

# USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN AND USABILITY

Syllabus: [go.unc.edu/581-spring23](https://go.unc.edu/581-spring23) | Materials: [go.unc.edu/581materials](https://go.unc.edu/581materials) | Calendar: [go.unc.edu/581calendar-spring23](https://go.unc.edu/581calendar-spring23)

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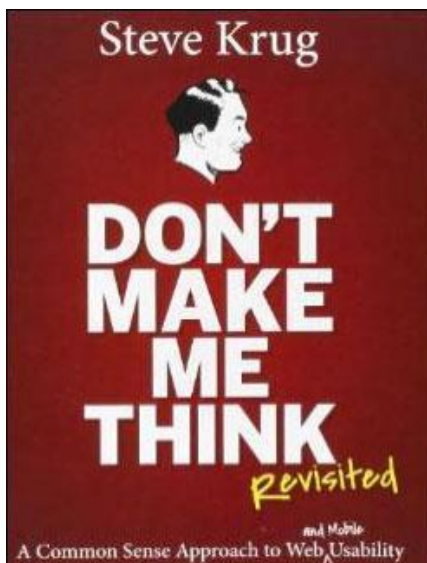
## Introduction

Welcome to Spring 2023 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 pm
- **Class location:**
  - Carroll Hall, Room 58
  - Any remote classes will be announced in advance and will meet at this link: [go.unc.edu/581class](https://go.unc.edu/581class)
- **Instructor:** Associate Professor Laura Ruel, 919-448-8864, [lruel@unc.edu](mailto:lruel@unc.edu)
- **Office hours:** Wednesdays from 10-11:30 am and by appointment
- **Office location:** CA 212 and/or @ [go.unc.edu/ruel](https://go.unc.edu/ruel)



## 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

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

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

**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.

## 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)

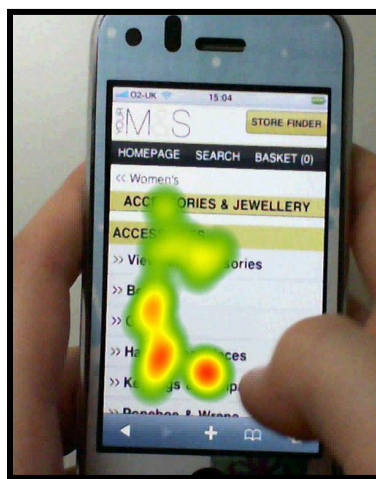
- **Adobe Creative Cloud software (including XD):** <http://software.sites.unc.edu/adobe/>

## 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 time stated on the class calendar.. (See the course calendar in 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 final 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

## Grading components

- **Weekly UI Challenges** and other impromptu assignments: approximately 20% of final grade
- **Usability Test:** approximately 20% of final grade
- **Course Project ideas** (includes Usability test idea and Think Big assignment): approximately 5% of final grade
- **Personas & Empathy Maps:** approximately 10% of final grade
- **Sketches & Flows:** approximately 10% of final grade
- **Wireframes:** approximately 10% of final grade
- **Hi fidelity mockups and project portfolio display:** approximately 20% of final grade
- **Final Project pitch:** approximately 5% of final grade

## 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

A grading rubric will be provided for all assignments. However, 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** 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 when presenting the project 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.

## Additional resources

- **Link to honor code document:** <https://studentconduct.unc.edu/about-us/forms-documents/instrument/>
- **Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office and documents:** <https://eoc.unc.edu/>
- **Heels Care Network:** compilation of mental health and well-being resources and assistance <https://care.unc.edu/>.
- **Dean of Student’s Care Referral Form** if you have a concern about a fellow student <https://care.unc.edu/im-concerned-about-a-student-what-should-i-do/student-care-team/>
- **For graduate students:** the Grad School has a page with diversity initiatives - <https://graddiversity.unc.edu/initiatives/>

## Honor Code

Each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the [University honor system](#). 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](http://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](http://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

Masks continue to be encouraged yet optional in all University buildings. Students who need or need an authorized accommodation please Accessibility Resources and Service. For additional information, see <https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/2022/07/29/fall-operations/>.

## 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 the current calendar see the class Sakai site.**

Readings/Viewings also are linked from the class Sakai site.

Week (approximate)	Topics
1	Course overview   UI design tools
2	Visual Design Essentials   Design thinking
3	Visual Design Essentials   Eye tracking
4	Equity, Ethics and accessibility
5	Design research: Usability testing
6	Design research: Usability testing
7	Design research: Usability testing
8	Design research: Personas
9	Design research: Personas
10	Design research: Empathy maps



11	Design Structure: Card sorting
12	Design Structure: Flows & sketches
13	Design Structure: Wireframes
14	High Fidelity Design work, portfolio display, guest speakers
15	High Fidelity Design work, portfolio display, guest speakers
15	High Fidelity Design work, portfolio display, putting together a pitch