Class time: Wed 3:00-5:50pm
Format: Online Synchronous via Zoom
Prerequisite: COM 245 (formerly COM 355) New Media and Communication

Professor: Dr. Urszula Pruchniewska
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Office Phone: 3-4563
Office Hours (Virtual): Mondays 10:30-11:30, Tuesdays 1:00-3:00, Thursdays 12:30-2:30, and by appointment
Zoom Link for Class Meetings and Office Hours: https://kutztown.zoom.us/j/5325476263

Course Overview

Course Description

This course explores the basic principles and practices of user research, digital architectures, user experience design, and usability testing. Students will develop an understanding of user-centered design (UCD) and will learn how to research user behaviors and experience to create well-designed digital products, such as websites and apps.

Course Rationale

Each year, an increasing number of careers are created that are situated in user experience design and research. Instead of theorizing about how people use digital spaces, the goal of this course is to understand how digital spaces are created, managed, and updated. As such, this course will pull back the curtain and introduce students to how media professionals design spaces and then test the usability of these spaces. Upon completion of the course, students will be prepared to take on positions as user experience designers and researchers at companies ranging from small digital startups to digital media conglomerates.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
    A. comprehend the basic principles of User Centered Design (UCD)
    B. demonstrate how the role of users and their behaviors, perceptions, attitudes, and expectations affect the ways in which they interact with digital spaces
    C. understand prototyping and wireframing methods
    D. conduct user experience research using a variety of methods
    E. use current accessibility guidelines
    F. improve their individual and collaborative skills in user experience design and research
    G. develop the skills to recognize a usability issue, test varied solutions, and argue for the best-case scenario fix

Required Textbooks and Course Materials

Course readings, videos, and other materials will be made available on D2L every week.

Required Technology

- Computer/laptop/tablet with microphone and speakers
- Internet connection
- Webcam
- Microsoft Office 365 for completing projects (free with your KU account)

Course Format

This is an online synchronous course that will be conducted using Zoom and KU's learning management system, D2L. You are expected to use the Zoom link to attend class every week on Wednesdays at 3pm. Also make sure to check D2L regularly for announcements, quizzes, worksheets, and other materials. The bulk of this class content is self-directed learning, so, to succeed in this class, you should do the readings and watch/listen to video and audio content on your own EVERY WEEK.

Students are expected to:

1) Complete all reading/viewing assignments during the week they are assigned
2) Actively participate in class discussion and activities
3) Complete assignments, quizzes, projects, and exams on the assigned day
4) Turn in the final, professional version of each assignment on time

Assessment

Weekly Pilot Studies and Worksheets (45%): Throughout the semester, you will conduct mock studies during class and as homework to practice the many methods we will learn. Specific directions will be handed out as relevant to each activity.

Discussion Posts (20%): Four times during the semester you will complete a reading/viewing on your own and then post to the corresponding Discussion Board on D2L. Be sure that you answer all questions thoroughly!

Final Report (25%): At the end of the semester you (or you and your team if you are working in groups) will hand in a complete report that outlines (1) a perceived problem with a website or app, (2) why this is a problem, (3) methods you would use to go about fixing the problem, (4) expected findings, and (5) suggested alterations to the website or app. Specific directions will be handed out.

Participation (10%): A lot of this course depends on your participation. You are expected to join class via Zoom every week. Attendance and *positive contributions* to the class will assist you in polishing important skills needed for effective communication. Do not assume that the full 10% will automatically be awarded to all students or that participation is solely based on attendance.

"Full points participation" requires excellence in ***all*** of the following:

> • Participating actively, regularly, and respectfully in class discussion.
> • Active and regular contributions to group and class dynamics by sharing ideas, asking questions, eliciting feedback from others, and helping to keep your group on task.
> • Listening respectfully when others talk: in groups, during presentations, and in class.
> • Remaining focused and attentive during lectures/discussions and while others are speaking/giving presentations.
> • Prompt and regular attendance.

