

MEJO 187.003

FOUNDATIONS OF INTERACTIVE MEDIA

Spring 2024 | T/H 5:00-6:45 pm | Carroll Hall Room 060

INSTRUCTOR

Taylor Blankenship

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OFFICE HOURS: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Web applications are essential for successful careers in the media industry, offering powerful storytelling options. This class aims to impart knowledge and skills in utilizing these tools effectively for impactful multimedia journalism.

COURSE FORMAT

The course will encompass four interactive media projects, along with assignments, critiques, and class discussions centered around practical applications of web technologies.

COURSE PROGRESSION

- Part I: UI/UX Design
- Part II: HTML & CSS
- Part III: Javascript
- Part IV: Content Management Systems

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).

Class Policy:

We will meet in person unless otherwise stated. Please note that **Zoom is only to be used when you cannot attend in person**. If you cannot attend in person, please let me know as

soon as possible so I can make accommodations. **If you attend via Zoom without notice or explanation, it will affect your participation grade.** Also, be aware that you are bound by the Honor Code when making a request for a university approved absence.

You are allowed one (1) unexcused absence from our class. After that, your participation grade will suffer.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Class sessions will typically have two segments: a lecture/demonstration followed by lab time for assignment work. Anticipate dedicating time beyond class for tutorials, and projects to meet expectations and excel. Your commitment will directly influence your experience in the course; you'll get out of it what you put into it.

Once the class begins, please do your part to ensure a focused environment for both peers and the instructor. Disregarding this policy will result in a participation grade reduction.

COURSE MATERIALS

Web Domain and Hosting

You will need to purchase a website domain and hosting midway through this class (approx \$15-\$20). We will discuss this process in class. If you already have a domain name and hosting service, you will be able to use that.

Tutorials and Coding Platforms

LinkedIn Learning is offered free to UNC students. We will use LinkedIn Learning tutorials for the first section of the course. To learn more about LinkedIn Learning, visit the ITS website at <https://software.sites.unc.edu/linkedin/>.

We will be using student licenses for Figma. See more about the process of obtaining a student license [here](#).

For HTML, CSS and JavaScript exercises, we will often use JS Bin. It is free and provides an excellent platform to experiment with your code.

We will also be using Codecademy throughout the HTML/CSS and JS portions of the course. You will need to make a free account.

ASSIGNMENTS

Projects

There will be four main projects during this course:

- Project 1 - utilize Figma to create high-fidelity prototype
- Project 2 - create your first web app using HTML and CSS
- Project 3 - develop an interactive dashboard using HTML, CSS, and Javascript
- Project 4 - use Wordpress to create a digital portfolio and host it online

In-class Exercises

During class, we will engage in exercises related to the lesson content. It is very important that you keep up with class exercises and ask questions as needed. Failing to engage in class activities will impact your participation grade.

Assessment

Your performance in this course hinges on participation, assignment completion, and effort. The semester will involve smaller assignments and four major projects.

Active involvement in critiques and informal class discussions is vital. I want this class to give experience relevant to industry standards, and feedback from peers is a big part of that.

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 **10-point deduction for each 24-hour period**.

Feedback

It is my goal to provide clear and valuable feedback on all submissions to allow you to hone your skills. I will be structuring project feedback into templates, which you will have access to ahead of project submission. If any aspect of the feedback is unclear, please contact me for further discussion.

Final Exam Period

Please note that while there is no final exam in this class, **we are required to meet during the scheduled final exam period**. We will use that time to view the final projects, offer feedback, and discuss what we've learned over the course of the semester.

SCHEDULE

Weeks 1-4: UI/UX | Figma

Weeks 5-8: HTML | CSS

Weeks 9-11: Wordpress

Weeks 12-16: Javascript

Week 17: Final Exam – **MAY 3rd, 7PM**

GRADING BREAKDOWN

Please note that Canvas **does not round up** (e.g. an 89.9 is a B+), so neither do I. The letter grade you see in Canvas will be the one transferred into ConnectCarolina at the end of the semester.

Additionally, I adhere to a policy of not re-evaluating individual assignments unless a clerical

mistake has occurred. Unlike a professional setting where collaboration and multiple revisions are possible, the educational context demands an accurate evaluation of your comprehension and skills. I will provide instruction, practice opportunities, and assistance before each deadline, but once your submission is graded, that number is final.

Finally, while there is some element of subjectivity in any creative endeavor, please note that I will not grade your work based on my personal tastes. Rather, I will approach the situation as if I were an industry professional evaluating the work. I will consider the *audience's* needs and interests when assessing your work, and grade it based on well-established principles of web design and usability that we discuss in class.

ASSIGNMENTS	% OF GRADE
Homework Assignments	25%
Project 1	15%
Project 2	15%
Project 3	20%
Project 4	15%
Participation	10%
Total	100%

LETTER GRADE	%
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73

D+	67-69
D	60-66
F	0-59

HONOR CODE & PLAGIARISM

I expect that each student will conduct themselves 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 Julie Dixon-Green, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

GENERATIVE AI

As you may know, generative AI tools like ChatGPT can now assist with many of the tasks we perform in this class, including coding, writing, and designing websites. Can you use AI in this course? Absolutely.

AI should only help you think, not think for you. Following are some example uses for AI in our class, and the guidelines for doing so ethically and responsibly:

AI for Web Design

ChatGPT can assist in proposing the structure, color palette, typography, and visuals for a website on a particular subject. This offers a productive method for idea generation, particularly when you provide precise prompts (e.g., "I need a polished UI/UX for middle-aged, educated users"). However, it is important to acknowledge your utilization of AI during the brainstorming phase when submitting your work. AI can also be employed to create website images, but in such cases, it is necessary to cite the AI usage in the image caption.

AI for Web Development

AI can serve as a valuable alternative to the coding "shortcuts" that have been used for years, like Stack Overflow. Previously, if you required code for tasks such as crafting a JavaScript quiz and lacked the expertise, you would scour the internet until locating a functional code snippet and then copy it.

Now, with the assistance of an AI chatbot, you can input a detailed prompt and it is likely to generate the code for you. If your own code is broken, you can paste it into the chatbot, and it will attempt to fix it for you.

There is nothing inherently wrong with this, if you are using it to learn, and you cite the use

of AI in your code comments.

AI and Data Privacy

Please do not copy and paste any personal data into an AI chatbot while working on your projects. This includes any information that might identify yourself or those around you.

Future Changes to the AI Guidelines

It is important to recognize that generative AI is continuously advancing and increasingly integrating into the web design and development process. As these dynamics progress, our AI usage guidelines will need to be adapted. I will inform you of any policy adjustments as they become necessary.

It is very important that you cite your use of code from external sources. Otherwise, it is an honor code violation.

SEEKING HELP

If you need individual assistance, it is your responsibility to reach out to me. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, ***ask for help as soon as you realize you need it*** – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness. Do not be afraid to admit that you need extra guidance. Web design and development can be daunting, and many of the core concepts are difficult to grasp.

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.

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 Services website at <https://accessibility.unc.edu/>

COUNSELING & 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), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at 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) or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#), or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

DIVERSITY

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.

AEMJC ACCREDITATION

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media accrediting body outlines several 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.

SYLLABUS CHANGES

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