

# USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN AND USABILITY

Syllabus: [go.unc.edu/581fall21](https://go.unc.edu/581fall21) Materials: [go.unc.edu/581materials](https://go.unc.edu/581materials) Sakai: [sakai.unc.edu/portal/site/581fall21](https://sakai.unc.edu/portal/site/581fall21)



## Introduction

Welcome to Fall 2021 semester! Whether creating the newest app, a VR interface or an entire Web presence, excellent, usable and understandable design is central to a communicator's success. UX Design and Usability combines the basics of visual layout with strategies for understanding users and building effective experiences.

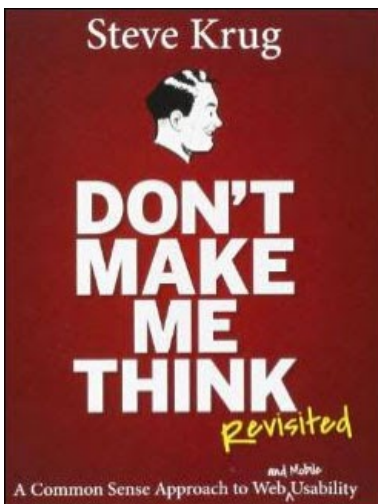
This course is about being a knowledgeable journalist, a media artist, an informed designer and an innovator. Passion for ethical communication and creativity are essential to your success. Understanding users and their behaviors will lead to becoming an effective creator of digital products. This work opens many possibilities, some of which we are yet to discover. The goals of this class, therefore, are to familiarize you with usability, UI and UX design concepts and provide opportunities to experiment, create and explore.

## The essentials

- **Class time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30-1:45 p.m.
- **Class location:**
  - Tuesdays, Carroll Hall Room 58
  - Thursdays, Zoom meeting @ [go.unc.edu/581class](https://go.unc.edu/581class) password for class: MEJO581
- **Instructor:** Associate Professor Laura Ruel, 919-448-8864, [lrue@unc.edu](mailto:lrue@unc.edu)
- **Office hours:** Wednesdays from 9:30-11 am and by appointment
- **Office location:** [go.unc.edu/rue](https://go.unc.edu/rue) password for office hours: UNC

## Required supplies

**Books:** Don't Make Me Think (Revisited): A Common Sense Approach to Web and Mobile Usability (copyright 2014) by Steve Krug.



## Recommended items

**USB memory stick** (1G minimum) or portable hard drive to save your work. Please be aware that you are responsible for backing up your own work.

**Personal headphones.** You will need to supply your own headphones for examining digital interfaces on your devices.

**Sketchbook** for tracking ideas, storyboarding class projects and brainstorming. Much of the material for this class is through online links and videos.

## Useful links

- **LinkedIn Learning tutorial access for UNC students:**

<https://software.sites.unc.edu/linkedin/> (page provides a link to LinkedIn Learning with your UNC credentials)

- **Adobe Creative Cloud software (including XD):**

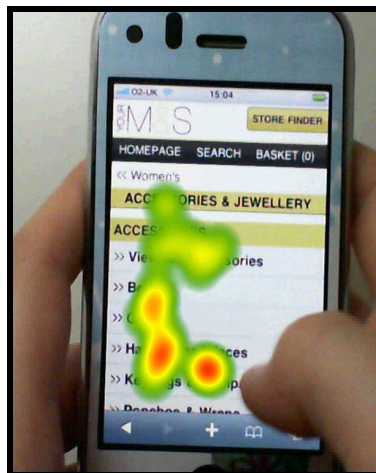
<http://software.sites.unc.edu/adobe/>

## Description

This course will introduce you to the basic areas of excellent UI and UX design and help you develop expertise in their application. They are:

- Usability
- Innovation
- Audience analysis
- Information editing
- Information architecture
- Aesthetic presentation

By reading, viewing and discussing the writings and works of UX professionals, journalists, artists, web developers, photographers, usability experts, graphic designers, educators and researchers you will deepen your appreciation for each distinct media form. By examining the latest eye-tracking research and conducting a usability test, you will assess the practical application of many concepts. Through original storyboards and exercises, you will work to integrate all this knowledge into well-designed packages.



Eye tracking can be used to assess the effectiveness of an interface and design. We will study these technologies in this course.

