

USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN AND USABILITY

Syllabus: go.unc.edu/581spring21 Materials: go.unc.edu/581materials Sakai: sakai.unc.edu/portal/site/mejo581sp21



Introduction

Welcome to Fall 2020 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.

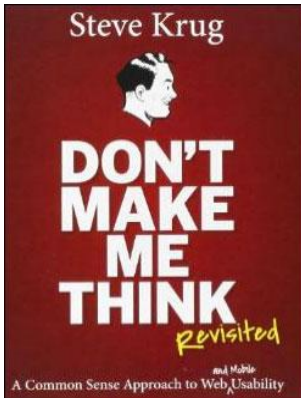
This course is about being a knowledgeable journalist, a media artist, an informed designer and an innovator. Passion for ethical communication and creativity are essential to your success. Understanding users and their behaviors will lead to becoming an effective creator of digital products. This work 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:** go.unc.edu/581class password for class: MEJO581
- **Instructor:** Associate Professor Laura Ruel, 919-448-8864, lrue@unc.edu
- **Office hours:** Wednesdays from 9:30-11 am and by appointment
- **Office location:** 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

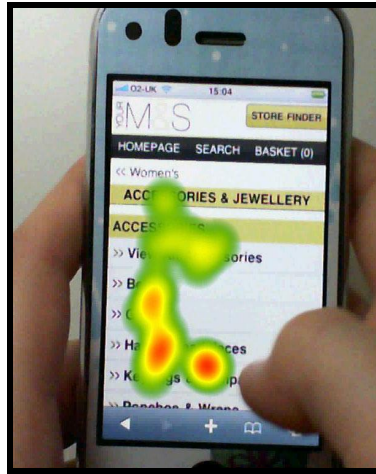
- **LinkedIn Learning tutorial access for UNC students:** <https://software.sites.unc.edu/linkedin/> (page provides a link to LinkedIn Learning with your UNC credentials)
- **Adobe Creative Cloud software (including XD):** <http://software.sites.unc.edu/adobe/>

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 the specified dates. (See course calendar @ go.unc.edu/581materials) **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Attendance

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 live online 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.

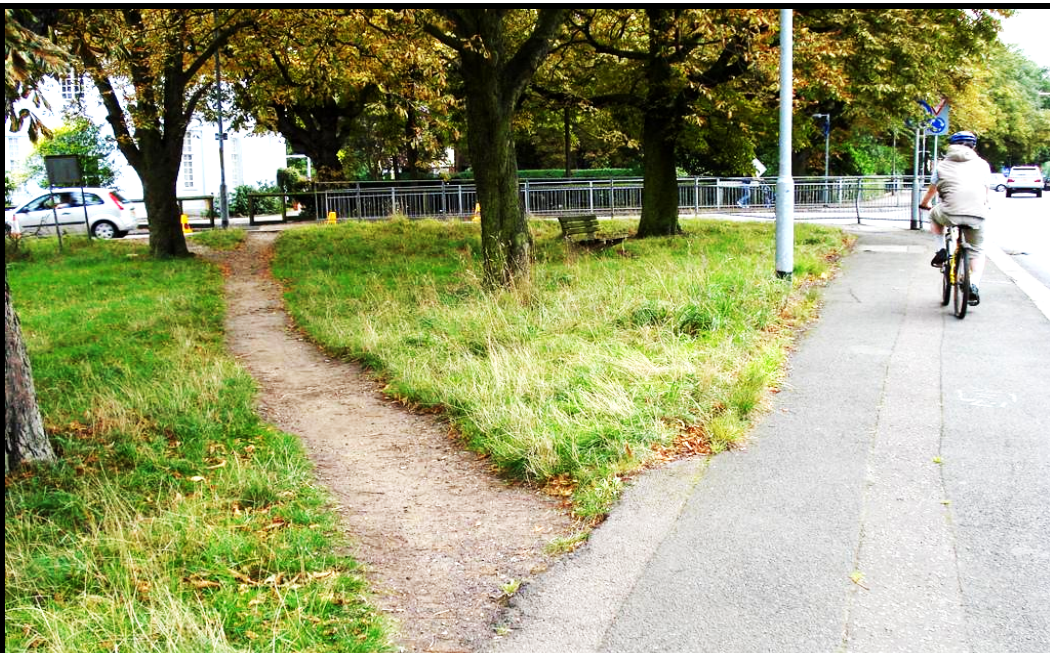
Organization of class time

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 and assignment:** approximately 15% of the final grade
- **Structure & Storyboard assignment:** approximately 15% of the final grade
- **Final project:** approximately 40% 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.

Honor code

It is expected that each student in this class will conduct him/herself within the guidelines of the Honor System (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high level of honesty and integrity that this University demands. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor’s responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please feel able to see the course instructor, speak with the senior associate dean of undergraduate studies in this school, and/or 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 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.

Diversity & Inclusion

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2019-2020 Undergraduate Bulletin at <http://catalog.unc.edu/about/introduction//>. In addition, the School of Media and Journalism also has its own policy that can be found here: <http://www.mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion>.

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. For campus resources concerning discrimination and related issues please visit safe.unc.edu/.

In this course, you are encouraged to represent diverse populations, diverse viewpoints, and diversity of perspective in your own work. You are also asked to be sensitive to the various backgrounds, perspectives, origins, and situations represented by the students in the course, the students, faculty, and staff at this university, and the residents of this state.

Special needs

The University of North Carolina – 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 difficulties with accessing learning opportunities.

All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) Office. In the first instance please visit their website at <http://accessibility.unc.edu>, call the office at 919-962-8300, or email accessibility@unc.edu. A student is welcome to initiate the registration process at any time. However, the process can take time. ARS is particularly busy in the run-up to Finals and during Finals. Students submitting Self-ID forms at that time are unlikely to have accommodations set until the following semester.

Please contact ARS as early in the semester as possible.

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

Links to online readings, viewings, presentations, assignments and rubrics @ go.unc.edu/581materials.

UNIT 1: *Weeks of January 17 through February 14*

- Welcome, understanding course requirements.
- Thinking about final project ideas. Developing design thinking questions.
- Starting Weekly UI assignments
- Usability testing, problem solving, understanding user challenges.

UNIT 2: *Weeks of February 21 through March 14*

- Researching and knowing your audience. Building Personas, audience analysis.
- Structuring your ideas. Creating user journeys, flowcharts.

UNIT 3: *Weeks of March 21 through April 4*

- Designing storyboards. Creating UI elements. Applying color and fonts effectively.
- Revisiting design thinking questions.

UNIT 4: FINAL PROJECT: *Weeks of April 11 through May 2*

- Designing your idea from start to finish.
- Building an effective pitch
- Packaging your materials
- Selling your story. How to talk about design. Speaking with confidence.

FINAL PROJECT PITCH PRESENTATIONS Noon-3pm on Tuesday, May 11