

INF 385: Usability

UNIQUE: 28509

Fall 2022

CLASS MEETS:

Monday 6-9pm | Room: SZB 4.508

Instructor: Natalie Dare

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Office hours: Email, By appointment over Zoom or Google Meets

Email: nataliemiller@utexas.edu

Course Description

PRE-REQUISITES FOR THE COURSE:

Graduate standing

UNIVERSITY CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

Though this course is titled “Usability”, it recognizes that usability as it is practiced today often entails a blurring of lines with the related disciplines of Human-Computer Interaction, Information Architecture, Ethnography, Accessibility, and Human Factors. As such, what was traditionally known as usability, has over the past 20 years been substantially broadened, a fact reflected in its modern re-expression such as “User Experience” (UX) research, “User-centered Design” (UCD), or even “Design Thinking” (DT).

Regardless of which name we use, or which specific domains we draw guidance from, all roads come together in the primary objective of this course: giving students hands-on training so they can start to acquire the “table-stakes” skills necessary for conducting user research in fast-paced and agile industry environments.

Specifically, this course will introduce some of the core UX research methods in use today, as well as how these methods are best applied to help teams focus on data-driven results aimed at ensuring successful products that are useful, efficient, learnable, equitable and enjoyable.

Accordingly, the class will cover 3 major areas:

1. The role of UX testing in the design process, including which methods are best suited to specific types of questions and at specific points along the development cycle
2. The joint process of research planning, implementation, data analysis and synthesis, as well as the final reporting of findings to stakeholders
3. The “real world” application of these skills to industry-paced projects

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Have an in-depth understanding of some primary UX methods relevant to product development (e.g. Heuristic evaluation, Moderated User testing, UX Benchmarking).
2. Understand the principles of other important UX tools/methods (e.g. Information architecture tests (card-sorts), RITE testing, Competitive Analysis, Thematic coding of qualitative data, etc.).
3. Have a working understanding of the most frequently used UX methods at each point of the development lifecycle, with a specific focus on which methods are best suited to evaluative research.
4. Learn the scientific underpinnings of the various methodologies, including the specific advantages and disadvantages of each.

MY PERSONAL GOALS FOR YOU

In addition to content-specific objectives stated above, I have these personal goals for each student:

- to get you to think deeply and carefully about the subject,
- to help you to genuinely like the subject, and provide a foundation of interest for further usability courses
- to provide knowledge and skills useful to you in your career,
- to make you proud of your achievements in this course,
- and, hopefully, have a little fun in the process.

How Will You Learn?

STATEMENT OF LEARNING SUCCESS

Your success in this class is important to me. We all learn differently, and everyone struggles sometimes. You are not, ever, the only one having difficulty! If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we will develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. I also encourage you to reach out to the student resources available through UT.

TEACHING MODALITY INFORMATION

This course will be taught in person and is a combination of intensive readings from journal articles and book chapters, self-directed learning within teams, as well as a semester-long project. There will be substantial team work done in each class meeting. Attendance and participation in class are critical to each individual student's success and to the value that this type of interactive course provides. Students are expected to come to class prepared to engage in both smaller collaborative groups and in large class discussions and presentations. Students must complete all required readings prior to each class and submit all assignments on time.

COMMUNICATION

The course Canvas site can be found at utexas.instructure.com. Please email me through Canvas. You are responsible for ensuring that the primary email address you have recorded with the university is the one you will check for course communications because that is the email address that Canvas uses.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed, and that the diversity that students bring to this class can be comfortably expressed and be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit to all students. Please come to me at any time with any concerns.

Course Requirements and Grading

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Portugal, S. (2013). *Interviewing Users: How to Uncover Compelling Insights*. Brooklyn, NY: Rosenfeld Media. ISBN: 9781933820118.

Fitzpatrick, R. (2014). *The Mom Test: How to talk to customers & learn if your business is a good idea when everyone else is lying to you*. London: Foundercentric. ISBN: 1492180742.

