

INF 1005H/1006H

Information Workshop: Graphic Design for User Experience

Section: 0111

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 12pm – 1pm

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Class time: 9am – 12pm, Wednesdays

Class location: BL 325

"Even if digital artifacts are based on technical systems, they influence our lives at individual as well as social levels. In the artificial landscape, digital artifacts constitute the environment and "nature" in which we live. They help or hinder us in almost all of our professional and everyday activities, and they influence our individual and social developments. This means that IT professionals and others involved in the design of this new environment take on a huge responsibility. To design digital artifacts is to design people's lives." (Löwgren & Stolterman, 2007)

Course Objectives

This workshop will teach a set of foundational skills in user experience design. The core skills in ideating and developing interface designs will be broken down into sketching, basic design principles, paper prototyping, and digital prototyping. The workshop will introduce students to tools and techniques necessary to go from idea to medium-fidelity prototype. Current discussions in design for user experience will be addressed through practical activities. Students will work both individually and in groups to develop the skills necessary to address problems through design. The major project in the workshop will challenge students to integrate all of the key skills into a testable medium-fidelity prototype.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this Information Workshop, students should be conversant with basic practices in user experience design/interaction design/user-centred design. Students should be able to undertake a design process in response to a brief; sketch in order to develop and communicate ideas; build paper-based and digital prototypes; and make use of basic graphic design skills to improve the quality of prototypes. All of the above-listed skills will be demonstrated in the Group Prototyping Project. Students will further learn to assess and choose specialized software, a skill which will be demonstrated in the Software Report assignment. Students will continue to hone their critical reflection skills, demonstrated in the Reading Reflection assignments.

Relationship to Program Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes for the MI program are listed at

<http://current.ischool.utoronto.ca/studies/learning-outcomes>

The learning outcomes for this course (listed above) relate to MI program outcomes 1 and 5, namely “Students understand and are conversant with fundamental concepts, theories, practices, and the diverse horizons of information disciplines, and can respond to changing information practices and needs of society” and “Students develop an understanding of the application of new technological developments to the preservation and communication of information, and in the identification of the impact of such developments on society.”

These program outcomes relate to course-level outcomes in that user experience design is a rapidly changing field in which information professionals operate. The ability to parse new technologies and make appropriate choices (demonstrated in the Software Report assignment) is key to continuing professional success and relevance. The prototyping and design skills provided in this course offer MI students the chance to apply fundamental principles in information, such as information architecture and the development of taxonomies.

Grading

Please consult the iSchool’s Grade Interpretation Guidelines

(<http://current.ischool.utoronto.ca/grade-interpretation>) and the University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy

(<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>). These documents will form the basis for grading in the course.

*****Please note that 23/Jan/2017 is the final date to drop INF1005H*****

A note on readings

Most readings for the course are available through Blackboard. The readings from Buxton (2007) and Löwgren & Stolterman (2007) are selections from books. Both books are well worth reading in full, though that's not required for this course. If you'd like to read them, they're available as ebooks through the University of Toronto Libraries website. For Buxton, the brevity of the chapters and the very practical nature of the second part of the book make it worth looking at if you'd like some more guidance on the design process. In the PDFs for Buxton that I've provided online, some images aren't rendered correctly. If you'd like to see those images, do look at the ebook version.

Assignments

1. In-class exercises, 4*5% - 20% - Do in class
2. Reading reflections (~2 pages each, or 500-700 words each), 2*10% - 20% - Due over the course of the semester
3. Software report (max five pages of text and images) - 20% - Due week 5
4. Group prototyping project - 40% - Due week 6

Course schedule

Week 1: Introduction to workshop goals and skills, introduction to sketching for interaction

READINGS: Syllabus; what Don Norman says about user experience

<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/definition-user-experience/>; presenting the major project and the reading reflections (go over all in class together)

ACTIVITIES: Form tentative groups for project, pick problems from list

Week 2: Sketching; paper prototyping and testing

READINGS: Chapter 1 of Thoughtful Interaction Design; three Buxton chapters: The Anatomy of Sketching, Experience Design vs. Interface Design, Sketching Interaction (these two chapters are included in an extract together).

ACTIVITIES: An hour of sketching, an hour of group work time

Week 3: Digital prototyping: Wireframing

READINGS: [Usability.gov Interaction Design Basics](#); [UX Booth Complete Beginner's Guide to Interaction Design](#)

ACTIVITIES: An hour of applied wireframing, an hour of group work time

Week 4: Digital prototyping: Software and design skills

READINGS: Franch & Carvallo (2003) ; to get an impression of the variety of simple prototyping software available, consult the lists of wireframing tools provided by [Creative Bloq](#) and [Mashable](#). It's worth noting that the Mashable list is from 2010. While, at the time, it highlighted free tools, some of the tools listed have now moved to a paid model.

