INF385T

Information Design Studio

Course Description: This studio course provides an overview of an interaction design subspecialty relating to the design of information, through methods of visual problem solving. Students learn to translate complex data into clear, visually dynamic solutions, and learn an iterative process for solving problems relating to information architecture and information design. This course complements study in topics of corporate and enterprise software design, wayfinding, print design, and product design.

Course Goals: This course focuses on the planning and creation of information systems and the presentation of these systems to the user in ways that are easily understood and manipulated. The objectives of this studio class are:

- to understand the implications of representing data in a variety of visual forms
- to place content at the core of information design systems, understanding that the bridge between the medium and the message is constantly shrinking
- to practice an iterative, user-centered design methodology
- to internalize the importance of creating coherent, visually appropriate design solutions while designing information systems

Course Outcomes: The following course outcomes indicate competencies and measurable skills that students develop as a result of completing this course:

- Explore and develop appropriate solutions to information design problems inherently associated with comprehending large quantities of information
- Develop procedural techniques, based on established synthesis design methods, for making sense of large, complicated systems
- Organize information, images and concepts into coherent graphic structures and frameworks that can inform and direct human actions
- Simulate, through graphic and digital prototypes, the effects of information design in the real world environment

Required Texts and Readings:


Attendance Policy: There are no excused absences. Students are expected to attend each class period; the accumulation of more than four absences will result in the student’s failure for the class. Additionally,

- If you are absent or late on the day something is due, you will receive a 0 on the entire assignment being presented.
- No late work will be accepted under any circumstances.
### Schedule of Classes: Key events including assignments, projects due dates/exam dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>In Class</th>
<th>Out Of Class</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1     | Jan 20| Lecture: Introduction to Information Design Studio  
Assignments: Mapping and Diagramming as Synthesis Methods  
Assignment 1: Mapping & Diagramming handed out  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. | Immersive domain research: understand the topic through primary and secondary research  
Refine concept map and high level flow diagram, with an eye for accuracy – ensure the content is logical and correct  
Read: Information Anxiety (Wurman), pp23-52. |
| 2     | Jan 27| Discuss Reading: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75  
Lecture: Design Process  
Interim critique  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. | Refine concept map and high level flow diagram, with an eye for accuracy – ensure the content is logical and correct  
Read: Information Anxiety (Wurman), pp23-52. |
| 2.5   | Jan 31| Optional Saturday Class  
Blue Dahlia Bistro (1115 E 11th S)  
1:00pm – 2:30pm  
Interim critique | Continue refining diagrams. |
|       | Feb 3 | No Class – Jon at bxDA in Vancouver [www.ixda.org]  
Interim critique | Continue refining diagrams. |
| 3     | Feb 10| Discuss Reading: Information Anxiety (Wurman), pp23-52  
Software Demonstration: Adobe Illustrator  
Interim critique  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. | Iteratively refine and finalize deliverables, using Adobe Illustrator to create a final version of each diagram. |
| 4     | Feb 17| Assignment 1 Due: Final Critique  
Assignment 2: Communicating Through Print handed out  
Lecture: Ethnography and Contextual Inquiry  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. | Immersive domain research: understand the topic through contextual research in the context of the problem space  
Competitive product tear-down: analyze and criticize existing artifacts in the context of the problem space  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. |
| 5     | Feb 24| Lecture: Data to Wisdom and the 3 Chasms  
Discuss Reading: Visual Revelations (Wainer), pp 85-124  
Interim critique  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. | Refine design ideas for depth, breadth, and broad concepts  
Begin to work in Adobe Illustrator, “getting real” quickly  
Read: Notes on Graphic Design and Visual Communication (Berryman)  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. |
| 6     | Mar 3 | Discuss Reading: Notes on Graphic Design and Visual Communication (Berryman)  
Lecture: Visual Design  
Interim critique  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. | Refine design ideas for clarity  
Gather user feedback to understand if your solutions are usable, useful and desirable  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. |
| 7     | Mar 10| Lecture: Information Design Culture  
Interim critique  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. | Refine design ideas for visual design, aesthetic sensibility, readability, and simplicity  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. |
|       | Mar 17| No class – spring break  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. |
| 8     | Mar 24| Assignment 2 Due: Final Critique  
Assignment 3: Information and Software handed out  
Lecture: Designing Software  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. | Immersive domain research: understand the topic through contextual research in the context of the problem space  
Competitive product tear-down: analyze and criticize existing artifacts in the context of the problem space  
Initial design explorations: identify your target audience and sketch primary flows through the interface  
Read: The Inmates are Running the Asylum (Cooper), ch7-9  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. |
| 9     | Mar 31| Discuss Reading: The Inmates are Running the Asylum (Cooper), ch7-9  
Lecture: Usability Analysis Methods  
Interim critique  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. | Refine your scenarios to be explicitly step-based  
Develop a concept map of the software, illustrating each screen and the connections between the screens  
Begin to sketch out your interface design  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. |
|       | Apr 7 | No Class – Jon at CHI in Boston [www.chi2009.org]  
Interim critique  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. | Produce wireframes of each screen  
Conduct think aloud user testing, based on your new design, with at least 3 users  
Begin to sketch out your interface design  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. |
| 10    | Apr 14| Lecture: The Structure of a Product Presentation  
Interim critique  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. | Revise wireframes of each screen  
Conduct think aloud user testing with at least 3 users  
Begin to sketch out your interface design  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. |
| 11    | Apr 21| Lecture: History of Computers and Computing  
Interim critique  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. | Refine the visual design in order to create a strong and professional design aesthetic  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. |
| 12    | Apr 28| In class work session  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. | Finalize design, using principles of visual design  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. |
| 13    | May 5 | Assignment 3 Due: Final Critique  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. | Finalize design, using principles of visual design  
Initial design explorations: begin to sketch out core nodes for concept map and high level flow for process flow diagram  
Read: Thoughts on Interaction Design (Kolko), pp63-75. |

**Revised September 2008**
Grading Opportunities: Your overall course grade will be computed according to the following breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: Mapping and Diagramming</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2: Communicating Through Print</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 3: Information and Software</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation, attendance, and review of assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Standards</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter grade: <strong>A</strong> Work greatly exceeds expectations in scope, quality, and execution, while successfully meeting all assigned objectives and fulfilling required criteria</td>
<td>90 – 100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter grade: <strong>B</strong> Work exceeds expectations in either scope, quality or execution, while successfully meeting all assigned objectives and fulfilling required criteria</td>
<td>80 – 89 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter grade: <strong>C</strong> Work successfully meets all assigned objectives and fulfills required criteria</td>
<td>70 – 79 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter grade: <strong>D</strong> Work does not meet all assigned objectives or fulfill required criteria, or work is sub par in terms of scope, quality or execution</td>
<td>60 – 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter grade: <strong>F</strong> Work fails to meet objectives, and is sub par with regard to scope, quality and execution</td>
<td>0 – 59%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Extra Help Session(s): As necessary and by appointment

Academic Integrity: Under all circumstances, students are expected to be honest in their dealings with faculty, administrative staff, and fellow students. In speaking with members of the college community, students must give an accurate representation of the facts at hand. In class assignments, students must submit work that fairly and accurately reflects their level of accomplishment. Any work that is not a product of the student’s own effort is considered dishonest. Students may not submit the same work for more than one class. A student may be suspended or expelled for academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Student Handbook for additional information regarding the policy on academic integrity.