

**I320: Topics in Informatics: Evaluation of Interactive Systems
Syllabus – Spring 2021**

Instructor: Yung-Sheng Chang

Office: Zoom <https://utexas.zoom.us/j/93494912006>

Office Hours: Friday 11:00 am to 12:00 pm or by appointment

Email: yscchang@utexas.edu (always include I 320 in the email's subject)

Note: direct email is by far the best way to contact your instructor

Class meetings: Tuesday and Thursdays 11am-12:30pm, synchronous online meeting via Zoom

Canvas @ UT: <https://utexas.instructure.com/>

Course schedule: A separate document on Canvas is available (look under Canvas Syllabus)

Course announcements and email list: through Canvas

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This will be an online class. The main mode of class instruction will be synchronous meetings via Zoom. There will also be asynchronous class activities. We'll try to make it flexible and accommodate your needs as much as possible. All class meetings will be recorded for the benefit of these students, who are not able to attend online and to enable review of course topics for all of you. When you are in a Zoom class meeting please be prepared to turn your camera on and to keep it on most of the time.

This is a project-based course designed to provide you with the knowledge and practical experience of interactive system evaluation, a.k.a. usability testing.

In this course, you will learn usability testing principles and strategies for planning and conducting a test in a usability lab. Once the basics are established through early class meetings and online discussion, you will focus your efforts on working with your team to plan, prepare, and conduct a usability test, then analyze and present the results in a written report, oral presentation, and embedded video clips.

This course centers on a usability testing project. The project will be conducted remotely.

It is a goal of this course to help students realize that the importance of usability evaluation, and that it is an ongoing process throughout the product life cycle and not something to be done at the last minute, when the "rest of the system" is finished.

Class time will be split between content-based lectures, discussions, and in-class project-related activities to demonstrate techniques and principles and to practice the skills being presented. The part of class time used for lectures will be devoted to highlighting course materials, questions, and discussion. The composition of individual class meetings will differ somewhat throughout the semester.

Outside of the classroom, students will acquire more in-depth hands-on experience in applying these skills and techniques in a semester-long team project. In this project, students will conduct multi-part usability evaluation of an interactive system.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Collaborate successfully as a team to plan a usability test
- Demonstrate the ability to conduct an effective usability test, based on a test plan
 - Specifically, demonstrate the ability to conduct remote usability testing.
- Analyze the results accurately and coherently
- Present the results in effective oral and written forms

UNIVERSALITY AND BREADTH OF APPLICABILITY

The process, principles, and guidelines are universal and applicable to any kind of system that involves human use, not only digital system. The material of this course applies not just to GUIs and the Web but to all kinds of interaction systems and devices, including ATMs, refrigerators, elevator buttons, ubiquitous computing, and everyday devices.

HANDS-ON, PRACTICAL APPROACH

This course takes a practical, applied, hands-on approach, based on the application of established best practices, principles, and proven methods to ensure usability of an interactive product.

MY PERSONAL GOALS FOR YOU IN THE COURSE

In addition to content-specific objectives reflected by the topics in the course calendar, I have these personal goals for each student:

- to get you to think deeply and carefully about the subject,
- to help you to genuinely like the subject,
- to provide knowledge and skill useful to you in your career,
- to engender a deeper interest (perhaps in some of you) that can be pursued beyond this course,
- to make you proud of your achievements in this course, especially of your project work, and,
- hopefully, have a little fun 😊 in the process.

TEXTBOOK

Barnum, C.M. (2011). Usability Testing Essentials: Ready, Set ...Test! Morgan Kaufmann. Companion website at www.mkp.com/testingessentials. The book is available in UT bookstore and online through UT libraries :

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/utxa/detail.action?docID=622174>

CLASS LECTURE SLIDES AND OTHER HANDOUTS

For your reference, the PDF versions of class lecture slides will be posted on Canvas. You have my permission to print a copy for your personal use. In the online part of the semester, lecture videos pre-recorded using Panopto will be uploaded to Canvas.