ACTIVITIES: An hour of software overviews, an hour of group work time

Week 5: Polishing your prototype and what comes next

READINGS: [Lovett \(1999\)](#); [Guy \(2012\)](#)

OPTIONAL READING: Rodríguez Estrada & Davis (2014); Tonkinwise (2011).

ACTIVITIES: An hour of graphic design and visual skills, an hour of group work time

Week 6: Presentations

READINGS: The [Usability.gov page on prototyping](#) is a very quick read on the value of iterative testing. Smashing's "[The Skeptic's Guide to Low-Fidelity Prototyping](#)" is a good supplementary read on prototyping, with a section on testing low-fi prototypes. Chapters 7 and 11 of Meyers, Badgett, & Sandley (2012) provide an in-depth explanation of user testing (7) and mobile user testing (11) on more advanced prototypes.

ACTIVITIES: Presentations and evaluations

References

Busche, L. (2014). The skeptic's guide to low-fidelity prototyping. *Smashing magazine*. Retrieved from <https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2014/10/the-skeptics-guide-to-low-fidelity-prototyping/>

Buxton, B. (2007). *Sketching user experience: Getting the design right and the right design*. San Francisco: Morgan Kaufmann.

Creative Bloq Staff (2016). The 18 best wireframe tools. *Creative Bloq*. Retrieved from <http://www.creativebloq.com/wireframes/top-wireframing-tools-11121302>

Franch, X., & Carvallo, J. P. (2003). Using quality models in software package selection. *IEEE software*,

20(1), 34-41.

- Guy, T. (2012). Visual design and usability yellow brick road. *UX Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://uxmag.com/articles/visual-design-and-usability-yellow-brick-road>
- Lovett, J. (1999). Elements and principles of design. Retrieved from <http://www.johnlovett.com/test.htm>
- Myers, G. J., Sandler, C., & Badgett, T. (2011). *The art of software testing*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Norman, D. & Nielsen, J. (n.d.). The definition of user experience. *Nielsen Norman Group*. Retrieved from <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/definition-user-experience/>
- Rodriguez Estrada, F. C., & Davis, L. S. (2015). Improving visual communication of science through the incorporation of graphic design theories and practices into science communication. *Science Communication*, 37(1), 140-148.
- Smith, G. (2010). 10 free wireframing tools for designers. *Mashable*. Retrieved from <http://mashable.com/2010/07/15/wireframing-tools/#EkXT4Du8fZqg>
- Stolterman, E., & Löwgren, J. (2007). Thoughtful interaction design : A Design perspective on information technology. Cambridge, US: MIT Press. Retrieved from <http://www.ebrary.com>
- Tonkinwise, C. (2011). A taste for practices: Unrepressing style in design thinking. *Design Studies*, 32(6), 533-545.
- Usability.gov (n.d.). Interaction design basics. Retrieved from <https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/interaction-design.html>
- Usability.gov (n.d.). Prototyping. Retrieved from <https://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/prototyping.html>
- UX Booth (2015). Complete beginner's guide to interaction design. Retrieved from <http://www.uxbooth.com/articles/complete-beginners-guide-to-interaction-design/>

Email Policy

Email is to be used for emergencies, private or confidential concerns, and—in extenuating circumstances—booking appointments outside of office hours. For everything else, we have other channels of communication. If you have general questions, concerns, or require clarification on something, the best place to raise your questions or concerns is in class. If you think of something outside of class, I invite you to post about it on Blackboard, where the answer to the question (whether provided by me or by one of your colleagues) can benefit the whole class. If you want to talk to me individually, I invite you to attend my office hours. If you really can't make it to office hours, we can work out another meeting time.

Writing Support

As stated in the iSchool's Grade Interpretation Guidelines, “work that is not well written and grammatically correct will not generally be considered eligible for a grade in the A range, regardless of its quality in other respects”. With this in mind, please make use of the writing support provided to graduate students by the SGS Office of English Language and Writing Support (<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/English-Language-and-Writing-Support.aspx>). The services are designed to target the needs of both native and non-native speakers and all programs are free. Please consult the current workshop schedule (<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Current-Years-Courses.aspx>) for more information.

Academic integrity

Please consult the University's site on Academic Integrity (<http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>). The iSchool has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism as defined in section B.I.1.(d) of the University's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters

(<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/pjun011995.pdf>). You should acquaint yourself with the Code. Please review the material in Cite it Right and if you require further clarification, consult the site How Not to Plagiarize (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>).

Cite it Right covers relevant parts of the U of T *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (1995)*. It is expected that all iSchool students take the Cite it Right workshop and the online quiz. Completion of the online Cite it Right quiz should be made prior to the second week of classes. To review and complete the workshop, visit the orientation portion of the iSkills site: uoft.me/iskills

Accommodations

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or a health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services Office (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>) as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services staff are available by appointment to assess needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let them and I know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Statement of Acknowledgement of Traditional Land

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates.

For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River.

Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.