

Fall 2021

INF 385P - Usability

Unique: 28805

Room: Online

Wed 3:00 - 6:00pm

Instructor

Eric Nordquist

eric.nordquist@ischool.utexas.edu

Office Hours:

(email for appointment)

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 in-depth understanding of qualitative 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 5pm of the date listed.

Assignments will be uploaded to Google Drive. 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)
- 10% - Heuristic Evaluation (group)
- 10% - Competitive Analysis (group)
- 10% - Recruitment Screener (group)
- 15% - Test Packet - Moderator Script and Participant Packet (group)
- 35% - Final Project Report (group)
- 10% - Your Review by Group Members

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Required Textbooks

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

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

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

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/>

Land Acknowledgment

(I) We would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Indigenous land. Moreover, (I) We 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.



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Title IX reminder

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. 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.

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.

Class Recordings:

Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

Syllabus:

See TeamGantt project for project outline. This will be updated and reviewed weekly by the class to ensure we are being as efficient as possible with our in-class time.

Reading schedule is listed on next page...