Course Syllabus

COURSE NUMBER: ART 345

COURSE TITLE: Introduction to Web Design

CREDITS: 3:2:3

PREREQUISITES: ART 240/241

FOR WHOM PLANNED: ART 345 is open to Art majors.

Instructor: Christopher Cassidy

Office: Gatewood 228

Office hours: Tue/Thurs. 2PM – 3PM

Website: www.chrismcassidy.com (http://www.chrismcassidy.com)

Email: cmcassid@uncg.edu

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to the design of interfaces for the Web using HTML and CSS. The course also addresses the issues of fluid design in interactive media.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course a student will be able to:

1. Analyze and critique web-based user interfaces and examples of net-based artwork in live critiques and in writing.
2. Design and prototype a fully interactive website.
3. Create semantic HTML pages that are logically structured and adequately commented.
4. Use CSS to style HTML elements according to the principles of responsive design.
5. Work in a WYSIWYG website editor to build functional and interactive user experiences.

TEACHING METHODS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

After some quick introductory exercises, the course will be organized around three design projects, each with a duration of roughly four weeks. Each assignment will be introduced with a lecture introducing the specific aesthetic concepts and media tools students will be employing in the creation of the assigned work. Pertinent examples from the commercial web as well as more experimental artistic works will provide concrete illustrations of the basics of interface design and the artistic possibilities of web technologies.

Technical demonstrations will occur throughout the course of each assignment, both as general introduction to the required techniques and tools and to specifically address issues occurring in students’ developing work.

There is one required text for the course, a technical guide to HTML/CSS. This text is available as a free web resource from the Jackson Library, a well as from Amazon. I’ll be following this text quite closely during the beginning of the course, so you will definitely need to use it.
As prospective professionals in digital media arts, you need to become proficient at teaching yourselves new software. Although I will demo a great deal, and am always willing to answer questions, you should avail yourselves of all available resources to aid in your understanding of the technical aspects of the course. Our textbook is essential, and our Lynda.com stations in the labs have access to complete tutorials on HTML and CSS. W3 Schools (http://www.w3schools.com/) is another great free online reference tool.

You will need to obtain a web host for the sites you create in the class. If you don't already have a host, you should use one.com (http://www.one.com/en/), where you can sign up for one year's hosting, with a unique domain name, for free.

NOTE: Our digital lab has upgraded to Adobe Creative Cloud. It's fine if you have a laptop and are using the most recent software, but be sure to always have your laptop with you in class. When we take a look at Adobe Muse later in the semester, you'll need to have your own Creative Cloud subscription if you want to continue working on your own laptop.

Both in process and at the completion of each assignment, all student works will be critiqued. Here, students are encouraged to develop their analytical and verbal skills, as the class discusses the successful and unsuccessful elements within each work. The focus is strongly on constructive criticism, using the group’s combined resources to suggest ways that the work might better fulfill the creator’s intent.

Two short writing assignments will be assigned over the course of the semester. Students will be asked to analyze the formal properties and conceptual content of (1) early net-art examples from a list I will provide and (2) a particularly compelling contemporary web interface design.

 EVALUATION AND GRADING

Each project grade is based on one or more of the following factors:

• How well does the completed assignment answer the posed problem or illustrate the design principle?

• Did you follow an iterative design process from initial concept through testing to final site coding?

• Is the content of the site organized in a logical manner?

• Does the site’s design and functionality reinforce the conceptual aims of the project? Is the visual design consistent and compelling?

There are four major assignments, which contribute to your final grade as follows:

Assignment 1 – 23%
Assignment 2 – 23%
Assignment 3 – 23%
Assignment 4 – 23%

The remaining 8% is determined by the completion and quality of two brief written assignments scheduled early in the semester.

On days when major assignments are due, we will discuss each student's final project in a class critique. This is an opportunity for students to get feedback from peers about how well a design works. Critiques are like exams, if you miss them without an approved excuse (see Attendance below) the grade for your assignment will be dropped by one full letter grade. This is true even if the project is in class, as we won't critique it without the designer present. For each additional class period a project is late, a further letter grade deduction will apply (e.g. due on Thursday, turned in following Thursday, a B project receives a D.)

There is no discrete grade given for classroom participation in discussions and critiques (although critique attendance is mandatory.) Rather, the goal of critiques is to hone your ability to talk and think about your own work, to begin to be able to analyze and judge your work as it develops.
REQUIRED TEXT


By: Elizabeth Castro; Bruce Hyslop  
Publisher: Peachpit Press  
Pub. Date: August 09, 2013

This title is available free and online through the UNCG library, at:  
Click on the "View an ebook" link under "Find a Copy Online."

TOPICAL OUTLINE

**Assignment 1 – Hyperlinked Narrative**

Part A: Choose a mythological tale from my list, or provide one of your own. Focus on relationships between aspects of content (characters, places, events) and the possibilities for nonlinear storytelling using links. Leverage the structural assumptions underlying HTML to experiment with how narrative content might be delivered using text and/or image. Create a detailed site map that illustrates the relationship between pages of content. Your site must contain at least 50 internal links and 10 external links (though some links may lead to different portions of the same page, so that the entire site may be much smaller than 50 pages).

Part B: Compose all of the text and create all of the artwork necessary for the site. *All artwork must be original.*

Part C: Build your site using semantic HTML5 code, sensible, HTML-legal file naming, and relative filepathnames for all internal links. Comment your code where appropriate. Obviously, the default HTML visual styling is extremely limited. You should try to create a consistent visual theme for the site and the art, but don't fuss too much over the details, as you'll be able to address visual design fully once you start working with CSS.

Part D: Upload your site to a server using Fetch or another ftp upload utility. Be sure all of your links work after upload.

