

Note: This syllabus may represent a past offering of this course and future course offerings may differ.

HCDE 418: User Experience Design

Instructor: Professor Julie Kientz
Quarter: Autumn 2009
Course Schedule: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00AM – 11:50AM
Course URL: <http://courses.washington.edu/hcde418/>

Course Description

HCDE 418 project-based introduction to the user interface design process and is oriented toward practical methods for approaching a design problem. The focus of the course is to develop conceptual designs based on the needs of users. Students will receive a grounding in the following topics:

- User Research Methods
- Design Sketching
- Design Evaluation

The general aims of this course are to:

1. Develop an appreciation for concepts and sensibilities of user experience design
2. Develop skills in the use and application of specific methods in user experience design
3. Improve individual and collaborative skills in design problem solving

Course Objectives

On the successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Gather useful information about users and activities through asking, looking, learning, and trying
2. Organize information about users into useful summaries with affinity diagrams
3. Convey user research findings with personas and scenarios
4. Learn and appreciate the skill of sketching as a process for user experience design
5. Learn to give and accept critiques of design ideas in a constructive manner
6. Demonstrate skills for low-fidelity prototyping and describe the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of prototyping methods
7. Appreciate the process of user experience design as a cyclical, iterative process
8. Understand the differences between usability and user experience
9. Analyze an interaction design problem and propose a user-centered process, justifying the process and identifying the trade-offs

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10. Prepare high quality, professional documentation and artifacts relating to the design process for preparation for a professional portfolio

Grading and Assignments

Work in this course will be graded to criteria. In other words, you won't be graded on a curve. Each deliverable is designed to test your achievement against one or more of the learning objectives. Different assignments emphasize different learning objectives. Four-hundred (400) points have been assigned to the course and each component of the course has been assigned a percent of the overall grade. So, for example, participation is worth 10% of the final grade (40 points) and the group project is with 45% of the final grade (180 points). The following scale is used to map points to numerical grades from 4.0 to 0.7:

<http://www.onlinelearning.washington.edu/ol/handbook/grades.asp>

- Class Participation 10%
- Online Discussion Board Posts 10%
- Individual Assignments 15%
- Quarter-long Sketching Project 20%
- Group Design Project 45%

Sketching Project:

One of the goals of this course is to be able to think critically about existing products and interactions and come up with ways of improving them. It is also good to practice sketching design ideas, so that you become more comfortable and more experienced. Thus, throughout the quarter, you will keep a sketchbook where you will think about objects or interactions in your daily life and sketch ideas for how they could be improved. For example, you will observe a door design you do not like and sketch how you might fix it, or a website you encounter where you'd like to redesign the menu. You should come up with at least 30 sketches for at least 10 different products or interactions (e.g., three per week). The focus is on quantity of sketches and not quality.

Upload your report as a single Word .doc or .docx file (no PDFs!) to the Catalyst CollectIt site for the class. You should also turn in your sketchbook by the deadline (Wednesday, Dec. 16th at 5:00 P.M.) as well. I will have a box outside my office door (Sieg 413) where you can place your sketchbooks. Make sure your sketchbooks have at least 30 sketches with at least two signatures. Sketchbooks will be available for retrieval after finals week.

Course Assignments:

Assignment 1: Understanding users, their activities, the contexts in which their tasks are carried out, and their experiences and attitudes is crucial to designing good products and technologies. However, there is no one single way to understand users. Each situation is different, each user group is different, and each project is different. In addition, resources such as time and budget may also play a role in determining which methods to use for understanding users.

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Assignment 2: Storyboarding is a key component of designing and conveying a user experience. Storyboards can be used in both the formative stages of the design process, by conveying current issues or experiences that users may have, or during the summative phase to evaluate ideas and contexts of a new idea. Because paper prototypes and sketches cannot often convey the experience of the design in use, narratives such as scenarios and storyboards help convey the experience of design ideas. Thus, they are essential to user experience design.

Assignment 3: For this assignment, you will get a small taste of what it's like to do a real world deployment with someone. Although it will only be for 1 week, you will have the chance to design and execute a small "study" of a new device.

Course Schedule

Week 1	Course Introduction User Research Overview
Week 2	User Research: Ask & Look <i>Sketch Pad & CollectIt Post 1 Due</i>
Week 3	User Research: Learn & Try Personas <i>Assignment 1 Due: Look, Learn, Ask</i>
Week 4	Sketching 1 Sketching 2 <i>Sketch Pad & CollectIt Post 2 Due</i>
Week 5	Scenarios and Storyboards Group Project Work Time <i>Sketch Pad & CollectIt Post 3 Due</i>
Week 6	Wireframes Prototyping 1 <i>Sketch Pad & CollectIt Post 4 Due</i>
Week 7	Prototyping 2 In-Class Group Project Time <i>Assignment 2 Due: Storyboarding</i>
Week 8	Field Studies & Experience Sampling Sketches, P5 Demos <i>Sketch Pad & CollectIt Post 5 Due</i>
Week 9	Emotional Design <i>Sketch Pad & CollectIt Post 6 Due</i>
Week 10	Special Topics Course Wrap-Up <i>Assignment 3 Due: Week Real World Field Deployment</i>
Finals Week	Final Presentations <i>Sketch Pad & CollectIt Post 7 Due</i>