

Spring 2022

INF 385P: Usability

Unique: 28215

Room: PAR 1 Wednesday 3:00-6:00pm

*note: first two class meetings over zoom; zoom links on Canvas

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Brooke Wooley (she/her)

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Office hours: over zoom, email for appointment

Course Description

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 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 as “User Experience” (UX) research, “User-centered Design” (UCD), or even “Design Thinking”.

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 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 development teams create successful products that USEFUL, USABLE, 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

The student who successfully completes this class will:

- Have an in-depth understanding of some primary UX methods relevant to product development (e.g. Heuristic evaluation, Moderated User testing, UX Benchmarking)
- 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.)
- 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.
- Learn the scientific underpinnings of the various methodologies, including the specific advantages and disadvantages of each.

CLASS FORMAT

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.

Course Requirements and Grading

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Portigal, 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

GRADES AND CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

All assignments are due by 5pm, on the date listed. Assignments will be uploaded to Canvas.

Each student will be required to present an in-class synopsis of one assigned reading topic [see Canvas for the assigned reading assignments and dates for the in-class presentation]. 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.

Grade Breakdown

- 10% – Reading Presentations (Individual)
- 10% – Heuristic Evaluation (Group)
- 10% – Competitive Analysis (Group)
- 10% – Recruitment Screener (Group)
- 15% – Moderator Script and Participant Packet (Group)
- 35% – Final Report & Presentation (Group)
- 10% – Peer Reviews by Group Members

CLASS TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

The below is a list of topics with each class meeting, the date, and the readings and assignments that are due PRIOR to those class meetings:

	DATE	TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
1	1/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome & course overview - Lecture: UX background and history; generative vs evaluative - Figma workshop 	For 1/26: Fitzpatrick - pg. 1-64 Article 1 Article 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)
2	1/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations - Lecture: Heuristic evaluation, project kickoff - Group work: Heuristic eval 	For 2/2: Handbook of Usability Testing Ch. 1, 2, 3 Articles 3 & 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)
3	2/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations - Lecture: Affinity diagrams, intro to Mural - Group work: Synthesize diagram, generate high-level project tasks, Heuristic Eval 	For 2/9: Portigal Ch. 1 & 2 Article Checklist - Competitive Article 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)

				- Top level tasks for group project due in class on 2/9
4	2/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations - Lecture: Comparative Analysis - Group work: Heuristic Eval, Comparative Analysis 	For 2/16: Handbook of Usability Testing Ch. 5 & 7 Article 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)
5	2/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations - Lecture: Screeners and moderator scripts - Group work: Heuristic Eval, Comparative Analysis 	For 2/23: Handbook of Usability Testing Ch. 6 Articles 5, 6, 7, 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas) - Heuristic eval and comparative analysis due in Canvas on 2/22
6	2/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations - Lecture: System Usability Scale (SUS), testing materials - Group work: screener, moderator script, task building 	For 3/2: Handbook of Usability Testing Ch. 4 & 8 Portugal Ch. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)
7	3/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations - Lecture: In-person & remote testing flows, prototyping in Figma, Active debriefs - Group work: screener, moderator script, task building 	For 3/9: Handbook of Usability Testing Ch. 9 Portugal Ch. 5, 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas) - Screener due in Canvas on 3/8
8	3/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations - Lecture: Qualitative methods and best practices - Group work: moderator script, participant packets, coding sheet 	For 3/23: Handbook of Usability Testing Ch. 10 Portugal Ch. 7, 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas) - Interview materials due in Canvas on 3/22
X	3/16	No Class: Spring Break		
9	3/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations - Lecture: Check-in: interview materials and test plans, review remote testing 	For 3/30: Handbook of Usability Testing Ch. 11 Portugal Ch. 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)

		- Group work: test dry runs using all materials	Article 13	
10	3/30	- Reading Presentations - Lecture: Analysis methods - Group work: user testing, data analysis	For 4/6: Handbook of Usability Testing Ch. 12 & 13 Article 16	- Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)
11	4/6	- Reading Presentations - Lecture: Report creation, review expectations for report and example reports for final project - Group work: user testing, data analysis	For 4/13: Handbook of Usability Testing Ch. 14 Portigal Ch. 4 Article 15	- Reading Presentations (student assignment & prompt in Canvas)
12	4/13	- Reading Presentations - Lecture: Information Architecture, journey maps - Group work: analysis check-in, report creation		
13	4/20	- Lecture: Quantitative Methods, A/B testing, usability benchmarking - Group work: report creation		
14	4/27	- Lecture: Presentation expectations, UX in the real world - Group work: report check-in, finalizing report and presentation		Final reports due 5pm on 5/3 in Canvas
15	5/4	Presentations		

Course Policies and Disclosures

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.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Please refer to SSD's website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with SSD, 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.

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

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.

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.

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, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by your chosen name and by the gender pronouns you use. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's chosen (not legal) name, if you have provided one. If you wish to provide or update a chosen name, that [can be done easily at this page](#), and you can [add your pronouns to Canvas](#).

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on the Indigenous lands of Turtle Island, the ancestral name for what now is called North America. Moreover, I would like to acknowledge the Alabama-Coushatta, Caddo, Carrizo/Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Comanche, Kickapoo, Lipan Apache, Tonkawa and Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas.

University Resources for Students

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.

For more information on CMHC, visit <https://cmhc.utexas.edu>

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

To help preserve our in-person learning environment, the university recommends the following.

- Adhere to university [mask guidance](#). Masks are strongly recommended, but optional, inside university buildings for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, except when alone in a private office or single-occupant cubicle.
- If you develop COVID-19 symptoms or feel sick, stay home and contact the [University Health Services](#)' Nurse Advice Line at 512-475-6877. If you need to be absent from class, contact [Student Emergency Services](#) and they will notify your professors. In addition, to help understand what to do if you have had close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, see this [University Health Services link](#).
- [Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line](#) (BCCAL) remains available as the primary tool to address questions or concerns from the university community about COVID-19.
 - Students who test positive should contact [BCCAL](#) or self-report (if tested off campus) to [University Health Services](#).
- Visit [Protect Texas Together](#) for more information.

TITLE IX DISCLOSURE

Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas 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) must be report it. If you would like to speak with someone who can provide support or remedies without making an official report to the university, please email advocate@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 Senate Bill 212, 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 Senate Bill 212. The Title IX office has developed supportive ways to respond to a survivor and compiled campus resources to support survivors.

Faculty members and certain staff members are considered “Responsible Employees” or “Mandatory Reporters,” which means that they are required to report violations of Title IX to the Title IX Coordinator. **I am a Responsible Employee and must report any Title IX-related incidents** that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with me or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX-related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you want to speak with someone for support or remedies without making an official report to the university, email advocate@austin.utexas.edu For more information about reporting options and resources, visit the [Title IX Office](#) or email titleix@austin.utexas.edu.