## Deadlines

Simply put, attendance is required, participation is expected and deadlines are absolute. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on specified dates. (See course calendar on Sakai.) **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

## Attendance: University Policy

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#), and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC).

## Attendance: Class Policy

Class will be handled like a job. You are responsible for being in class on time each day. Consistent late arrivals or early departures will be reflected in your in-class exercise grade. Timeliness matters in media and journalism.

**Attendance will be taken at the start of each class session, and occasionally at the end of each class.** Similar to having personal time off (PTO) at work, you are allotted TWO absences without need to justify or explain your reasons for the missed classes. Similar to extending beyond one's allotted PTO, any additional absence past the two allotted days will result in a half-grade deduction (e.g., a B becomes a B- at three absences) for each additional day of absence. As this course is project-based and cumulative in its delivery of technical information, it is important to attend each scheduled course day to receive new information, work collaboratively and practice new skills. Students who choose to miss class are responsible for understanding the TOPICS taught that day. Bottom line, attendance is required. In the case of unforeseen circumstances or emergencies, please notify the instructor as soon as possible.

## Organization of class time

Each class will consist of lecture/discussion and group work. Some days will include time to work on upcoming assignments. This time will be used to practice design techniques, work collaboratively with your classmates or begin an assignment. Students should plan to spend time outside of class to complete these class assignments.

## Grading

You are graded according to the highest professional standards. Rubrics for each assignment will be provided at the time each project is distributed. The breakdown in percentages is:

- A = 94-100%
- A- = 90-93%
- A- = 90-92%
- B+ = 87-89%
- B = 83-86%
- B- = 80-82%
- C+ = 77-79%
- C- = 70-72%
- D = 63-69%
- F = 62% or below





Understanding the user experience can provide direction in design.

## Grading components

- **Weekly UI challenge, in-class exercises/quizzes and peer critiques:** approximately 10% of the final grade
- **Usability test assignment:** approximately 20% of the final grade (includes report, slides and live presentation)
- **Persona & user journey assignment:** approximately 20% of the final grade
- **Structure & Storyboard assignment:** approximately 20% of the final grade
- **Final project:** approximately 30% of the final grade (includes ideas, proposal, project and pitch)

## Additional graduate student requirements

In addition to the items above, students taking this course **for graduate credit** will be required to present a comprehensive critique of a website, app or another digital interface. More details will be provided during the second week of class.

## Grading criteria

There are basic expectations that any supervisor or project manager would have for a project undertaken by a UI or UX designer or usability specialist. All of your assignments must meet the following **minimum basic standards** to be considered for a grade of “B” or better. Graduate students must meet these requirements for a grade of “P” or better). The project must be:

- completed according to all the assignment specifications
- completed on time.

- free of typographical, grammatical and mechanical errors.

Your assignments also will be evaluated for these other aspects (when relevant):

- audience analysis and personas
- news value to these audiences
- presentation editing decisions
- architecture of information presentation
- aesthetic design choices
- creativity and innovation
- usability
- written justifications and explanations of design decisions

Your usability test also will be evaluated for:

- quality of the user test script and testing materials.
- interpretation of test results.
- clarity and focus of written usability report.
- effectiveness of usability test results presentation.

## Syllabus Changes

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

## Seeking help

If you need individual assistance, it is 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. Please feel able to contact the course instructor as soon as you perceive any warning signs of things that might adversely affect your class performance or final grade.

## Honor Code

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 C. A. Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

## ARS

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities.

Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

(source: <https://ars.unc.edu/faculty-staff/syllabus-statement>)

## Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

## Title IX

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim – [titleixcoordinator@unc.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu).

## Policy on Non-discrimination

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's [Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination](#) offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu)) or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#), or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

## Diversity statement

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions. More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion [mission and vision statements](#) with accompanying goals. These complement the University policy on [prohibiting harassment and discrimination](#). In summary, 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. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] 966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies.

## Mask use

All enrolled students are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom. This requirement is to protect our educational community -- your classmates and me -- as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, I will ask you to leave immediately, and I will submit a report to the [Office of Student Conduct](#). At that point you will be disenrolled from this course for the protection of our educational community. Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception. For additional information, see <https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/university-guidelines-for-facemasks/>.



