MEJO 187-003

Foundations of Interactive Media

Andrew Sipes

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TTH 6:00 PM - 7:45 PM, Carroll Room 58
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Office Hours by Appointment

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.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

These are skills a student should be able to demonstrate at the conclusion of the course:

- Outline the steps necessary to design and develop a website from scratch

- Communicate the attributes that make a website usable and accessible

- Use the internet to search for design ideas, development ideas, and royalty-free assets

- Use Adobe XD to create website prototypes and document crucial design assets

- Markup information for a website using semantically correct HTML

- Responsively design and style a website using CSS

- Implement interactive features for a website using JavaScript

- Troubleshoot development issues using MDN web docs, Chrome DevTools, and Stack Overflow

- Version and Deploy code using GitHub

- Manage WordPress features such as posts, pages, categories, themes, and plugins

- Communicate clearly about web design and web development, and deliver meaningful feedback

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

This course is demanding. Each session will teach skills that you will need to proceed with your assignments, and missing a class will leave you behind. Therefore, attendance is required, participation is expected and deadlines are absolute. You can attend in person or your can attend via Zoom. In special cases you may watch a recording of the class after the fact, but it is highly recommended that you attend in realtime with your classmates. These cases include but are not limited to being sick, taking time for mental health, living in a timezone outside the continental United States, voting, and attending to important personal matters.

Each student will be allowed one unexcused absence. Additional unexcused absences will result in a 1% reduction in your final grade. Excused absences (e.g. any situation cleared with me in advance) do not affect your grade. Students that attend most often tend to do the best in this class.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

This class does not require you to purchase any materials.

Computer: mejo187.com/computer

These are recommendations for a more seamless computing experience. Some common problems students have include running out of storage, running out of memory, having an out-of-date operating system, or having poor window management. Learning to code can sometimes be a frustrating experience; make sure your computer isn't making it harder than it needs to be!

Slack: mejo187.com/slack

A communication platform for collaboration, public feedback, and public/private help requests.

Adobe XD: mejo187.com/xd

A UI/UX design tool for creating interactive prototypes of web apps and mobile apps.

Visual Studio Code: mejo187.com/code

An open source text editor for creating websites (and other applications).

GitHub Account: mejo187.com/github

A free internet based service where you can version and deploy your code.

Git: mejo187.com/git

An open source version control software that keeps track of changes made to your code.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Projects

There will be four main projects during this course. Additional information about all of these projects will be provided during class.

Project I: create a prototype using Adobe XD and the design techniques we discuss in class

Project II: design and develop a website from scratch using HTML and CSS

Project III: design and develop an interactive website using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript

Project IV: create your own online magazine website using WordPress

Additional information and directions for these projects will be provided during class.

Website Critique

Each student will critique and lead a discussion about a professional multimedia project of their choosing. More specifics about the requirements of this presentation and the accompanying paper will be provided during class.

Exercises

There will be exercises associated with most lectures. The exercises are designed to be finished in class, but are due each Sunday at 11:55 PM.

Quizzes

There will be weekly quizzes on the material covered in lecture. No more than five questions per quiz. Quizzes are due each Sunday at 11:55 PM.

Participation

Based on engagement, feedback, and student-led review.

Engagement: answer open questions, submit examples, volunteer

Feedback: commentary on the pros **and cons** of peer's design decisions (should not be repetitive/vague)

Student Review: at the beginning of class a student is picked to give a summary of the previous lecture

GRADING:

Grading scale	Grading breakdown
A = 94-100%,	Participation: 10%
A- = 90-93%,	Exercises and Quizzes: 10%
B+ = 87-89%,	Adobe XD Project: 15%
B = 83-86%,	HTML & CSS Project: 15%
B- = 80-82%,	HTML, CSS, & JavaScript Project: 20%
C+ = 77-79%,	WordPress Project: 15%
C = 73-76%,	Website Critique: 15%
C- = 70-72%,	
D+ = 67-69%	
D = 60-66%,	
F = 59% or below	

Grading method

I utilize transparent grading rubrics on Sakai for every assignment except quizzes, which are multiple choice and graded automatically. I provide limited written feedback for exercises and peer-feedback, moderate written feedback for the website critique, and detailed video feedback for projects. Additional or early feedback is always available via office hours or Slack help request.

Grading turnaround time

So long as an assignment is submitted on time, feedback and grades will be returned within a week of the due date. Assignments that are submitted late may have to wait up to an additional week.

DEADLINES:

Please note that deadlines are absolute. Extensions will only be granted because of extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, etc.), and you must notify me as soon as you are aware of the problem. Your workload – either in this class or in combination with others – is not an extenuating circumstance. Unexcused failure to submit your work by the deadline will result in a five-point (5) deduction for the first 24-hour period, followed by 10-point deductions for each day thereafter.

HONOR CODE:

The Honor Code (https://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/honor-code/) forms a bond of trust among students, faculty, and administrators. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill operates under a system of self-governance, as students are responsible for governing themselves. As such, our University is transformed into a powerful community of inquiry and learning. The Honor Code embodies the ideals of academic honesty, integrity, and responsible citizenship, and governs the performance of all academic work a student conducts at the University. Acceptance of an offer of admission to Carolina presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in our century-old tradition of honor and integrity.

