

## Introduction Fall 2020

When creating an app, website, game, or another digital product, you need excellent, usable and understandable design to be successful. Usability and Multimedia Design combines the basics of visual layout with strategies for building and testing interfaces.

This course is about being a data-informed designer, a knowledgeable communicator, an artist and an innovator. Understanding users and their behaviors will help you to become an effective creator of digital products.

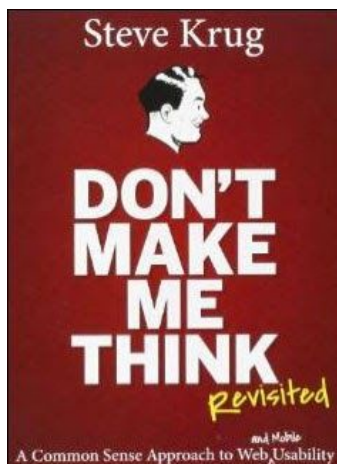
The main goals of this class are:

- to familiarize you with usability and design concepts
- to encourage you to grow, experiment, create, test and explore

## The essentials

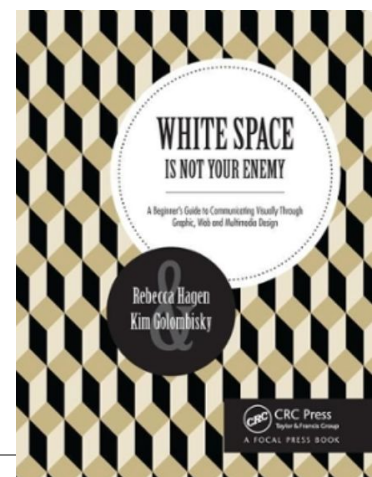
- **Instructor:** Professor Melissa Eggleston, [mjmoser@email.unc.edu](mailto:mjmoser@email.unc.edu), 704-280-9080 (mobile)
- **Office hours:** By appointment as needed via Zoom or phone. Synchronous “AMA” sessions will also serve as times to ask me anything class-related. [Melissa’s Zoom room access is here.](#)
- **Instructor availability:** If you have questions or need clarification on an assignment/reading, please post to the class forum area first. This is similar to asking questions in an in person class and everyone will benefit. If you need to talk about something more sensitive, email is the best way to reach me. I will respond to your email within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours on weekends.
- **Sakai:** The material for this class is provided through online links and videos. You will find these in the Course Materials area of Sakai. You will also find and upload assignments in Sakai. If you are ever in doubt of when something is due or what exactly is due, check Sakai.

## Required supplies



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

**Book:** White Space is Not Your Enemy: A Beginner's Guide to Communicating Visually Through Graphic, Web & Multimedia Design (copyright 2017) by Kim Golombisky and Rebecca Hagen. Paper copy recommended.



**Design software:** Access to Adobe Creative Cloud is available to all UNC students with an onyen. <http://software.sites.unc.edu/adobe/> Any kind of design software is fine for completing your assignments. Common programs to use are Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Sketch, Figma, or Invision Studio.

**Other suggested items (but not required):**

**Sketchbook:** This is helpful for tracking ideas, storyboarding class projects and brainstorming design ideas. You often want to sketch ideas out before going to your computer, it will save you time.

**Lynda.com training library:** You can access free as a UNC student by going to <http://software.sites.unc.edu/lynda/>. If you don't have experience with Adobe Illustrator or a similar design program, you are **strongly** encouraged to review Lynda courses to gain these design skills you will need to complete assignments well.

## Description

The School of Media and Journalism'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.](#)

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. This course will introduce you to the basics of 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 concepts. Through original creations and exercises, you will work to integrate all this knowledge into well-designed packages.

## Important policy about deadlines

Deadlines are firm. All assignments are due as stated in Sakai. Don't wait until the last 10 minutes and run into a Sakai problem. **If you are late, you will not receive credit for the assignment.** Do not email me to request anything different - the policy is the same for all students in this class to be fair to everyone who works hard to get items in on time. Exceptions may only be made for truly exceptional circumstances, e.g. an emergency health situation. If something of that nature is the case, contact me ASAP.

# Semester Schedule & Topics

Check for assignment information and exact due dates in Sakai. Any changes to dates will be made in Sakai.

Week	Dates	Topic	Assignments Due
1	8/10–8/16	Introduction	Intro Meeting with Melissa Weekly UI website Website to Work On
2	8/17–8/23	Unit 1: Design Thinking, Usability Testing, User Behavior	Research Plan
3	8/24–8/30	Unit 1 continued	
4	8/31–9/6	Unit 1 continued	Usability Testing Results
5	9/7–9/13	Unit 2: Understanding Audiences	Weekly UI #1
6	9/14–9/20	Unit 2 continued	Weekly UI #2
7	9/21–9/27	Unit 2 continued	Weekly UI #3
8	9/28–10/4	Unit 2 continued	Persona Assignment
9	10/5–10/11	Unit 3: Structure & User Journeys	Weekly UI #4
10	10/12–10/18	Unit 3: continued	Weekly UI #5
11	10/19–10/25	Unit 3 continued	Weekly UI #6
12	10/26–11/1	Unit 3 continued	Structure Assignment
13	11/2–11/8	Unit 4: Visual Design & Storyboards	Weekly UI #7
14	11/9–11/15	Unit 4 continued	Weekly UI #8
15	11/16–11/22	Unit 4 continued / Closing Materials	Storyboard Assignment

## Introductory Meetings

In lieu of sending a survey out, in our first 10 days, I will hold individual 15-20 minute meetings with each one of you. I'll provide a schedule where you can sign up for a time that is convenient for you. During our time together I will want to learn more about your background, hear about your goals for the semester and discuss any concerns you have.