Rubin, J., & Chisnell, D. (2008). *Handbook of Usability Testing: How to Plan, Design, and Conduct Effective Tests (2nd edition)*. Indiana: Wiley. ISBN: 0470185481.

REQUIRED DEVICES

- Laptop computers for use in and outside of class
- Mobile device with App Store access (see me if this is an issue and we can work on accommodations).

ASSIGNMENTS

- All assignments are due by midnight, on the date listed.
- All readings are due before class the day we discuss them.
- Assignments will be uploaded to Canvas.
- Each student will be required to present an in-class synopsis of one assigned reading topic. There will be a PDF covering the instructions re: the reading presentations.
- Along with the key deliverables for your course project, you will also be graded by your team member peers. Your peers will grade you in terms of your participation and the quality of your contribution to the overall small group effort. The peer grades will be combined as part of the final report grade.

Assignments	% of Total Grade
1. Reading Presentations (Individual)	10%
2. Heuristic Evaluation (Group)	10%
3. Competitive Analysis (Group)	10%
4. Recruitment Screener (Group)	10%
5. Moderator Script and Test Packet (Group)	15%
6. Final Report & Presentation (Group)	35%
7. Peer Reviews by Group Members	10%

This table represents how you will demonstrate your learning & how we will assess the degree to which you have done so.

LATE WORK AND MAKING UP MISSED WORK

Late work is accepted and subject to a 10 point grade reduction for every 24 hours late. If you (or your group) are not able to complete an assignment by the due date, it would be best for you to hand in as much of it as you have done. It will help if you notify me in advance about any emergency circumstances that will adversely affect completion of an assignment.

ABSENCES

You will not be graded directly on attendance. You are adults and are expected to be present for all course-related activities. You should plan to be in the class meetings.

If you are absent or unable to participate on the day that your team meets, you are responsible for providing

your team with the necessary information to compensate for your absence. It is crucial to keep in communication with your team; you are responsible for letting both your team and myself know if you cannot make it to a class.

Excused Absence: The only absences that will be considered excused are for religious holy days or extenuating circumstances due to an emergency. You will not be penalized for this absence, although you will still be responsible for any work you will miss on the day of absence if applicable. If you have to be absent, use your resources wisely. Check materials on Canvas (lecture slides etc.), ask your team and other classmates to get a run-down and notes on any lessons you miss. If you have to miss class for an extended period due to a protracted illness or similar reason, we will work with University Health Services, and we will treat your needs as a special case and do everything to help you survive and complete the class.

+/- GRADNG POLICY

The final class grades will include +/- grades.

GRADE BREAKS

Grade	Cutoff
A	94%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	84%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	74%
C-	70%
D+	67%
D	64%
D-	60%
F	<60%

Course Outline

All instructions, assignments, readings, rubrics and essential information will be on the Canvas website at utexas.instructure.com. Check Canvas regularly. **Changes** to the schedule may be made at my discretion if circumstances require. I will announce any such changes in class and will also communicate them via a Canvas announcement. It is your responsibility to note these changes when announced, and I will do my best to ensure that you are notified of changes with as much advance notice as possible.