Grading Scale:

93-100% = A
90-92.9% = A-
87-89.9% = B+
83-86.9% = B
80-82.9% = B-
77-79.9% = C+
70-76.9% = C
60-69.9% = D
Less than 60% = F

<p align="center">**Course Policies**</p>

Attendance
Regular attendance in class is important for fulfilling our course objectives. You are expected to attend class every day, arrive on time, and actively participate in class discussions and activities. You have one "free" pass – that is, you can miss one class, no questions asked. **Each unexcused absence after your free pass will drop your final grade by one point. For example, if you have earned a 90 in the class, but you have five unexcused absences, your final grade earned is an 85.** If you have to miss class, please make sure you email me ahead of time to be excused (unless there is an emergency, in which case you need to let me know as soon as possible).

Late Assignments
Late assignments will NOT be accepted, unless there is an emergency or an unavoidable conflict, in which case you need to let me know in advance to make alternate arrangements. In the media world, events are happening so quickly that a late assignment may mean that you completely missed out on an opportunity and could even result in getting fired. Because of this, it is important to learn how to plan, get organized, and complete projects in a timely manner.

Emailing Etiquette
I tend to not read/reply to emails that are disrespectful or unprofessional in nature. This means that every email should include: (1) a subject line that captures the subject of your email, (2) salutations (an intro and a sign-out), and (3) full sentences and correct grammar and spelling. I will always take the time to send you clear, concise, and professional emails, so I hope that you will do the same. If you need an example, please let me know.

General Writing Guidelines
All assignments should be typed, double-spaced, with 1" margins on all sides. A 12-point font should be used. Papers should include your name at the top. Please do not include a title page. <u>ALL PAPERS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED ONLINE THROUGH D2L.</u>

Application and assimilation of discussion and readings should be evident in all assignments. I admire and reward good writing skills. **Be sure to proofread your work.** Poor grammar and spelling distract from good communication and will be graded down. I am willing to help you with your writing skills during office hours. Additionally, you might request help from the Writing Center on campus.

Writing Center
The University Writing Center is a free service for students, offering advice and assistance with writing assignments from any course or subject. Tutors can assist you in improving your composing process, as well as with development, organization, style, documentation, and mechanics. The UWC offers its services in two ways: in our physical center (Rohrbach Library 100C) and online.

<u>In-person Hours</u> (Appointment only, no walk-ins):
Sunday 2-8
M/W   2-8
T/Th   11-5
F   11-5

<u>Online Hours:</u>
Sunday   2-9
M- Th   11-8
F   11-4

For the physical center, please call 610-683-4733 or email wrcenter@kutztown.edu to set up an appointment. For online appointments, please visit https://kutztown.mywconline.com

Accommodations
It is the policy of Kutztown University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Any disabled student who needs accommodations (e.g., seating placement, arrangements for examinations, etc.) should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. If you have already disclosed a disability to the Disability Services Office (215 Stratton Administration Building) and are seeking accommodations, please feel free to speak with me privately so that I may assist you. If you have an injury sustained during military service including PTSD or TBI, you are also eligible for accommodations under the ADA and should contact the Disability Services Office. Students with disabilities must also contact the Office of Disabled Student Services located in the Stratton Administration building, Room 215. They can be reached at 683-4108.

University Policy on Title IX and Mandatory Reporting
In order to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and university policy, Kutztown University's faculty and staff must report incidents of sexual violence, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, including relevant details, such as the names of those involved in the incident, to the Department of Public Safety and Police Services and to Jesus Peña, Title IX Coordinator. The only exceptions to the faculty member's reporting obligation are when the previously listed offenses are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing or other creative assignment for class or as part of a university-approved research project. Faculty

members are obligated to report sexual violence or any other abuse of a student who was, or is, a child (a person under 18 years of age) when the abuse allegedly occurred to the person/entity designated in the university's protection of minors policy. Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and resources available to victims of sexual violence is set forth at: http://www2.kutztown.edu/about-ku/administrative-offices/social-equity/title-ix-information.htm and http://www.kutztown.edu/prebuilt/apps/policyregister/policy.aspx?policy=GEN-005.

