Basic Information

Instructor: Spencer Williams (sw1918@uw.edu)

Course Name: INFO 360: Design Methods

Location: <Sample>

Time: <Sample>

Office hours: <Sample>

Introduction

Welcome to INFO 360: Design Methods! This course is an introduction to design paradigms and methods for envisioning information systems that meet the needs of people, organizations, and society. We will explore design thinking, creativity, and the sketching, prototyping, evaluating, and specifying of information experiences. By the end of this course, you will be able to understand and articulate design problems, apply basic design methods to those problems, and envision information experiences, while working in a team.

The bulk of the work in this course is **group based.** By the second week, you will begin working with a group of 3-4 students on a design project of your choosing, through the research, ideation, prototyping, evaluation, and reporting phases, culminating in a final presentation in Week 11.

In this class, we seek to ensure an environment of **inclusivity**, **support**, and **respect.** As students, you should feel comfortable asking questions, seeking support whenever you need it, and letting me know how I can meet your needs. I will do my utmost to ensure this class is an environment you can thrive in, and I greatly value feedback. I will provide an anonymous survey halfway through the course to ensure things are going smoothly and determine how things can be improved, but feel free to reach out with questions, comments, or concerns at any time.

This also means it is your responsibility to treat your fellow students with kindness and respect. We are here to learn together, so it is up to each one of us to make sure this class is a supportive and inclusive space for all.

Communication

Slack will be the primary communication platform for this class. To join the Slack channel for this class, use the invite link on the Canvas site.

If you have questions you think the whole class can benefit from, feel free to ask in the general chat or feedback channel. Otherwise, you can feel free to directly message me, or reach me via

email. I cannot guarantee I'll respond during the weekend, but I will make every effort to respond within 24 hours during the work week, between 9am-5pm.

Class Schedule

Note that this is tentative, and may shift based on how quickly we move through the material

Week 1 (Sep 27): What design is, course introduction

Week 2 (Oct 2, 4): Design paradigms, understanding problems, wicked problems

Week 3 (Oct 9, 11): Research methods

Week 4 (Oct 16, 18): Analysis and synthesis, problem definition

Week 5 (Oct 23, 25): Creativity, ideation, sketching

Week 6 (Oct 30, Nov 1): Low-fidelity prototyping, usability

Week 7 (Nov 6, 8): High-fidelity prototyping, designing interfaces

Week 8 (Nov 13, 15): Analytic evaluation

Week 9 (Nov 20): Empirical evaluation

Week 10 (Nov 27, 29): Communicating, deployment

Week 11 (Dec 4, 6): Final presentations

Assignments and Grading

The breakdown of grades in this course is as follows:

- Reading reflections (20%)
- Project work (45%)
- Individual Assignments (20%)
- In-class activities (15%)

Reading reflections will be short reflections on the readings for that week. The format and content will largely be up to you, and can range from a short (i.e. one-paragraph) written reflection, an annotated sketch, a brief (i.e. 1-2 minute) video essay, etc. Whatever format you chose, these should touch on the readings for a given week, including anything you found interesting, useful, surprising, or even something you disagreed with!

Project work will include the milestone assignments associated with your group's project. These will be delivered at various points throughout the course, culminating with a final

presentation and written report. Note that this is the final graded assignment; **there is no final exam for this course.**

Individual assignments will be short, individual tests of your knowledge and understanding of the material for a given module. They will be a chance to reflect on the material and demonstrate your understanding beyond what is required for group assignments. There will be five in total.

Finally, **in-class activities** will be used as evidence of your participation. These will only be graded as present/absent, so simply showing up to class and engaging will ensure you get credit for participation.

A note on late submissions. I understand it is not always possible to get assignments in on time. If you feel you need an extension, please try to let me or the TA(s) know **before the assignment due date,** so we can plan the grading schedule. I will try to be flexible where possible. That said, unexcused late submissions will be penalized **10% every 24 hours late,** so please let us know if you can't get something in on time!

Readings

There will be weekly readings for each class related to the lecture content. These are meant to be read *before* class for the week they are assigned. For example, you should aim to read "Value Sensitive Design" (Friedman) before class on 10/2.

Because there is more ground to cover, the first few weeks will have more reading to do. This will lighten up in the second half of the course, as you focus on your projects.