## Accreditation

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media 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 "Professional values and competencies" listed below.

- 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 in which they work.

## Semester topics

The outline below provides a rough idea of class topics by week. Based on the availability of guest speakers, topics and exercises are subject to change. For a [current calendar](#), links to online readings, viewings, presentations, assignments and deadlines, see the class Sakai site.

### MEJO 581 Fall 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
15 Aug 2021 TOPIC: Course intro	16	17	18 FDOC	19 IN PERSON MEETING	20  11:55 pm <a href="#">Student survey due</a>	21
22 UNIT ONE: Design Thinking	23	24 IN PERSON MEETING <a href="#">Weekly UI Instructions</a> <a href="#">Weekly UI #1 due</a>	25	26 REMOTE MEETING @ <a href="http://go.unc.edu/581class">go.unc.edu/581class</a>	27  11:55 pm <a href="#">Think BIG due</a>	28
29 UNIT TWO: Usability testing	30	31 IN PERSON MEETING Weekly UI #2 due	1 Sep	2 REMOTE MEETING @ <a href="http://go.unc.edu/581class">go.unc.edu/581class</a>	3  11:55 pm Think BIG peer feedback due	4
5 UNIT TWO: Usability testing	6	7 IN PERSON MEETING Weekly UI #3 due	8	9 REMOTE MEETING @ <a href="http://go.unc.edu/581class">go.unc.edu/581class</a>	10	11 --
12 UNIT TWO: Usability testing	13	14 IN PERSON MEETING Weekly UI #4 due	15	16 REMOTE MEETING @ <a href="http://go.unc.edu/581class">go.unc.edu/581class</a>	17	18
19 UNIT TWO: Usability testing	20	21 IN PERSON MEETING Weekly UI #5 due	22	23 REMOTE MEETING @ <a href="http://go.unc.edu/581class">go.unc.edu/581class</a>	24  11:55 pm Usability reports and presentations due	25
26 UNIT THREE: Building personas	27	28 IN PERSON MEETING Weekly UI #6 due	29	30 REMOTE MEETING @ <a href="http://go.unc.edu/581class">go.unc.edu/581class</a>	1 Oct	2
3 UNIT THREE: Building personas	4	5 IN PERSON MEETING Weekly UI #7 due	6	7 REMOTE MEETING @ <a href="http://go.unc.edu/581class">go.unc.edu/581class</a>	8  11:55 pm Persona project due	9

10 UNIT FOURS Structure and Storyboards	11	12 NO CLASS UNIVERSITY DAY	13	14 REMOTE MEETING @ <a href="https://go.unc.edu/581class">go.unc.edu/581class</a>	15	16
17 UNIT FOUR: Structure and Storyboards	18	19 IN PERSON MEETING Weekly UI #8 due	20	21 NO CLASS FALL BREAK	22	23
24 UNIT FOUR Structure and Storyboards	25	26 IN PERSON MEETING Weekly UI #9 due	27	28 REMOTE MEETING @ <a href="https://go.unc.edu/581class">go.unc.edu/581class</a>	29 1:55 pm Structure and Storyboards project due	30
31 UNIT FIVE: More design thinking. final project, guest speakers	1 Nov	2 IN PERSON MEETING Weekly UI #10 due	3	4 REMOTE MEETING @ <a href="https://go.unc.edu/581class">go.unc.edu/581class</a>	5	6
7 UNIT FIVE: More design thinking. final project, guest speakers	8	9 IN PERSON MEETING	10	11 REMOTE MEETING @ <a href="https://go.unc.edu/581class">go.unc.edu/581class</a>	12	13
14 UNIT FIVE: More design thinking. final project, guest speakers	15	16 IN PERSON MEETING	17	18 REMOTE MEETING @ <a href="https://go.unc.edu/581class">go.unc.edu/581class</a>	19	20
21 UNIT FIVE: More design thinking. final project, guest speakers	22	23 IN PERSON MEETING	24	25 NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK	26	27
28 UNIT FIVE: More design thinking. final project, guest speakers	29	30 IN PERSON MEETING	1 Dec <b>LDOC</b>	2	3	4

**FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS @ 8-11 AM ON TUESDAY, DEC. 7**