Assignment and project descriptions are also posted on Canvas. The files posted on Canvas will be linked to Canvas Modules or available directly in the Files section.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Wk	Date	Topic	Homework or Project deliverables Due	Reading before class
1	19-Jan	Syllabus		
	21-Jan	History of UX		
2	26-Jan	Chapter 1: Establishing the Essentials		Chapter 1: Establishing the Essentials
	28-Jan	In-class discussion. Homework discussion. Project explanation.	Homework 1: usability of product instructions	
3	2-Feb	Chapter 2: Exploring the usability and UX toolkit		Chapter 2: Exploring the usability and UX toolkit
	4-Feb	In-class discussion. Homework discussion.	Homework 2: card-sorting tools and expert reviews	
4	9-Feb	Chapter 3: Testing Here, There, Everywhere	Form project groups	Chapter 3: Testing Here, There, Everywhere
	11-Feb	In-class discussion. Homework discussion.	Homework 3: web-based usability tools	
5	16-Feb	Chapter 4: Understanding Users and their Goals		Chapter 4: Understanding Users and their Goals
	18-Feb	Create persona. In-class discussion.	Project 1. HE report	Two online articles
6	23-Feb	Chapter 5: Planning for Usability Testing		Chapter 5: Planning for Usability Testing
	25-Feb	Chapter 5: Planning for Usability Testing		
7	2-Mar	In-class discussion.	Project 2. Personas and memo report due	
	4-Mar	Chapter 6: Preparing for Usability Testing		Chapter 6: Preparing for Usability Testing
8	9-Mar	In-class discussion.		
	11-Mar	Internship experience sharing	Project 3. Draft Test plan due	
-	16-Mar 18-Mar	Spring Break		
9	23-Mar	Chapter 7: Conducting a Usability Test		Chapter 7: Conducting a Usability Test
	25-Mar	Guest lecture		
10	30-Mar	Pilot test practice (I) In class discussion		
	1-Apr	Pilot test practice (II) In class discussion	Project 3 final. Revised Test plan due (4-Apr)	
11	6-Apr 8-Apr	Teams work independently to conduct testing (no online class meeting)		
12	13-Apr	Chapter 8: Analyzing the Findings		Chapter 8: Analyzing the Findings
	15-Apr	In-class discussion.		
13	20-Apr	Group meeting		
	22-Apr	Group meeting		
14	27-Apr	Chapter 9: Reporting the Findings In class discussion		Chapter 9: Reporting the Findings
	29-Apr	Group meeting		
15	4-May	Project Presentation		
	6-May	Project Presentation	Project 4. Presentation Project 5. Final report (9-May)	

HOMEWORK

The major work outside the classroom is the team project (see below). In addition, there will be a few small assignments. Due dates are on Canvas (in assignments area, also on the course schedule page and in calendar). Even if the instructor doesn't announce each homework in class, it's your job to know when you should be working on one and when they are due. Ask when in doubt. One other type of homework will be the weekly reading assignments described below.

Submitting written homework and project assignments

You must prepare your assignments using a word processor (such as Word) and submit it by uploading to Canvas by the due date/time. Please always use appropriate three- or four-letter file extensions in submitted filename (e.g., .docx for Word files, .pdf for Adobe portable document format). Assignments usually may not be submitted via email to either the professor or a TA.

All documents that you are submitting should include on the front page of your submission your name (spelled in the same way as in the course roster), course number/name, instructor's name, semester and the date of submission. For team work, please also always include on the front page all team member names, your project team number, and your project short name (or title).

GRADING

Class participation (includes in-class activities, participation in discussions, etc.)	10%
Homework (3 x 5%)	15%
Project assignments:	
Heuristic evaluation	10%
Personas (2) with a memo	10%
Test plan	15%
Oral presentation	15%
Final report, including appendices	25%
Project total	75%

* most project activities will take place outside classroom; some will take place in class.

GRADING SCALE

- 94-100 (A) 90-93 (A-)
- 87-89 (B+) 84-86 (B) 80-83 (B-)
- 77-79 (C+) 74-76 (C) 70-73 (C-)
- 67-69 (D+) 64-66 (D) 60-63 (D-)
- 0-59 (F)

Or *Pass/Fail*: please consult updated UT policies https://onestop.utexas.edu/faq-covid19/#acc_1-0
Please also see below.

Note: Final grading does not happen just by calculations. I take into account many factors, and so your "Canvas points/%" are only a rough indication of the final grade. Ask when in doubt.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

You are responsible for keeping up with readings in the book per the schedule given in the course schedule. All assigned readings are to be done before a class meeting (except our first meeting,

of course). Assigned readings will be discussed in the classroom. Discussion questions will be posted on Canvas.