## Forum participation

We will use the forums to post our Weekly UIs and to showcase other assignments. I'll ask you to post links to your work there so others can see it.

There will also be a place for you to ask any questions you have to the group or me related to resources you might be seeking or anything that confused you about what you read. Post questions to the forum rather than emailing me individually. This will allow others to learn as well.

**It will be important for you to review the comments I make on all the Weekly UIs so you don't make the same mistakes the following week.** In design class, you learn through critiques of your work and others' work.

## Synchronous AMA sessions

There will be **four synchronous sessions** this semester. I will share with you how usability and UX design is applied in real world projects. The sessions will often be coordinated with the Unit materials. These recorded sessions will also serve as "Ask Me Anything" (AMA) hours for any and all questions. They will take place on **Thursdays from 8:15–9:00 p.m.** **You are not required to attend these sessions**, and attendance will not affect your final grade.

As stated above, those who cannot attend the sessions will have access to and should watch the recording. **You are responsible for knowing the information shared in any of the recordings and this knowledge should inform your assignments.**

**This semester's synchronous sessions are on these Thursdays at 8:15pm:**

**Thursday, Aug 20**

**Thursday, Sept. 10**

**Thursday, Oct. 8**

**Thursday, Nov. 5**

You can access the sessions via [this Zoom link](#) which is my Zoom meeting room.

## Weekly UI challenges

One important way to improve as a designer is to problem solve and create solutions to visual challenges. **On eight Mondays** in September and October you will be presented with UI challenges **to solve by 11:59pm Sunday night** of the same week. These challenges may be as simple as re-designing an airline boarding pass. Implicit in these challenges is understanding your users and their behaviors. As the semester progresses, you will get better and better at solving and designing solutions for these challenges.

**You will receive this challenge in the form of a class announcement on Sakai and via email.** The UI challenges also will be updated in the Course Materials area in Sakai.

You will use **web.unc.edu** to create a Wordpress site to house your solutions to these challenges. By the end of the semester, you will have a collection of UI challenges that demonstrate your understanding of user behavior, problems and solutions.

More details on [how to setup your site here.](#)

**You will post a link to your weekly UI Challenge as a blog post on your website and link to it in our forum in Sakai.** Your blog post can include up to 2 sentences (max) explaining your design objective. The Weekly UIs are typically hard for people who have never taken a design class. Putting your work out in public is part of the process, and you will gain expertise on receiving both positive and negative feedback gracefully. This might actually be one of the most important skills you learn in this course.

## Grading

You are graded according to the highest professional standards. Your assignments will be evaluated according to the rubrics distributed along with assignments. Grades will be given as follows:

- H = truly outstanding work and is given rarely.
- P = quality work that a student should be proud of.
- L = sub-standard work and cause of concern.

## Grading components

- **Weekly UI challenges:** 20% of final grade
- **Usability test assignment:** 20% of final grade
- **Persona assignment:** 20% of final grade
- **Structure assignment:** 20% of final grade
- **Storyboard assignment:** 20% of final grade

## Grading criteria

There are basic expectations that any supervisor or project manager would have for a project undertaken by a UX designer or usability specialist. All of your assignments must meet the following minimum basic standards:

- 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 multimedia production and usability standards and design concepts

Your assignments also will be evaluated for:

- adherence to basic visual design principles
- research and analysis

- presentation editing decisions
- architecture of information presentation
- aesthetic design choices
- creativity and innovation
- clarity
- usability
- written explanations of design decisions

## 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 graduate studies in this school, and/or speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

## Plagiarism and Digital Media

We all use the internet for research. With a wealth of information available, including everything from pre-written essays to ready-made graphics, the potential for plagiarism is enormous. Keep in mind that as easy as it is for students to find and copy information from the internet, it is just as easy for instructors to find the same information.

To avoid plagiarizing, remember that the same rules apply to information found on the internet as to information found in print sources:

- When you take ideas or quote from a source, you must paraphrase accurately and give credit by appropriately citing and/or linking to the original source.
- If you take a sentence or phrase directly from a source, you must indicate it by using quotation marks around the direct quote and citing and/or linking to the original source.
- **\*\*\*If you use an element in a project that you didn't create (for example, a vector icon you found online), you must identify the creator and where you found it.\*\*\***

Citing digital sources can be confusing. For more information on how to cite Web-based sources, see the Citing Information tutorial (<http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/>) or contact a reference librarian (<http://www.lib.unc.edu/ask.html>).

## Seeking help

If you need individual assistance, it is your responsibility to contact 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

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2017-2018 UNC 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.

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](mailto: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.