

GDES 5342

ADVANCED WEB DESIGN

Course description:

“As distribution of all forms of culture becomes computer-based, we are increasingly ‘interfacing’ to predominantly cultural data—texts, photographs, films, music, virtual environments. In short, we are no longer interfacing to a computer but to culture encoded in digital form.”

Lev Manovich
Cinema as a Cultural Interface

As our population becomes more digitally connected to one another, websites have become a major part of how we experience and interact with the world. Compounded with the rising popularity of mobile devices, the means to which we can access the so-called cultural data are extending into new platforms. This stage of technological evolution grants designers the unique opportunity to be active cultural participants in how knowledge is communicated and shared.

Building upon the foundations of web design introduced in GDES 2342 or equivalent experience, this class addresses the opportunities and complexities in graphic design applied to the development of websites. This approach requires analysis of informational content, the context in which this will function to a target audience, data from usability testing, and to explore options for re-telling or introducing content in visually meaningful and engaging ways.

Instructor:

Eugene Park, MFA
ebpark@umn.edu

Studio:

Mo & We 3:00pm–4:55pm
McNeal Hall 146

Office hours:

Tuesdays 11am–12pm*
McNeal Hall 246e

Spring Semester, 2020
Jan 22–May 04

*also available for appointments

Course Objectives:

- Identify and question existing trends in web design.
- Develop working web site prototypes.
- Have proficient knowledge of HTML/CSS/javascript.
- Create web designs that go beyond predictable web templates commonly seen on Squarespace and Wix.
- Inspire authenticity for all aspects in the design process (research, ideation, prototyping, etc.)
- Use critique as constructive conversation to help further refine formal solutions.
- Apply knowledge and skills from prerequisite classes to explore their applications.
- Emphasize making and critical visual thinking.

Course prerequisites:

DHA/GDES 2334 or 2342, design minor or graphic design major or graduate student or with instructor's consent. Credit will not be granted if credit is already received for DHA/GDES 5342.

Format for the course:

This is a 3-credit course, and divides our contact time in two weekly sessions. Class is centered primarily on discussions and critique of work done outside of class.

Recommended texts:

There are no required textbooks for this class. All reading assignments will be provided by the instructor at the appropriate times. Students who wish to engage in further reading outside of class can consult the following books:

Jon Duckett, *HTML & CSS: Design and Build Websites* (Indianapolis, IN: Wiley, 2011).

Steve Krug, *Don't Make Me Think!: a Common Sense Approach to Web Usability* (Berkeley, Calif: New Riders Pub., 2006).

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Can identify, define, and solve problems

The main problems to be identified, defined, and solved when creating an app and a web site are as follows.

Visual

- Communicate the visual identity and goals of a website
- Communicate the key tasks a user can accomplish
- Apply design elements and principles (e.g., color, imagery, space, typography, writing, navigation, and unity of the whole)
- Apply the principles of user interface design

Technical

- Use related software, including programs from Adobe Creative Suite 6, Sublime Text 2, and TextWrangler.
- Plan and construct custom functions with Javascript to implement various technical features (e.g. complex animations, automated processes, feedback loops).

Technical also for web

- Mark text for HTML and style texts and objects with CSS, and dynamically animate with jQuery and Javascript.
- Design the site for a standards-compliant browser on Mac, Windows, and Linux operating systems.

3. Have mastered body of knowledge and mode of inquiry

Have mastered beginner-to-intermediate level competency in the bodies of knowledge named above, as well as the mode of inquiry found through the design process (e.g., use of iterative cycles in a progressive sequence).

5. Can communicate effectively

- Create websites that can visually communicate its affordances through static and kinetic elements.
- Participate in written and spoken critiques, as well as present the final web sites to the class.

Evaluating Learning Outcomes

The aforementioned learning outcomes will be assessed through the creation of the following:

Web site goals, sketches, wireframes, style guides, prototypes, an incremental build of the HTML, CSS, and jQuery of final site, construction of custom functions in Javascript, and presentation of final product. All visual elements must adhere to the principles of user interface design by presenting themselves clearly to the user. The intent of the website must also be clear to the intended users and free of any visual distractions and technical imperfections.

Class schedule:

Unit 1: HTML/CSS Review

Jan	22	html/css reviews & main project brief
	27	html/css reviews
	29	main project ideas discussion
Feb	03	html/css reviews
	05	main project ideas due
	10	html/css reviews / short project brief
	12	main project info. architectures due
	17	html/css reviews
	19	short project workday
	24	main project wireframes edits
	26	main project wireframes edits

Unit 2: jQuery/Javascript

Mar	02	jQuery intro / short project 1 due
	04	in-class activities
	16	no class
	18	jQuery & JavaScript lessons
	23	jQuery & JavaScript lessons
	25	main project mockups
	30	no class
Apr	01	jQuery & JavaScript lessons
	06	main project edited mockups
	08	main project edited mockups
	13	production / short project 2 due
	15	production
	20	production
	22	production
	27	production
	29	production
May	04	exit interviews
	16	main project due

schedule is subject to change

Grading breakdown:

50% main project
20% mini-project 1
20% mini-project 2
10% in-class assignments

Criteria for evaluation:

- A: strong design process / thorough research / frequent participation in critiques and class discussions / focused / ability to generate multiple solutions / mastery of form and usability / excellent (digital) craftsmanship / effectively articulate and sketch ideas
- B: can improve on the items from the A student / needs to generate more solutions / seldom participation / needs refinement in craftsmanship / final outcome of projects is good but needs to improve on process.
- C: completes work only to satisfy minimum requirements / very few instances of participation / unwilling to break initial mold / doesn't make significant improvements to projects / frequently late
- D: little or no participation / chronic tardiness / incomplete work / lack of refinement / express little to no interest / doesn't follow instructions

Grading late work:

The student is required to complete all course assignments on time: that is, each assignment is to be finished by 3:00 pm on the day it is due, unless specified otherwise. Work completed after this time but by 3:00 pm of the next class period will be marked down a full letter grade. If you have a scheduling problem regarding an assignment due date, please speak to the instructor before the due date about alternative means of meeting the course obligation.