#	Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments due
1	8/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introductions – Syllabus – Course Objectives – Overview of reading presentations – Lecture: Introduction to Mural + Icebreaker Activity, Information Architecture, Brief History of UX 	For 8/29 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fitzpatrick: Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4 – Articles 1, 2 	
2	8/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading Presentations: – Lecture: Heuristic Eval, Task Analysis, Comp Analysis – Class Project Kickoff (review big picture, milestones, deliverables) – Group Work: Generate high-level project tasks, Gantt Chart/Project Timeline, Start Heuristic Eval 	For 9/12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rubin & Chisnell: Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4 – Articles: 3, 4 	Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)
	9/5	LABOR DAY - NO CLASS		Have Fun!
3	9/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading Presentations: – Lecture: Screeners & Moderator Scripts, Recruiting – Demo: Intro to Figma – Group Work: Heuristic Eval, Synthesize diagram, Competitive Analysis 	For 9/19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Portigal: Ch. 1, 2 – Articles: 9, 10 	Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas) Heuristic eval due in Canvas on 9/18
4	9/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading Presentations: – Lecture: System Usability Scale (SUS), T-O-T, and other testing materials – Group Work: Heuristic Eval, Competitive Analysis 	For 9/26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rubin & Chisnell: Ch. 5, 7 – Articles: 11, 12, 14 	Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas) Competitive Analysis due in Canvas on 9/25
5	9/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading Presentations: – Lecture: In-Person & remote testing, Intro to Figma – Group Work: screener, moderator script, task building 	For 10/3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rubin & Chisnell: Ch. 4, 8 – Articles: 5, 6, 8 	Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)
6	10/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading Presentations: – Lecture: Qualitative methods and best practices – Group Work: screener, moderator script, task building 	For 10/10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Portigal: Ch. 3 – Rubin & Chisnell: Ch. 6 – Articles: 17 	Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas) Screener due in Canvas on 10/9

7	10/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations: - Lecture: Quantitative Methods, A/B testing, usability benchmarking - Group Work: moderator script, participant packets, coding sheet 	<p>For 10/17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portigal: Ch. 5, 6 - Rubin & Chisnell: Ch. 9 - Articles: 	<p>Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)</p>
8	10/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations: - Check-in: Interview materials, script and test plans, - Group Work: Test dry runs using all material 	<p>For 10/24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portigal: Ch. 7, 8 - Rubin & Chisnell: Ch.10 - Articles: 13 	<p>Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)</p> <p>Moderator Script, Interview materials & test plans due in Canvas on 10/23</p>
9	10/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations: - Lecture: Affinity Diagrams, Synthesis & Analysis - Group Work: Recruiting & Begin User testing 	<p>For 10/31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portigal: Ch. 9 - Rubin & Chisnell: Ch.11 - Articles: 15 	<p>Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)</p>
10	10/31	<p>Halloween</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations: - Lecture: Report Creation, review expectations for report and example reports for final project - Group Work: User testing, data analysis 	<p>For 11/7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rubin & Chisnell: Ch. 12, 13 - Articles: 16 	<p>Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)</p>
11	11/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations: - Lecture: Storytelling, Journey Maps - Group Work: Analysis & report creation 	<p>For 11/14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portigal:Ch. 4 - Rubin & Chisnell: Ch. 14 - Articles: 18 	<p>Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)</p>
12	11/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations: - Check-in: report creation - Group Work: Cont. report and presentation 		<p>Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)</p>
	11/21	Thanksgiving Break		
12	11/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lecture: Presentation expectations & stakeholder buy-in - Group Work: finalizing report and presentation 		<p>Final reports due on 12/4 in Canvas</p>
14	12/5	- Presentations		

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY EXPECTATIONS

Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLASS RECORDINGS

I do not plan to record any classes at this time. This is subject to change. Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

GETTING HELP WITH TECHNOLOGY

Students needing help with technology in this course should contact the [ITS Service Desk](#)

BASIC NEEDS SECURITY

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. UT maintains the [UT Outpost](#), which is a free on-campus food pantry and career closet. Furthermore, if you are comfortable notifying me, please do so, as I may have additional resources I can share.

SHARING OF COURSE MATERIALS IS PROHIBITED

No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class without explicit, written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. The University is well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to [Student Conduct and Academic Integrity](#) in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure of the course.

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

By [UT Austin policy](#), you must notify me of your pending absence as far in advance as possible of the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

NAMES AND PRONOUNS

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender identity & expression, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name, unless they have added a "chosen name" with the registrar's office, which you can do so [here](#). I will gladly honor your request to address you by a name that is different from what appears on the official roster, and by the pronouns you use (she/he/they/ze, etc). Please advise me of any changes early in the semester so that I may make appropriate updates to my records. For instructions on how to add your pronouns to Canvas, visit [this site](#). More resources available on the Gender and Sexuality Center's website, www.utgsc.org.