PLAGIARISM:

In this course, it is acceptable to incorporate code from documentation, tutorials, or stack overflow answers. The source should be credited, linked, and commented in your code and credited visibly on the site, either in the footer or a credits page. Make sure to add comments explaining what the code is doing, how it works, and what you learned from reading through it / using it. **Do not copy or use code that you do not understand.** Additionally, the third-party code should merely serve as a launch pad for your own, original work and code; it should not be copied wholesale.

It is not acceptable to copy an entire project/website/example you find online, replace the text and images, tweak the style, and submit it as your own. The majority of this course focuses on how to design and develop your own websites from scratch, not filling in a template with content.**

** Does not apply to the WordPress project, where use of plugins and templates is required

If you have questions about what code you can use, how to properly cite the code, or you would like an explanation on how a piece of code you found works, ask me! I'm more than happy to walk you through a piece of code so you can apply that foundational knowledge in future projects.

SEEKING HELP:

Do not delay asking for help. The skills in this class build on one another, so failing to get help early on can hurt your overall experience and performance in the course. I am always happy to help and I aim to be one of the most accessible instructors you have at UNC.

Part of this course focuses on learning to troubleshoot things on your own. This is a valuable and empowering skill that I want you to acquire. Sometimes this means that my first response may be more of a point in the right direction instead of a step-by-step fix. For common problems, I might point you to FAQ videos I have made. For content covered in class, I might ask you to review the lecture.

If you have given it another good try after our first chat and are still having trouble, message me again and I will provide more detailed guidance until the issue is resolved.

Please do not spend more than 15 minutes per round of troubleshooting before checking in with me or your peers on Slack. Ideally working on these projects should be fun. Spending hours troubleshooting a single problem is demoralizing and not what I want for students.

Office Hours

Want personal, live assistance or feedback? I have office hours by appointment on weekdays, and I am happy to meet with you!

Slack

Message me on Slack, whenever you'd like! Triaging all requests to a unified, conversational platform helps me provide fast responses and quality assistance. **Please do not email me a help request, I will ask you to resubmit via Slack.****

** Do email me for formal matters, like excused absences, grades, etc

How to Ask for Help

Here are some things you can do to submit a quality help request:

- Describe the issue, and what you have tried to fix it.

- Attach photos of the problem (if applicable).

- Make sure your Adobe XD project or GitHub repo is up to date, and then link to it in the request.

Failure to include these relevant details delays my ability to help. If missing, my first message will likely be a request for the details, instead of the solution to the issue.

Addressing Code Anxiety

Web development can be intimidating, especially if you have not written any code before. If you are worried about the coding aspect of this course, I recommend you meet with me early on so we can go over strategies that will maximize your experience and performance in the course.

Know that several students have been in your shoes, and they have all made it through just fine! :)

DIVERSITY:

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined on the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office's webpage (https://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/). 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 Resources & Services site at https://ars.unc.edu/.

ACCREDITATION:

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media'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://hussman.unc.edu/accreditation. 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. The values and competencies associated with this course include being able to:

- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;

- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;

- Think critically, creatively and independently;

- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions.

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE:
** Subject to change due to COVID-19

Class No.	Date	Topics Covered
1	Jan. 19	Introduction & Syllabus
2	Jan. 21	Web Design Process
3	Jan. 26	Web Design Principles
4	Jan. 28	Color & Typography
5	Feb. 2	Branding & Visual Hierarchy
6	Feb. 4	Project I Lab Session
	Feb. 7	**Project I Due at 11:55 PM**
7	Feb. 9	How Does the Internet Work
8	Feb. 11	How Do We Publish Code
	Feb. 16	Wellness Day
9	Feb. 18	HTML Part I
10	Feb. 23	HTML Part II
11	Feb. 25	CSS Part I
12	Mar. 2	CSS Part II
13	Mar. 4	CSS Flexbox Part I
14	Mar. 9	CSS Flexbox Part II
	Mar. 11	Wellness Day
15	Mar. 16	CSS Practical Examples
16	Mar. 18	Project II Lab Session
	Mar. 21	**Project II Due at 11:55 PM**
17	Mar. 23	JavaScript Part I
18	Mar. 25	JavaScript Part II
19	Mar. 30	JavaScript Part III
20	Apr. 1	JavaScript Practical Examples I
21	Apr. 6	JavaScript Practical Examples II
22	Apr. 8	Embed Flourish Chart With JavaScript

23	Apr. 13	JavaScript Student Requested Examples
24	Apr. 15	Project III Lab Session
	Apr. 18	**Project III Due at 11:55 PM**
25	Apr. 20	WordPress Part I
26	Apr. 22	WordPress Part II
27	Apr. 27	WordPress Themes
28	Apr. 29	WordPress Shortcodes and Plugins
29	May 4	Project IV Lab Session
	May 5	**Project IV Due at 11:55 PM**
30	May 11	Final Exam Period at 7:00 PM

FINAL EXAM:

Our exam period will take place on May 11th at 7:00 PM in the room we normally meet. There is no final exam in this course. We will spend our time presenting projects/critiques, reflecting on the course, and discussing next steps.