Day	Topic
Understanding Problems	
9/27 M	Design Methods (Ko) - Chapter 1
10/2 M	Design Methods (Ko) - Chapter 2 Design Justice (Costanza-Chock) - Introduction (up to p. 23) **Optional:** Value Sensitive Design (Friedman)
10/4 W	Wicked Problems in Design Thinking (Buchanan) (p.14 onward) **Optional:** Wicked Problems Revisited (Coyne)
10/9 M	Design Justice (Costanza-Chock) - Chapter 1 Design Methods (Ko) - Chapter 3 **Optional:** A Survey of Value Sensitive Design Methods (Friedman & Hendry)

10/11 W	Design Justice (Costanza-Chock) - Chapter 2 Writing Survey Questions (Pew)
10/16 M	**<No class. Collect your data!>**
10/18 W	Design Methods (Ko) - Chapter 4 Putting Personas to Work (Adlin, et al) Scenarios in User-Centered Design (Bodker)
Ideation	
10/23 M	Design Methods (Ko) - Chapter 5 The Anatomy of Sketching (Buxton)
10/25 W	7 Simple Rules for Brainstorm bing **Optional:** Sciences of the Artificial (Simon) - Chapter 5
Prototyping	
10/30 M	Design Methods (Ko) - Chapter 6
11/1 W	Usability testing 101 (Moran) Handbook of Usability Testing (Rubin & Chisnell) - Chapter 5
11/6 M	Design Methods (Ko) - Chapter 7
11/8 W	Design Methods (Ko) - Chapter 8
Evaluation	
11/13 M	Design Methods (Ko) - Chapter 10
11/15 W	10 Usability Heuristics for User Interface Design (Nielsen)
11/20 M	Design Methods (Ko) - Chapter 9
11/23 W	<No reading>
Communication	
11/27 M	Story Purpose and The And-But-Therefore Format (Chapin) **Optional:** Houston, We have a Narrative (Olson)
11/29 W	<No reading>
12/4 M	<No reading>
12/6 W	<No reading>

The Final Project

In this course, you and 2-3 other classmates will work as a team to complete a design project, from conducting background research, through sketching, prototyping, evaluation, culminating in a final written report and an in-class presentation. To help you come up with ideas (and to keep your projects grounded and specific), you should identify problems that affect a **specific, local community or public.** For example, you might choose to focus on a university club, or an activist organization, or a hobbyist group, or a local Facebook group, or a non-profit, etc. The point is to choose a specific (to keep your project well-scoped) and local (to facilitate access) community.

AI Tools Policy

My official stance is that you should not be using ChatGPT and other AI-based tools as a replacement for critical thinking and learning in this class. They should not be writing your assignments for you. That said, I want to outline a few cases where ChatGPT is acceptable, and when it is not. You **may** use ChatGPT and other AI tools for the following tasks:

- Spell-checking
- Grammar checking
- Removing typos
- Formatting citations correctly

However, you **may not** use these tools to:

- Write your assignments, in part or in whole

I do want to outline a few cases where you **may** use these tools **with caution.** They can be useful for coming up with ideas, generating dummy data, or even as a first step in doing secondary research. However, they are prone to hallucination (i.e. making stuff up that sounds right but is actually wrong), and they are not smart. They are essentially just calculating statistically likely linguistic output based on a gargantuan corpus of text data. They are constrained by what other people have written about a topic, and tend to write bland, generic, overly-long text.

Tl;dr: Use these tools with caution, and if you do, don't just copy and paste their output into your assignments. Engage with them critically. Use them strategically if you have to, but don't rely on them.

Ultimately, the point of taking any class is to learn how to *do* something. Learning how to communicate effectively is a crucial skill for virtually every career, and I hope you don't cheat yourselves out of the opportunity to hone those skills in this class.

Other Policies and Accommodations

Face Coverings

Please refer here for up-to-date UW guidance on face coverings. In general, we recommend face coverings in class to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Religious Accommodations

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Religious Accommodations Policy (https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form (https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/).

Conduct

The University of Washington Student Conduct Code (WAC 478-121) defines prohibited academic and behavioral conduct and describes how the University holds students accountable as they pursue their academic goals. Allegations of misconduct by students may be referred to the appropriate campus office for investigation and resolution. More information can be found online at https://www.washington.edu/studentconduct/

Disability Resources

Your experience in this class is important to us. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please activate your accommodations via myDRS so we can discuss how they will be implemented in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), contact DRS directly to set up an Access Plan. DRS facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations. Contact DRS at disability.uw.edu