University Resources for Students

DISABILITY & ACCESS (D&A)

The university is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment consistent with university policy and federal and state law. Please let me know if you experience any barriers to learning so I can work with you to ensure you have equal opportunity to participate fully in this course. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Disability & Access (D&A). Please refer to the D&A website for more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with D&A, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and needs in this course.

COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH CENTER (CMHC)

I urge students who are struggling for any reason and who believe that it might impact their performance in the course to reach out to me if they feel comfortable. This will allow me to provide any resources or accommodations that I can. If immediate mental health assistance is needed, call the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) at 512-471-3515 or you may also contact Bryce Moffett, LCSW (iSchool CARE counselor) at 512-232-2983. Outside CMHC business hours (8a.m.-5p.m., Monday-Friday), contact the CMHC 24/7 Crisis Line at 512-471-2255.

UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES (UHS)

Your physical health and wellness are a priority. University Health Services is an on-campus high-quality medical facility providing care to all UT students. Services offered by UHS include general medicine, urgent care, a 24/7 nurse advice line, gynecology, sports medicine, physical therapy, lab and radiology services, COVID-19 testing and vaccinations and much more. For additional information, visit <https://healthyhorns.utexas.edu> or call 512-471-4955.

STUDENT EMERGENCY SERVICES (SES)

Student Emergency Services in the Office of the Dean of Students helps students and their families during difficult or emergency situations. Assistance includes outreach, advocacy, intervention, support, and referrals to relevant campus and community resources. If you need to be absent from class due to a family emergency, medical or mental health concern, or academic difficulty due to crisis or an emergency situation, you can work with Student Emergency Services. SES will document your situation and notify your professors. Additional information is available at <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/> or by calling 512-471-5017.

Important Safety Information

If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or professors, contact BCCAL (the Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line) at <https://safety.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line> or by calling 512-232-5050. Confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible, however the university may be required to release some information to appropriate parties.

CLASSROOM SAFETY AND COVID-19

- For any illness, students should stay home if they are sick or contagious, not only to stop the spread, but also to promote their personal wellness.
- The university will continue to provide rapid antigen self-test kits at [distribution sites](#) throughout campus. Students can receive up to four tests at a time.
- The university will provide [symptomatic COVID-19 testing](#) on campus for all students, faculty and staff.
- UHS maintains up-to-date resources on COVID, which can be found here:
 - [COVID-19 Information and Resources](#)
 - [COVID-19 Exposure Action Chart](#)

TITLE IX DISCLOSURE

Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Education Code, Section 51.252 (formerly known as Senate Bill 212) requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, to report any information to the Title IX Office regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive any information of this type (including, but not limited to, writing assignments, class discussions, or one-on-one conversations, or third party reports) must be report it. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, please remember that I will be required to report this information to the Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to speak with someone who can provide support or remedies without making an official report to the university, please email supportandresources@austin.utexas.edu. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit <http://www.titleix.utexas.edu/>, contact the Title IX Office via email at titleix@austin.utexas.edu, or call 512-471-0419.

Although graduate teaching and research assistants are not subject to Texas Education Code, Section 51.252, they are still mandatory reporters under Federal Title IX laws and are required to report a wide range of behaviors we refer to as sexual misconduct, including the types of sexual misconduct covered under Texas Education Code, Section 51.252. The Title IX office has developed supportive ways to respond to a survivor and compiled campus resources to support all impacted by a Title IX incident.

CAMPUS SAFETY

The following are recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the [Office of Campus Safety and Security](#), 512-471-5767,

- Students should sign up for Campus Emergency Text Alerts at the page linked above.
- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus must evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- For more information, please visit [emergency preparedness](#).