**Assignment 2 – CSS and User Interface Design**

Part A: Choose an artistic practice, technique or methodology with which you are familiar. For this assignment, you will design and build an instructional website that will guide a newbie user through the entire process. Topics can vary, but may be something like "Perspective Drawing," "Lost Wax Casting in Bronze," "Kinetic Typography in After Effects," "Basic Color Theory," etc. The topic must be involved enough to mandate at least 15 complete pages (or sections.) While you can and should supplement the instructional text with photos, illustrations, diagrams, video or audio, the entire content of the site must be available to the user as HTML text. *All artwork must be original or public domain.* Generate a complete outline and sitemap of the site.

Part B: Using Illustrator or Photoshop, create a simple paper prototype of the site, concentrating on informational layout and navigation. The class will be broken up into small teams for iterative testing/redesign of these paper prototypes prior to any coding.

Part C: Build the site with full semantic HTML, styled with an external CSS stylesheet.

Part D: Upload your site to a server using Fetch or another ftp upload utility. Be sure all of your links work after upload.

**Assignment 3 – Basic interactivity**

Part A: Develop a concept for a simple web-based game that takes some aspect of Art History as its subject. This may be a trivia game about artists and "schools" or eras; it may be based on a particular artists' practice; or it may even be based on the subject
matter of a particular work. Alternatively, you may use the content from Assignment 1 as the basis for this project. The visual style and degree of interaction is open, but be sure to approach the design with a focus on interface usability and visual coherence. Keep in mind that we are only just introducing Javascript as a development tool, so while your concept itself may be complex, keep your goals for site behavior relatively basic. We’re not coding a Triple-A video game here.

Part B: Using pencil and paper, Illustrator or Photoshop, create a simple prototype of the site, concentrating on informational layout and navigation. The class will be broken up into small teams for iterative testing/redesign of these paper prototypes prior to any site-building.

Part C: Working in mobile-first fashion, build out 1) the html site (which may have limited interactivity, mostly links) 2) the CSS to style the site and provide more interactivity, and 3) as much Javascript as is necessary to finish the site.

Part D: Upload the completed game site to the server. Test your site!

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Students are expected to abide by the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy for this class. (All out of class assignments are to be completed individually by the student unless otherwise directed by the instructor.)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

I take attendance at the start of each class. It helps me remember everyone’s name. It also contributes to your grade. You will be permitted two unexcused absences for any reason (including religious holidays), after which your grade will be reduced one step (e.g. B- to C+) for each additional absence. Absences will be considered excused if accompanied by a note from a doctor or health service, or a note on school letterhead from a coach, professor or administrator. Keep in mind that a steady stream of unexcused or excused absences may affect the quality of your work, and so can have a negative impact on your final grade. Finally, three unexcused latenesses will equal one absence.

UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA.) Students requesting accommodations based on disability must be registered with the Office of Disability Service located at 208 Elliot University Center. 336-334-5440 v/tty.

CLEAN-UP AND LAB CARE

On the days when we are working in class, it is your responsibility to clean up your work area and leave the classroom as you found it. Remember that no food or drink will be allowed near the computer workstations.

You will also have to keep your digital desktops neat, which means saving any working files to an external drive. As UNCG students, you have access to unlimited storage space through your UNCG Google Drive account. Use that to regularly back up your work.

CALENDAR

8/18 Intro/Syllabus.

8/20 Intro to website structure.
Discussion of early netart.
Exercise 1.
Introduce Assignment 1.
Writing Assignment 1.
8/25  Review Assignment 1 outline/structure map.
    Intro to document structure and *semantic* HTML.

8/27  Continue semantic HTML discussion. Images, Links and file pathnames.
    Begin Assignment 1 in class.
    **Writing Assignment 1 due.**

9/1   Work on Assignment 1 in class.

9/3   Work on Assignment 1 in class.
    **Submit HTML code for in-progress review.**

9/8   Discussion of *ftp*.
    Work on Assignment 1 in class.

9/10  **Critique Assignment 1.**
    Introduce Assignment 2.

9/15  Review sitemaps.
    Discussion of UX and interface design.
    Introduce CSS.
    Begin design/prototyping in class.

9/17  CSS text styling.
    Continue design/prototyping in class.

9/22  **First round of prototype testing.**
    CSS text styling.

9/24  Continue Assignment 2.
    Begin HTML/CSS coding.

9/29  CSS Layout.
    Continue HTML/CSS coding.
    **Writing Assignment 2.**

10/1  More CSS Layout.
    Continue HTML/CSS coding.

10/6  **Writing Assignment 2 due.**
    Continue HTML/CSS coding.

10/8  Continue HTML/CSS coding.

10/13 Fall Break

10/15 **Critique Assignment 2**

10/20 Responsive Design

10/22 Work on Responsive design version of Assign. 2

10/27 Work on Responsive design version of Assign. 2

10/29 Work on Responsive design version of Assign. 2

11/3  **Review Responsive Designs**

11/5  Introduce Assignment 3.
    Discussion of games in art.
Introduction to Javascript.
Begin design/prototyping in class.

11/10 More Javascript.
Continue design/prototyping in class.

11/12 More Javascript.

11/17 Review game proposals.

11/19 Continue coding/building.

11/24 Continue coding/building.

11/26 Thanksgiving

12/3 3:30-6:30 Final Critique.

Course Summary:

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<td>Thu Aug 27, 2015</td>
<td><a href="https://uncg.instructure.com/courses/10872/assignments/59614">Writing Assignment 1</a> due by 3pm</td>
<td><a href="https://uncg.instructure.com/courses/10872/assignments/59616">Project 1</a></td>
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