TEAM PROJECT

The major effort (and the main part of course grade) component for the course is the team project. The team project involves:

1. Heuristic evaluation
2. Personas (two) + memo report
3. Project test plan
4. Project final report
5. Oral presentation of results

Team meetings. Your team will need to set up regular communication and regular meetings to plan and test the product. Effective, timely communication is essential to success with this project. You can use Canvas for private text team discussions or Zoom for private remote meetings (audio and video, if you choose so). Your team can request meetings with me or a TA at a mutually convenient time. I and the TA are available to help you succeed in your project in whatever way you find most appropriate. This includes reading early drafts of reports, sorting out differences of opinion about processes and approaches, and helping your team make sense of the findings.

Usability Testing Requirements and Options

Ideally, everyone on the team should participate in all of the activities and tests. However, to provide the flexibility some of you may need, I have structured the course with one testing requirement and several other testing options:

- One whole-team test required: The team should schedule one test session with full team participation. This needs to be scheduled on your own. The pilot test—or walkthrough—does not count for satisfying this requirement.
- Flexible options for other tests: if needed, your team can do partial team testing—this might mean changing up roles, which is not the best situation, but can be done with proper coordination.

Project Assignments. You will be producing work associated with planning, testing, and reporting on the results of a usability study for a “client” (hypothetical). All assignment descriptions are posted to the course website. Canvas contains samples for each assignment.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class participation includes presentation of assigned materials in the classroom, active role in in-class activities as well as active participation in classroom discussions.

REVISED UT Austin POLICIES

The university recognizes the many challenges that our Longhorn community is facing as a result of the transition to remote learning. With that in mind, UT Austin has approved

the extension of deadlines related to course drops, withdrawals, and extended deadlines. Please see below for specific information.

Deadlines: Students will be given until **Friday, May 28**, one week after final grades are submitted, to Q-drop a course, to withdraw with a W from the university, or to change a course to Pass/Fail, overriding existing deadlines.

Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit: For all *courses**, students will be given until after final grades are submitted, Friday, May 28, to change a course to Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit. Students may change to Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit as many times as needed this semester. For courses taken in Spring 2021, all UT policies requiring letter grades in undergraduate courses will be waived. This includes prerequisites, degree requirements, core, flags and internal transfers. In graduate-level courses, some policies will remain in effect because of historical differences from university standards. Graduate students are encouraged to consult with their college or program.

Q-drops: Please note that all Q-drops will be treated as “substantive, non-academic course drops,” which means that they will not count against the maximum of six allowed Qs. The deadline to Q-drop is now **Friday, May 11**.

**One exception:* A college may require courses to be taken for a grade if they are required to be taken for a grade for professional accreditation. Again, students must consult with an advisor prior to making changes.

Advising: Students are required to speak with their academic advisor before taking any action.

Please visit: https://onestop.utexas.edu/fag-covid19/#acc_1-0 for more information.

CLASS POLICIES

Due dates and times for handing in homework and project assignments

All homework and project assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date (unless a specific date is given, always check Canvas for the correct date and time). You should think of all due dates for assignments, especially project assignments, as firm. The tight schedule of deliverables throughout the whole semester makes it nearly impossible to extend due dates. Any assignment that you do not hand in on time may be penalized in grading. If you are not able to complete an assignment by the due date, it would be best for you to hand in as much of it as you have done. It will help if you notify us about special circumstances that will adversely affect completion of an assignment.

Class recordings

Zoom lectures will be recorded. Class recordings are reserved only for the use of members of this class (students, TAs, and the instructor) and only for educational purposes. Recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited

No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

Attendance

Virtual. Students are expected to attend classes and participate in online discussions.

Academic Honor Code

You are encouraged to discuss assignments with classmates, but anything submitted must reflect your own, original work. If in doubt, ask the instructor. Plagiarism and similar conduct represents a serious violation of UT's Honor Code and standards of conduct:

- http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_plagiarism.php
- <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/conduct.php>

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/conduct.php>

Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to severe disciplinary penalties, such as automatically failing the course and potentially being dismissed from the University. **PLEASE do not take the risk.** We are REQUIRED to automatically report any suspected case to central administration for investigation and disciplinary hearings. Honor code violations ultimately harm yourself as well as other students, and the integrity of the University, academic honesty is strictly enforced. For more information, see the Student Judicial Services site: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>.

