with this course.

Course Format

This course will consist of four interactive media projects and a student presentation/critique on an interactive document or product; quizzes, tutorials, critiques and class discussions on practice and readings.

Course Progression

Part I: Information Architecture and User Experience
Part II: HTML & CSS
Part III: PHP & Content Management Systems

Course Goals

To meet the following student learning outcomes core values and competencies:

Student Learning Outcomes

- Design systematic interactive information architecture and usability
- Design for user experiences that responds to a diversity of peoples and cultures
- Logically and intuitively organize information for different interactive projects
- Understand concepts and apply legal practices in the use of images and information
- Compare and contrast interactive design and communication strategies
- Write and develop with basic programming languages including HMTL, CSS, PHP
- Write HTML and CSS using a dynamic text editor
- Adapt the work flow and creative process for a front-end designer or developer
- Demonstrate interactive best practices in file management, code and design decisions
- Plan and produce diverse interactive projects for web and mobile
- Build responsive interactive projects using a preferred framework
- Present, evaluate and critique interactive projects

Suggested Course Textbooks

HTML & CSS: Design and Build Websites

Jon Duckett

John Wiley & Sons (2011)

ISBN-13: 978-1118008188

The Principals of Beautiful Web Design

Jason Beard

SitePoint, Ltd. (2007)

ISBN 978-0-9805768-9-4

(eBook available via UNC Library)

The Non-Designer's Design Book

Robin Williams

Pearson Education (2008)

ISBN 9780321563088

(eBook available via UNC Library)

Don't Make Me Think, Revisited, A Common Sense Approach To Web and Mobile Usability

Steve Krug

New Riders (2014)

ISBN-13: 978-0321965516

(eBook available via UNC Library)

Website Domain and Hosting

You are required to have a personal domain and obtain a host provider. Suggested hosts are GoDaddy.com, HostGator.com, Bluehost.com. I will provide demos via GoDaddy.com.

Software and Training

Some software programs are required for this course, including **Adobe Illustrator**. All of the programs you need will be available on the lab computers. If you wish to have Adobe Illustrator on your personal computer, it can be purchased through the UNC Ram Shop online or in store. Contact: (919) 962-2422 or ramshop@email.unc.edu. Software programs are nonrefundable, so be sure you are buying what you want. Earlier versions of Illustrator (CS4, CS5) are acceptable for use in this course. Adobe Creative Cloud subscription is probably the best option, with a 30 day trial.

Lynda.com is offered free to UNC students. We will use Lynda.com and other free tutorial sites throughout the semester. To learn more about Lynda.com, visit the ITS website at <http://software.sites.unc.edu/lynda/>

We will use <http://www.w3schools.com/> and <https://www.codecademy.com/> throughout the course.

Lab Information

- Connecting to the lab Class Server Storage remotely: <http://it.iomc.unc.edu/remote-access/#mac>
Once connected, select your semester and class section.
- Drinks and food are not allowed on desks next to computers. Water in a sealed container is ok.
- Computers refresh every night, save all your work to the server and/or take with you.
- Lab equipment/software support: help@help.mj.unc.edu
- Lab hours are 6AM-Midnight every day, and free when not in use. To access the labs you will need a OneCard.

Assignments

Projects

There will be four main projects during this course. The first one will challenge you to design a website using Adobe Illustrator and employing sound design techniques that we will discuss in class. The second project will expand on the first by asking you to both design and develop a website using HTML and CSS. The third will challenge you to create your own personal portfolio website using WordPress. The final project will be an online magazine/publication with a completely custom design and WordPress theme. Additional information about all of these projects will be provided during class.

Exercises and Quizzes

Exercises will correlate and build upon lecture material and suggested reading. There will also be quizzes on current material via Sakai. If you follow along in class, keep up with the reading assignments and pay attention in class, the quizzes should be only moderately challenging.

Website Critique

You will be asked to critique and lead a discussion about a professional multimedia project of your choosing for the class. More specifics about the requirements of this presentation and the accompanying paper will be provided during class.

Assessment

Your success in this course will be determined by participation as well as completion and effort on all assignments. There will be smaller exercises, quizzes and four main projects throughout the semester. In general, late projects are unacceptable. You will lose **one letter grade per day late** on all projects. In unusual circumstances (serious illness, etc.), late projects will be accepted only if you reach out to the instructor before the assignment is due with a legitimate reason for its tardiness.

It is also important that you discuss your work and the work of others during project critiques. Failure to do so will lower your participation grade.

Grading

There are basic expectations that any supervisor or project manager will have for a project undertaken by an interactive designer or developer. All of your assignments must meet the following minimum basic standards to be considered for a grade of "B" or better the project must be:

- Presented and shared during class critiques and informal discussions
- Completed according to the assignment specifications.
- Completed on time.
- Free of typographical, grammatical and mechanical errors.
- Completed so as to evidence a clear grasp of interactive design and production standards.

For a grade of "A" or better, your work will be evaluated for information and news value, presentation, editing decisions, information architecture, aesthetic design choices, and creativity and innovation.

Grade Weighting

Participation: 10%

Tutorials: 10%

Quizzes: 10%

Website Critique: 10%

Projects: 60%

Grading Scale

94-100: A

90-93: A-

87-89: B+

83-86: B

80-82: B-

77-79: C+

73-76: C

70-72: C-

67-69: D+

60-66: D

Below 60: F

Explanation of course letter grades

A Excellent: Above and beyond

B Strong: Very good

C Adequate: Acceptable performance

D Minimal passing: Marginal performance

Attendance

This course is demanding, and skills will be taught in each session that you will need to proceed with your assignments. Missing class will leave you behind. Therefore, attendance is required, participation is expected, and deadlines are absolute. If you must miss a class for any reason, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor ahead of time. Each student will be allowed one unexcused absence. Each additional unexcused absence will result in a 2% reduction (via participation points) in your final grade. Excused absences (doctor's note or cleared with me in advance) will not affect your grade. Critique absence will be an additional 1% reduction. 3 tardies will equal 1 absence.

Class Expectations

Most class sessions will consist of lecture/demonstration and lab time used to work on the current assignment. Students should plan on spending a generous amount of additional lab time outside of class to complete readings, tutorials and assignments. You are expected to come to every class on time, interact with your classmates and the instructor, and work hard inside and outside of lab.

Once class has started, you are expected NOT to check your cell phone or browse non-course related websites during class. This is distracting to students around you and to the instructor. Failure to do so will lower a student's participation grade.

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.

<http://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/>

<http://www.mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion>

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 Department of Disability Services website at <http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/>

Accreditation

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication'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.