



art155informationarchitecture

kcc :: new media arts :: spring 2010
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instructor: chris gargiulo :: office: olapa 130
email: gargiulo@hawaii.edu

:: coursesyllabus

spring2010

COURSE INFO

ART 155 Information Architecture
6 hours lecture/lab per week

Prerequisite(s): ART112 with a grade of "C" or higher; satisfactory completion of the Information Architecture portfolio review or acceptance into a NMA AS specialization.

Art 155 is the study of the organization and presentation of content for interactive web sites. Students learn how to structure complex information systems, to set meaningful usability goals; to define navigational menus that site visitors will immediately understand; and to design a site to meet the needs of target audiences.

COURSE OBJECTIVES/COMPETENCIES

Upon successful completion of ART 155, the student should be able to:

- Review, analyze, and evaluate large-scale interactive projects.
- Define the goals of information architecture and outline its history.
- Define how information architecture is used in conjunction with design, technology and business practices.
- Set meaningful Web site goals.
- Profile users, behaviors, and intentions to reach a specific audience.
- Identify and prioritize content and functional requirements.
- Create and manage a feature inventory.
- Review and analyze user-centered design that demonstrates a need for particular organization structures.
- Analyze basic information structures and demonstrate the ability to research topics and organize ideas into comprehensive information hierarchies.
- Identify different navigational systems and the qualities of successful navigation.
- Segment a site into meaningful information areas, layout grids, and content positions.
- Define menus that users will easily understand.
- Create site maps, content maps, page mockups, design sketches, flowcharts, storyboards, and prototypes to assist programmers and designers understand content and organization.
- Create and manage functional specifications, page inventories and style guides.
- Build Web sites that demonstrate a clear understanding of the site development process.
- Measure the success of a site after implementation.
- Identify the goals and types of usability and user testing.
- Explain the relationship between information architecture and front-end and back-end technology.
- Explain cross-platform and browser related issues that enhance the user experience.

- Complete the creative problem-solving process from the preliminary planning stage and exploration through revisions to the final product.
- Experiment by taking risks through the process of exploration during the creative problem solving process.
- Use various techniques and develop skill with media and application.
- Demonstrate strong group communication skills and the ability to speak clearly during critiques.
- Write about and defend the conceptual merits of work produced for the course.

COURSE CONTENT

A. Information Architecture Theory 33%

- Introduction to information architecture via theory and practice of contemporary web site architecture
- Review, analysis and evaluation of web sites' information architecture
- Exploration of user-centered design that demonstrates a need for organizational information structures

B. Information Architecture Issues 33%

- Research and development of audience specific site structure and design demonstrating successful information architecture
- Research and identify audience personas, intentions, needs and behaviors
- Demonstrate the ability to research topics and organize ideas into comprehensive information hierarchies

C. Information Architecture Techniques 33%

- Preparation of site maps, mockups, sketches, flowcharts, storyboards, and prototypes to assist programmers, designers, and clients in understanding content and organization
- Usability and user testing techniques
- Analysis and demonstration of cross-platform and browser related issues that enhance the user experience

TEXTS

Required Text:

- Don't Make Me Think : A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability (2nd Edition)
by Steve Krug

Recommended, but not required, texts:

- Usability for the Web: Designing Web Sites that Work
by Tom Brinck, Darren Gergle, and Scott D. Wood
- Designing With Web Standards (2nd Edition)
by Jeffrey Zeldman

Any additional readings will be supplied by the instructor on a week to week basis, in either paper handout form or online.

MATERIALS

The primary software used in this class is Microsoft Word, Power Point, and Excel - all part of the Microsoft Office suite which will be installed on all computers in class and in the labs. A free open source office suite available online as an alternative is Open Office. We will also use Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator.

Students will be required to submit sketches on plain white paper. While it is not required, it is recommended that you purchase a cheap sketchbook and a set of black and/or grayscale markers.

Additional materials may include backup storage and disks (such as an external hard drive, blank cd's, dvd's, or a usb flash card) and printer paper.

INSTRUCTOR'S EXPECTATION:

Attendance and class participation are important to succeed in this course. Lectures will be given once. It is essential that you attend class, arrive promptly and remain for the full duration of the scheduled class period. Leaving class early without permission will result in an absence marked for that class period. Consistent lateness and absences may result in a lower grade for the semester due to the missed opportunities for participation in class discussions. If you are absent for medical reasons, please provide a note from your doctor or nurse. More than five unexcused absences will result in a final grade of a F. Three tardies will equal one unexcused absence. If there is a severe family problem, a long-term personal illness, or something else that may interfere with the course, please discuss this with me as early as possible. So long as I know about any potential problems in advance, there is usually a solution. Please do not wait until it is too late so as to avoid any repercussions to your grade. For unexcused absences, students will need to make arrangements with other class members regarding missed information.

Taking notes during lectures and demonstrations is recommended. Time outside of class will need to be consistently spent on projects in order to meet the requirements of the class.

There will be no email during class time! You can only check your email during class breaks.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

The method of instruction will include lectures, lessons, demonstrations, project development, individual instruction, group discussions, and critiques.