Notice about students with disabilities

The University of Texas at Austin provides appropriate accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 512-471-6529 or UT Services for Students with Disabilities. If they certify your needs, we will work with you to make appropriate arrangements. UT SSD Website: <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>

Coping with stress and personal hardships

The [Counseling and Mental Health Center](#) offers a variety of services for students, including both individual counselling and [groups and classes](#), to provide support and assistance for anyone coping with difficult issues in their personal lives. As mentioned above, life brings unexpected surprises to all of us. If you are facing any personal difficulties in coping with challenges facing you, definitely consider the various services offered and do not be shy to take advantage of them if they might help. These services exist to be used.

Notice about missed work due to religious holy days

A student who misses an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence, provided that he or she has properly notified the instructor. It is the policy of the University of Texas at Austin that the student must notify the instructor at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates he or she will be absent to observe a religious holy day. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, the notice should be given on the first day of the semester. The student will not be penalized for these excused absences, but the instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to complete satisfactorily the missed assignment or examination within a reasonable time after the excused absence.

Weather contingencies

If the university is closed (for any reason) on an assignment due date, the assignment will be due at the beginning of the next class.

E-mail Notification Policy

In this course e-mail will be used as the main means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class work and announcements. If you are an employee of the University, your e-mail address in Canvas is your employee address.

Please make sure that your email is configured in such a way as to show your name in the same way as it appears on the official course roster. This most likely means that it should be spelled using Latin alphabet characters only.

All email messages you send concerning the class should be addressed to the TA with a copy to the instructor. We will sort out which of us should act on the message and will make every effort to answer your email in a timely fashion. However, you should not necessarily always expect to get an immediate reply. In particular, don't expect to get answers to questions about a homework or project assignment within the last few hours before that assignment is due. **Please put I320 as part of the subject line of your email; that will help us identify your emails more quickly.**

The University has an official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with

University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. Read the policy: <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

You can find and change your official email address of record at https://utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/utd/all_my_addresses

STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

- You have a right to a learning environment that supports mental and physical wellness.
- You have a right to respect.
- You have a right to be assessed and graded fairly.
- You have a right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- You have a right to privacy and confidentiality.
- You have a right to meaningful and equal participation, to self-organize groups to improve your learning environment.
- You have a right to learn in an environment that is welcoming to all people. No student shall be isolated, excluded or diminished in any way.

With these rights come responsibilities:

- You are responsible for taking care of yourself, managing your time, and communicating with the teaching team and with others if things start to feel out of control or overwhelming.
- You are responsible for acting in a way that is worthy of respect and always respectful of others.
- Your experience with this course is directly related to the quality of the energy that you bring to it, and your energy shapes the quality of your peers' experiences.
- You are responsible for creating an inclusive environment and for speaking up when someone is excluded.
- You are responsible for holding yourself accountable to these standards, holding each other to these standards, and holding the teaching team accountable as well.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As the flagship institution in our state university system, it is important that The University of Texas at Austin demonstrate respect for the historic and contemporary presence of Indigenous Peoples in Texas and, particularly, in the greater Austin area. To that end, it is incumbent upon The University of Texas at Austin to recognize that our campus resides on what were historically the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples who were dispossessed of their homelands. Land Acknowledgements are an expression of gratitude and appreciation to the Indigenous Peoples, the traditional caretakers of the land, for the use of their lands on which we work, study, and learn.

Land Acknowledgment

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Indigenous land. Moreover, I would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Lipan Apache, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, Tigua Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas, here on Turtle Island.

Title IX Reporting

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, unprofessional or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When unprofessional or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature occurs in our community, the university can:

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university's [relevant policies](#).

Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Senate Bill 212 requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, report any information to the Title IX Office regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive any information of this type (including, but not limited to, writing assignments, class discussions, or one-on-one conversations) must be reported. **I am a Responsible Employee and must report any Title IX related incidents** that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you would like to speak with someone who can provide support or remedies without making an official report to the university, please email advocate@austin.utexas.edu. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit <http://www.titleix.utexas.edu/>, contact the Title IX Office via email at titleix@austin.utexas.edu, or call 512-471-0419.

Although graduate teaching and research assistants are not subject to Texas Senate Bill 212, they are still mandatory reporters under Federal Title IX laws and are required to report a wide range of behaviors we refer to as unprofessional or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature, including the types of conduct covered under Texas Senate Bill 212. The Title IX office has developed supportive ways to respond to a survivor and compiled campus resources to support survivors.