The University of Texas at Austin
School of Information

Fall 2019

INF 385P - Usability
Unique: 27240
Room: UTA 1.212
Mon 3:00 - 6:00pm

Instructor

Eric Nordquist
eric.nordquist@ischool.utexas.edu

Office Hours:

UTA 5.426
(email for appointment)

TA
TBD

Course Description

The roles and responsibilities of individuals contributing on a User Experience (UX) team vary widely from company to company. A common UX team would include members with specialties in Visual Design, Interaction Design, and User Research. This course will focus solely on the role of User Researcher and will teach the skills necessary to be successful in an industry environment.

Students will learn the basics of usability studies and get experience with some of the common methods used during a typical product development lifecycle. We will focus on data-driven results aimed at ensuring a successful product adoption. We will pull from methods created within Human Factors and other behavioral sciences to fully understand our users and adopt them to fit in the fast paced, Agile, development frameworks in most corporate settings. This course will focus on the evaluative, or summative, aspects of the design process.

The class will cover three major areas:
1. the role of usability testing in the design process, how usability testing can provide answers for certain questions, and experience with basic evaluations and tests
2. the process of planning, conducting, synthesizing, and reporting the results from usability studies
3. 'real-world' application of these skills using industry projects

Objectives
The student successfully completing this class will:
- an basic understanding of qualitative and quantitative methods
- a focus on evaluative phase of the product development lifecycle
- have a working understanding of the methods used by a user researcher during a product development lifecycle
- understand the scientific background of the various methodologies and the advantages and disadvantages of using each methodology
- learn the value of a data-driven approach to user research and how a focus on ROI can help you be successful in a business environment

Class Format
This course is a combination of intensive readings as well as a semester long project. There will be a lot of group work each class meetings, so attendance and participation in class are critical to individual success in this course and to the success of the course. You need to come to class prepared to participate in small group and full class discussions and project work, to complete all required readings prior to class, and to submit assignments on time.

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Grades

All assignments are due at midnight of the date listed.

Assignments will either be uploaded to Canvas or UT Box (depending on file size). Specific instructions will be provided for each assignment in the instructions provided for that assignment in Canvas.

Each student will be required to present one reading presentation. See Canvas for the assigned reading assignments and dates for the in-class presentations. There is also a PDF containing the instructions for the reading presentations.

Along with the deliverables for your course project, you will also be graded at two intervals by your group members. Your group members will grade you based on your participation and quality of your work. These grades will be averaged to compute an overall group member review grade.

Grade Breakdown:
10% - Reading Presentation (Individual)
 5% - Proposed Project Plan and Gantt Chart (group)
10% - Heuristic Evaluation (group)
10% - Competitive Analysis (group)
5% - Recruitment Screener (group)
15% - Test Packet - Moderator Script and Participant Packet (group)
35% - Final Project Presentation (group)
10% - Your Review by Group Members

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Required Textbooks
(Use code 'profnordy' for 20% off the two books from rosenfeldmedia.com)

Fitzpatrick, R. (2014). The mom test how to talk to customers and learn if your business is a good idea when everyone is lying to you. London: Foundercentric. ISBN: 1492180742

Portigal, S. (2013). Interviewing users: how to uncover compelling insights. Brooklyn, NY: Rosenfeld Media. ISBN: 9781933820118

Rubin, J., & Chisnell, D. (2008). Handbook of usability testing: How to plan, design, and conduct effective tests (2nd ed.). Indiana: Wiley. ISBN: 0470185481

Tullis, Tom, and Bill Albert. (2013). Measuring the User Experience: Collecting, Analyzing, and Presenting Usability Metrics. 2nd edition Amsterdam: Elsevier/ Morgan Kaufmann. ISBN: 0124157815

Optional Textbooks:

Goodman, E., Kuniavsky, M., & Moed, A. (2012). Observing the user experience: a practitioners guide to user research. Amsterdam: Morgan Kaufmann. ISBN: 9780123848697

Spatz, C. (2019). Exploring statistics: Tales of distributions. Conway, AR: Outcrop. ISBN: 978-0-9963392-2-3

Spencer, D., & Garrett, J. J. (2009). Card sorting: Designing usable categories. Brooklyn, NY: Rosenfeld Media. ISBN: 1-933820-07-1

Misc

- Policy on Academic Integrity - 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.

- Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. Other awesome resources are available on their website: http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/

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- Religious Holy Days - Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. Sections 51.911 and 51.925 of the Texas Education Code address absences by students and instructors for religious holy days. Section 51.911 states that a student shall be excused from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence andshall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy required students to notify each of their instructors as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made. Section 51.925 prohibits the university from discriminating against or penalizing an instructor who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day. Proper notice must be given to the department chair. Prior to the begin of classes each semester, the instructor must provide the department chair a list of classes that will be missed due to observance of a religious holy day. The list must be personally delivered, acknowledged and dated by the chair, or sent via certified mail, return receipt requested. Consistent with regular university policy, the instructor is responsible for finding a qualified substitute UT Austin instructor for any missed class(es).

Schedule:

WK	DATE	TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
1	9/2	CLASS DOES NOT MEET - LABOR DAY HOLIDAY	*Required* - Fitzpatrick - pg. 1-64 - Rubin & Chi... Ch. 1-3 - Article 1 - Article 2	
2	9/9	- Introductions - Syllabus - Canvas Review - Client Kickoff	*Required* - Tullis & Alb... Ch. 1 - Portigal Ch. 1	Sign up for Teams (Due 9/15)
3	9/16	- Reading Presentations (2 presentations) - Lecture: Heuristic Eval, Task Analysis, Comp Analy - Heuristic Evaluation Principles - Group Work - Gantt Chart, Who Are Your Users, Context, Scenarios/Tasks, Review Past Research	*Required* - Rubin & Chi... Ch. 5&6 - Tullis & Alb... Ch 2 - Articles 3 & 4 *Optional* - Portigal Ch. 2	Project Plan/ Gantt Chart (Due 9/22) Heuristic Evaluations (Due 9/29) Competitive Analysis (Due 9/29)
4	9/23	- Reading Presentations (2 presentations) - Lecture: Test Packet (Script and Participant Packet), Screeners & Recruiting - Groups Work (Heuristic Eval, Comp Analy)	*Required* - Rubin & Chi... Ch. 4&7 - Tullis & Alb... Ch 3 - Articles 6, 7, 8 *Optional* - Portigal Ch. 3	Screener, Test Packet (Due 10/6)
5	9/30	- Reading Presentations (2 presentations) - Lecture: Tullis 4, 6 - Group Work (Test Packet, Screener) - Client Check-in	*Required* - Rubin & Chi... Ch. 8 - Article 10 - Tullis & Alb... Ch. 4,5,6 - Portigal Ch. 4 & 5	
6	10/7	- Reading Presentations (3 presentations) - Begin Recruiting - Lecture - Code book - Group Work	*Required* - Rubin & Chi... Ch. 9 - Tullis & Alb... Ch. 7 - Portigal Ch. 6 - Article 5 & 9	CITI Training (Due 10/13)
7	10/14	- Reading Presentations (2 presentations) - Group Work - Begin User Interviews	*Required* - Portigal Ch. 7 & 8 - Article 11 & 12	Group Grade pt 1
8	10/21	- Reading Presentations (2 presentations) - Continue User Interviews - Project Checkpoint - Group Work	*Required* - Portigal Ch. 9 - Tullis & Alb... Ch. 8 - Article 13	Codebook due (Due 10/27)

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9	10/28	- Reading Presentations (2 presentations) - Continue User Interviews - Lecture - Synthesis, Affinity Diagram - Group Work	*Required* - Rubin & Chi... Ch. 11 - Article 14	
10	11/4	- Reading Presentations (3 presentations) - Data Analysis - Group Work - Lecture - Storytelling	*Required* - Rubin & Chi... Ch. 12 - Articles 15 & 16 *Optional* - Spencer Ch. 1-4	
11	11/11	- Reading Presentations (2 Presentations) - Lecture - Card Sort, Tree Test - Group Work	*Required* - Rubin & Chi. 13 & 14	Draft Presentations (Due 11/24)
12	11/18	- Reading Presentations (2 presentations) - Lecture - Journey Map, Card Sort, Tree Test - Group Work	*Required* *- Articles 17 & 18*	
13	11/25	- Reading Presentations (2 presentations) - Lecture - Content Strategy - Group Work	*Required* - Articles 19 & 20 *Optional* - Spencer Ch. 5-8	
14	12/2	- Lecture - Placeholder - Group Work	*Required* - Articles 21 & 22 *Optional* - Spencer Ch. 9-11	Presentations Due (Due 12/8)
15	12/9	Client Presentations		Group Grade pt 2