Diversity
This course encourages different perspectives related to such factors as gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and other relevant cultural identities. This course seeks to foster understanding and inclusiveness related to such diverse perspectives and ways of communicating.

Required Face Masks on Campus
Current research on the COVID-19 virus suggests there is a significant reduction in the potential for transmission of the virus from person to person by wearing a face mask that covers the nose and mouth. As described in the Kutztown University COVID-19 pandemic response plan, students and employees must wear face masks in classrooms, public areas and common spaces on campus, in addition to practicing social distancing. For the safety of everyone, any student not appropriately wearing a face mask will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. The student will be responsible to make up any missed class content or work. Please note, a face shield can be worn in addition to a face mask – not instead of a face mask (unless approved for pre-existing conditions).

The Student Conduct Pandemic Response Guidelines include information on penalties for not wearing face masks in the classroom. Students who demonstrate a willful pattern of non-compliance, expose community members to a serious, demonstrable health risk, and/or do not comply with a directive of a university employee related to a university-approved pandemic regulation are subject to immediate interim suspension from their academic schedule. Full information can be found online.

Academic Integrity
The course emphasizes ethical practices and perspectives. Above all, students and instructors should strive to communicate and act, both in class interactions and in assigned coursework, in a manner directed by personal integrity, honesty, and respect for self and others. Included in this focus is the need for academic honesty by students. Students need to do original work and properly cite sources. For example, be aware of plagiarism—directly copying more than three or four words from another author without quoting (not just citing) the author is plagiarism. You must not only give credit to the appropriate source, but every assignment must be your own original work. *Academic offenses, including plagiarism and other forms of cheating, will result in failure of the assignment and possible failure of the course.*

<u>**Course Schedule**</u>

This is a tentative schedule that is subject to change. Announcements will be made via D2L.

*** Weekly material (readings, videos, etc.) will be posted on D2L***

<u>**Week 1**</u>
8/26   Introduction to course and review syllabus
    What is UX? What is UX design? What is UX research?
    Usability vs. User Experience
    Set up Figma and Typeform

<u>**Week 2**</u>
9/2   Designing for end users: a brief history
    Design thinking

<u>**Week 3**</u>
9/9   Non-neutral structures and ethics in design

<u>**Week 4**</u>
9/16   <u>User research</u>
    Interviews, focus groups, contextual inquiry
    Ethnography, diary studies, photo safaris

    DUE: Discussion Post One 9/20 by 11:59pm

<u>**Week 5**</u>
9/23   <u>Discovery/requirements</u>
    Competitive analysis

    <u>Generating ideas</u>
    Problem trees, darkside, brain writing

<u>**Week 6**</u>
9/30   <u>Analysis</u>
    Personas
    Scenarios of use

<u>**Week 7**</u>
10/7   <u>Analysis</u>
    User flows: task analysis, journey mapping

    DUE: Discussion Post Two 10/11 at 11:59pm

Week 8

10/14   <u>Design</u>
                  Interfaces and navigation
                  Card sorting
                  Information architecture
                  Site mapping

Week 9

10/21   <u>Design</u>
                  Sketching
                  Wireframing
                  Prototyping

Week 10

10/28   <u>Design</u>
                  Visual design and branding
                  UX writing
                  Accessibility

DUE: Discussion Post Three 11/1 at 11:59pm

Week 11

11/4   <u>Evaluation</u>
                  A/B testing
                  Heuristic evaluations
                  Usability testing, remote testing
                  Advanced methods, e.g., eye tracking

Week 12

11/11   <u>Evaluation</u>
                  Surveys
                  Feedback mechanisms
                  Analytics

DUE: Discussion Post Four 11/17 at 11:59pm

Week 13

11/18   Final Project Workshop

Week 14

11/25   **Thanksgiving Break – no class**

Week 15

12/2   Work on Final Project

DUE: Final Project 12/6 at 11:59pm