METHOD OF EVALUATION & GRADING POLICY:

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|---|------------|
| A. Projects/Assignments | 80% |
| a. Clarity of Conceptual Understanding | 40% |
| Students must demonstrate their conceptual understanding of project assignments by creating preliminary sketches and drawings and by meeting each project's thematic and technical specifications. Students will be asked to defend their conceptual understanding of the course content through their group communication skills during critiques. | |
| b. Quality of Execution of Assignments | 40% |
| Each student will be expected to conduct their own research and create their own documentation and design assets (sketches, creative briefs, graphical elements, photography, video, designs, etc.) based on project guidelines. Completing tutorials and assignments will demonstrate the ability to execute specific software techniques. The aesthetic quality of the designs will be assessed during critiques and during the final grade evaluation period based on the application of the visual elements of line, shape, value, color, texture, space, time and motion as well as the design principles of balance, rhythm, emphasis, contrast, variation, unity and motion. | |
| B. Participation/Attendance | 20% |

Students will be expected to participate as active class members. This includes attending all classes; meeting weekly, midterm, and final project deadlines; completing production time outside of class and in the lab environment; and participating as dependable team members. During critiques, all students are required to participate as both presenters and critics.

Grading is based on assignments, projects, and class participation. It is the responsibility of the student to collect handouts, take notes, complete and turn in assignments on due dates. Make-up assignments will be administered only in cases where there is a valid medical reason accompanied by a doctor's note. Missing a

deadline will result in a full letter grade reduction for that project unless there is a valid medical reason or a family emergency. Projects may be revised and turned in again for re-grading.

- ***Any student missing the mid-term/final semester critique or not turning in a midterm/final project without prior permission will have a full letter grade taken off the final semester grade.***

All projects are worth 100 points each. Letter grades are dictated as follows:

A	90-100	B	80-89	C	70-79	D	60-69	F	59-0
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The final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Weekly Assignments	40%
Mid-Term Assignment	20%
Final Assignment	20%
Class Participation	20%
TOTAL	100%

SPECIAL STUDENT SERVICES (SSSO)

Extended time in a distraction-free environment is an appropriate accommodation based on a student's disability. If you do have a disability and have not disclosed the nature of your disability and the support you need, you are invited to contact the Special Student Services Office, 734-9552, 'Ilima 105.

STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

A college campus is a community with specific behavior expectations designed to allow all students, faculty, and staff to flourish. Please familiarize yourself with KCC's Student Conduct Code in the course catalog. You should know your rights and responsibilities on campus. The Student Conduct Code describes specific campus policies related to: drug and alcohol use, smoking, lethal weapons, sexual harassment and sexual assault, academic honesty, nondiscrimination, and family privacy.

In all campus environments, Disruptive Behavior will not be tolerated. This means: any speech or action that (1) is disrespectful, offensive, and/or threatening; (2) interferes with the learning activities of other students; (3) impedes the delivery of college services; and/or (4) has a negative impact in any learning environment.

THIS CLASS IS A "SAFE ZONE"

Discriminatory or rude comments of any kind, particularly regarding gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion, will not be tolerated.

SCHEDULE

Throughout the semester we will be covering a variety of information architecture topics and principles. Topics will include:

- The RFP Process
- Brainstorming
- User scenarios
- Visual project schedule
- How to draft a project budget sheet
- Usability checklists

- Listing deliverables
- How to design a client web site
- Site maps
- Page maps
- Feature spec documents
- Technical spec documents
- Style guide documents
- User flow charts

Week 1 :: information architecture, the user-centered design process, & usability

Topics covered:

- Intro to HCI, Usability, and Information Architecture

Assignment:

- Choose one site/company to analyze and ultimately redesign over the course of the semester

Week 2 :: creative brief

Topics covered:

- The full web design production process
- Brainstorming process
- How to write a creative brief

Assignment:

- Creative Brief – due Week 3

Week 3 :: user scenarios

Topics covered:

- How to measure/assess the usability of a web site
- Forrester consulting reports
- User Scenarios

Assignment:

- Three User Scenarios – due week 4

Week 4 :: site features

Topics covered:

- Functional Specifications/Feature List
- Usability Checklist
- The RFP Process
- Client Pitches
- Power Point

Assignment:

- Functional Specifications – due Week ?

Week 5 :: site maps

Topics covered:

- Information organization & organizational systems
- Navigation and naming
- User flow charts

Assignment:

- Site Map – due Week ?

Week 6 :: site maps & wireframes

Topics covered:

- Improving your site map and wireframes
- How to design a layout without design elements

Assignment:

- Revise Site Map and Wireframes – due Week 8

Week 7 :: site maps & wireframes

Topics covered:

- Visual communication of improved usability
- User centered design

Assignment:

- Client Documentation Packet & Presentation – due Week 10

Week 8 :: Design

Topics covered:

- Work week

Assignment:

- Round 1 Design – due Week ?

Week 9 :: Design

Topics covered:

- Work week

Assignment:

- Round 1 Design – due Week ?

Week 10 :: Design

Topics covered:

- Work week

Assignment:

- Round 1 Design – due Week ?

Week 11 :: NO-CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Week 12 :: Design

Topics covered:

- Work week

Assignment:

- Round 1 Design – due Week ?

Week 13 :: Design

Topics covered:

- Work week

Assignment:

- Round 1 Design – due Week ?

Week 14 :: Design

Topics covered:

- Work week

Assignment:

- Round 1 Design – due Week ?

Week 15 :: Design

Topics covered:

- Work week

Assignment:

- Round 1 Design – due Week ?

Week 16 :: Final project

WORK WEEK

Assignment:

- Two re-design mockups – final designs due week 17
- Updated client documentation packet – due week 17

Week 17 :: Final project

FINAL CRITIQUE

- **In-class presentation in a formal critique environment**
- **Two re-design mockups final designs due**
- **Updated client documentation packet due**