
MEJO 433-002 | Valentina Arismendi, Adjunct Instructor | Fall 2024
Hussman School of Journalism and Media | UNC-Chapel Hill
3 Credits | Remote Synchronous | **Tuesdays 9:00-11:45 am** | Office hours by appointment
Meetings via Zoom

UX STRATEGY AND DESIGN

Contact me:

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*"A user interface is like a joke. If you have to explain it, it's not that good."
- Martin LeBlanc*

Introduction

This course will teach you how to develop a UX strategy—through research, documentation, and user feedback—and design user-friendly experiences based on that strategy. You'll learn how to develop a work process that incorporates business strategy, research, customer mapping, rapid design prototyping, and user feedback, while also balancing the time constraints inherent in any design project.

Prerequisite: prior visual design course or design experience demonstrating basic graphic design skills.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Learn the tenets of UX strategy and apply them through a series of progressive projects.
- Define a user problem and develop a UX-based strategy for a digital product that solves that problem.
- Develop provisional personas of the core users of your product.
- Validate your assumptions about the user problem and core users through interview-based research.
- Research and analyze the main competitors of your product.
- Storyboard your core customer journey to devise your design approach.
- Design wireframes and develop rapid prototypes using those wireframes.
- Conduct usability tests of your prototypes with your target users.
- Speak and write as a professional, presenting and defending business and creative ideas.
- Document and compile all your work into a case study presentation.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

This course is progressive, with each class session and assignment building on the previous session's learnings. Work will be centered on a series of studio projects as well as lectures, readings, tutorials, and written assignments. Additionally, you'll participate in small group review sessions of your work as the semester progresses—peer feedback is invaluable and can often help us refine our work and see different perspectives.

Design is also an intellectual activity, so we will discuss and critique professional and student design work during the semester. This will deepen your appreciation of experience design and teach you how to professionally evaluate and articulate strategic and creative ideas. By the end of the course, you will have developed an end-to-end UX Strategy and Design case study that you can add to your portfolio.

Course resources

TEXTBOOK

Required, Available for rent/purchase at the UNC Student Store, Amazon
UX Strategy, Second Edition (2021)
Jaime Levy 978-1-492-05243-2
O'Reilly Media

SOFTWARE

Required, Available free online. We will be creating many high-fidelity mockups in the coming weeks. You may use either Adobe XD or Figma for your projects. Additionally, I will assign various LinkedIn Learning courses for those without extensive experience in XD and Figma.

- **Figma:** Figma offers a free "Figma for Education" subscription. Subscribe via [Figma for Education](#).
- **Adobe Creative Cloud:** A subscription is free to UNC students. Order via [Adobe Creative Cloud - Software Distribution](#).
- **LinkedIn Learning:** Tutorial access for UNC students [LinkedIn Learning - Software Distribution](#) (page provides a link to LinkedIn Learning with your UNC credentials)

Additional class readings, videos, and podcasts will be linked in Canvas.

Assignments and grading

TL;DR: Attendance is required, participation is expected, and deadlines are absolute.

DEADLINES

All assignments are due in Canvas by class time (Tuesdays at 9am) on the specified due date, unless otherwise stated in the assignment instructions (weekly design challenges). Because the assignments build on each other, it's in your best interest to meet deadlines to keep up with the pace of work.

Late assignments: For each day that an assignment is late, 10% of your grade will be deducted for that assignment. With that said, I understand life can get in the way, so please let me know ahead of time if you're having difficulty completing your assignment by the due date.

ATTENDANCE

University Policy: As stated in the University's Class Attendance 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: University Approved Absence Office (UAAO) website provides information and FAQs for students and FAQs for faculty related to University Approved Absences
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).

MEJO 433 Course Attendance Policy: Class will be handled like a job. Similar to having personal time off (PTO) at work, you are allotted ONE absence 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 allotted day will result in a half-grade deduction (e.g., a B becomes a B-) for each additional day of absence, unless previously approved by the instructor. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, please notify me as soon as possible.

PARTICIPATION

You are responsible for being in class on time each day. Consistent late arrivals or early departures will be reflected in your final grade. To excel in this course, it is imperative that you participate in class discussions and complete assignments by the due dates.

Class starts at 9:00am, but just like in the classroom, I will be on Zoom at least 5 minutes early, so please come on as soon as you can. Once on Zoom, if anyone's connection becomes unstable or disconnects, please reconnect as soon as you can. This includes me as well. I ask that everyone fully participates in each class with their camera on when possible.

