

MEJO 490 – 003 SPECIAL TOPICS: VISUAL LANGUAGE LAB

Thursday, 4:40 – 7:20 p.m. | Carroll Hall, Room 141

Instructor

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Office Hours

Thursdays | 1:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Available by appointment. Please email.

Credits

3 Credits | Counts toward MJ School conceptual and immersive course requirements.

Level

Graduate/Undergraduate

Description

The Visual Language Lab explores the growing influence of design as a thinking process for human-centered activity, innovation and management. In this course students investigate how design is becoming integrated into all disciplines. Collaborating with researchers, data analysts, reporters, marketing content strategists, social media specialists, computer scientists, business operations analysts and others to share interdisciplinary knowledge, students design and develop strategic communication plans, research reports, projects or products addressing societal issues and challenges. A variety of media and methodologies will be used including design research, applied theory, design thinking, service design, systems thinking and social consciousness.

Focus of the VLab includes:

- Immersive learning
- Design research
- Strategic communications using visual, verbal and written language
- Holistic problem-solving
- Programmatic design thinking for change
- Experimentation with cross-platform, multichannel communication
- Exploring possibilities of media culture, innovation and technology

Course Structure

This course is highly participatory and structured as a seminar setting. In class and independently students are required to collaborate, research and develop solutions— by plan, schematic or making — to address practice-based problems. During the course students apply theoretical design systems, use design research methods and learn information and data design skills and strategies. Guest lectures by designers and thinkers contribute to the discussion. Collaboration with other courses and real-world companies and organizations is encouraged.

Note The exploratory nature of this course encourages diverse opinions. This course is a catalyst for open and free thinking with the intention of learning to express opinions and ideas within an environment of respect and shared purpose. Indeed, the ability to listen, evaluate and reevaluate ideas is a central lesson of the VLhab.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Investigate societal issues and challenges using various design theories and models
- Apply design research and ethnographic techniques to examining societal problems
- Develop strategic solutions, plans or approaches using visual, verbal and written language
- Evaluate the adequacy of the solution, plan or approach
- Communicate findings and results to diverse stakeholders across platforms, channels and with diverse methods

Readings

The Design of Everyday Things
Don Norman
Basic Books (2013)
ISBN: 1452654123

Reading also includes online or resource articles and papers. The instructor reserves the right to assign a second textbook if needed

Course Grade Weighting

Research projects 60%
Research presentation 20%
Insights and thought leadership (includes journal) 20%

Grading Scale

94% and higher: A
90-93: A-
87-89: B+
84-86: B
80-83: B-
77-79: C+
74-76: C
70-73: C-
67-69: D+
64-66: D
60-63: D-
59% or below: F

Explanation Of Letter Grades

A Excellent: Above and beyond
B Strong: Very good
C Average: Meet requirements
D Minimal passing: Marginal performance

Attendance

Attendance is expected and required for all classes. You are expected to participate in class discussions and activities and to share your work and points of view. Students will be responsible for everything covered in class, therefore participation is mandatory. Excused absences must be coordinated with the instructor and with your team.

Honor Code

Students are expected to 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, please visit the Accessibility Services website at <https://accessibility.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.

Fall 2016 Schedule*

Week 1		August 25	Social Innovation
Week 2		September 1	Design Research
Week 3		September 8	Ideation
Week 4		September 15	Problem Framing
Week 5		September 22	Systems Thinking
Week 6		September 29	Prototyping
Week 7		October 6	Messaging
Week 8		October 13	Presentation
Week 9		October 20	FALL BREAK
Week 10		October 27	Service Design
Week 11		November 3	Design Thinking
Week 12		November 10	Journey Mapping
Week 13		November 17	Presentation
Week 14		November 24	THANKSGIVING
Week 15		December 1	Social Design
Week 16		December 13	FINAL EXAM

* *The instructor reserves the right to adjust and change schedule as needed.*