GRADING SCALE

- A = 94-100%
- A- = 90-93%
- B+ = 87-89%
- B = 83-86%
- B- = 80-82%
- C+ = 77-79%
- C = 73-76%
- C- = 70-72%
- D = 63-69%
- F = 62% or below

Graduate Student Scale:

- H = High Pass
- P = Pass
- L = Low Pass
- F = Fail

GRADING COMPONENTS

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

15%	Practice Assignments
15%	Sprint 1 Deliverables
15%	Sprint 2 Deliverables
15%	Sprint 3 Deliverables
30%	Final Project
10%	Class Participation
100%	

ADDITIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT REQUIREMENT

In addition to the items above, students taking this course **for graduate credit** will be required to complete an additional project. More details will be provided during the fourth week of class.

WEEKLY DESIGN PRACTICE

To build up your creative muscle and work portfolio, every week you will complete a user interface design challenge. More details will be shared on the first day 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. 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
- presentation editing decisions
- architecture of information presentation
- aesthetic design choices
- creativity and innovation
- usability
- written justifications and explanations of design decisions

Feedback takes the form of instructor/student conversations, peer critiques, class critiques, and grading comments. I cannot stress enough the importance of class discussions. I recommend you take notes during discussions to accelerate learning.

Weekly schedule

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. The instructor 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.

Week	Date	Topics
1	August 20th	Course Overview What is UX Strategy
2	August 27th	Design Thinking Feedback Best Practices User Research + Interview Methods
3	Sept 3rd	WELLBEING DAY No class held
End of Sprint 0		
4	Sept 10th	Empathize Personas User Stories

5	Sept 17th	Empathize Empathy map User Journey Map
End of Sprint 1		
6	Sept 24th	Define Problem statements Hypothesis Value Propositions *Potential guest speaker
7	October 1st	Ideate HMW
8	October 8th	Equity, Ethics and Accessibility *Potential guest speaker
9	October 15th	Ideate Competitive Research Work session
End of Sprint 2		
10	October 22nd	Prototype Flows + Sketches *Potential guest speaker
End of Sprint 3		
11	October 29th	Prototype Wireframes + lo-fi prototypes Final project intro
12	November 5th	Prototype Hi-Fi Prototypes Visual Design Principles *Potential guest speaker
13	November 12th	Test Tasks
14	November 19th	Test User Testing
15	November 26th	Test Business Communication Final project work session
16	December 3rd	Test Final project work session

Final Exam period: Friday Dec. 13th at 8am

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/>

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USE POLICY

The following uses of generative AI tools are permitted in this course: topic selection, brainstorming and idea generation, outlining and planning, drafting, and media creation. AI can be a powerful learning aid and starting point for idea generation but remember to always question and validate the information it generates.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

I value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. 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.

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://hussman.unc.edu/accreditation>

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.

HONOR CODE

All students are expected to follow 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 you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES AND SERVICE

Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS – ars@unc.edu) receives requests for accommodations, and through the Student and Applicant Accommodations Policy determines eligibility and identifies reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or chronic medical conditions to mitigate or remove the barriers experienced in accessing University courses, programs and activities. ARS also offers its Testing Center resources to students and instructors to facilitate the implementation of testing accommodations.

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

UNC-Chapel Hill is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body. The Heels Care Network website is a place to access the many mental health resources at Carolina. CAPS is the primary mental health provider for students, offering timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services. Go to their website <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health building for an initial evaluation to learn more. Same-day, walk-in services are available at CAPS (3rd floor, Campus Health) Monday-Friday, 8AM-5PM.

For crisis or 24/7 support, call CAPS at 919-966-3658 or call/text 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

To initiate services with the Hussman Embedded Counselor, Carolyn Ebeling, email them at cebeling@email.unc.edu to schedule. Carolyn meets with students by appointment only and works exclusively with Hussman majors and minors. Available services include an initial assessment of needs, individualized planning for reported concerns, initiating engagement in brief therapy, connection to group therapy services, medication management, and referral coordination. Services are offered both in-person and by telehealth (as long as the student is located in North Carolina at the time of services).

TITLE IX AND RELATED RESOURCES

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/> or by contacting the University's Title IX Coordinator (titleixcoordinator@unc.edu) or the Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu). Confidential resources include Counseling and Psychological Services and the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gysc@unc.edu). Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP)

By attending the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the acceptable use of IT systems and services. The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) sets the expectation that you will use the University's technology resources responsibly, consistent with the University's mission. In the context of a class, it's quite likely you will participate in online activities that could include personal information about you or your peers, and the

AUP addresses your obligations to protect the privacy of class participants. In addition, the AUP addresses matters of others' intellectual property, including copyright. These are only a couple of typical examples, so you should consult the full Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy, which covers topics related to using digital resources, such as privacy, confidentiality and intellectual property. Additionally, consult the Safe Computing at UNC website for information about data security policies, updates, and tips on keeping your identity, information, and devices safe.

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, 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 (email reportandresponse@unc.edu or see additional contact info at safe.unc.edu) or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.