Extra credit:

Extra credit will be given for certain assignments.

Final class meeting:

Our final class meeting will take place 3:00pm, may 4, 2020. There will be no final examination, but students must be present and bring all finalized projects for critique. In addition, students must also provide a cd with digital versions of all of their work done in this course.

Required equipment/software:

- Photo and vector editing software such as Photoshop and Illustrator.
- Text editor for coding: Sublime Text 2, Text Wrangler, and Coda are great options.
- Up-to-date web browser that supports Java.
- Personal laptop.
- Github account for submitting assignments/projects. Do not use the University's hosting space since they are unreliable with poor technical support.

Note on Dreamweaver:

Use of Dreamweaver is not allowed in this class. Many web classes across the country do not permit the use of this software for many good reasons. Dreamweaver, like many other third party software, adds many unnecessary features such as templates that promote bad design. Additionally, its automatic code generator provides incoherent markup that is almost impossible to troubleshoot and turns many designers into lazy coders. But most importantly, Dreamweaver undermines the age-long practice that coding, just like Typography, is a form of craft that demands attention to detail and careful planning. There are many free text editors such as Sublime Text 2 and Textwrangler that are useful tools to meet these ends.

Note on critique:

Critique is a time during class where we give useful input to improve the work of our peers. Whether any of us “like” the work from our classmates is irrelevant. So try to tailor your comments and suggestions to be as objective as possible. Key questions might include:

“What is the work doing?”

“How is the work doing what it is doing?”

“What do we think the designer’s intention might have been?”

“What associations or references does the work call to mind?”

Each student is highly encouraged to practice being as specific as possible and avoid vague and subjective statements such as: “I like...” “I don't like...” “...is good” “could be better”, etc.

Classroom decorum:

Classroom is a time when we meet and be productive towards satisfying the class objectives. You are expected to be respectful of the time of your peers and be attentive and in all classroom activities and discussions. This means no phone use or texting during class times except in cases of emergency. Headphones for music are not allowed during lectures, class discussions, and critiques.

Release of work:

Students understand that enrollment in this course grants consent for their work to be selected for inclusion or college or departmental publications (online and print). Your instructor may select to use your work to represent his/her skills via teaching portfolio (online and print).

Attendance policy:

Attendance is essential in a studio course. The design process involves input and feedback among class members. You are expected to be on time for each class and work in class on class projects for the entire period. Repeated tardiness and/or consistently leaving class early will be considered an attendance problem and can result in a lower course grade. **Three tardiness will count as one unexcused absence. Three unexcused absences will result in two letter grades deducted from final grade. Five or more unexcused absences will result in course failure.** Excused absences are defined in the policy found here and include the following circumstances: illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events (not intramural), subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Any circumstance that you believe falls under the excused absence category must be verified by presenting the instructor with documentation (e.g., a note from your doctor) that gives the date(s) for which you should be excused (the details of the circumstance do not need to be explained). Students are responsible for information covered during any missed class session and are to acquire this information from a fellow classmate. The instructor will be available to answer follow-up questions during scheduled office hours or during class time, when appropriate. No appointment is needed for office hours.

Incompletes

An incomplete will not be given for this course unless there is a medical emergency or other extraordinary circumstance that can be verified and deemed reasonable by the instructor. If such an emergency occurs, please notify the instructor as soon as possible. To receive an incomplete, both the student and the instructor must sign a formal contract outlining what needs to be done in order to remove the incomplete. The incomplete must be completed satisfactorily by the end of the following semester or the University automatically turns the incomplete into a failing grade.

Personal electronic devices in the classroom

Designated class hours are intended for GDES 5342 studio work, discussion, and critique. Your ideas and designs will thrive in an atmosphere of open exchange so have fun, share your ideas and opinions respectfully. In the computer lab, opportunities, responsibilities, and distractions of the digital world are at your fingertips. You must resist. In other words, no Internet exploration or device use that is not directly related to this class, no work from other classes. M&W 6:15–8:25 p.m.

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html>

Use of class notes and materials:

Students may not distribute, via the Internet or other means, instructor-provided lecture notes or other instructor-provided materials, except to other members of the same class or with the express consent of the instructor.

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/CLASSNOTESSTUDENTS.html>

Scholastic dishonesty and student conduct code:

Any student found to have committed or to have attempted to commit misconduct as defined in this policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html>

Sexual harassment

University policy prohibits sexual harassment as defined in the University Policy Statement of December 11, 1998; copies of this statement are available at

<http://policy.umn.edu/hr/sexualharassment>

Climate of inclusivity

You are expected to be attentive during class, ask questions if you do not understand something, and to offer your opinion. You are also expected to listen respectfully to other students and to me when speaking. The University of Minnesota is committed to providing a safe climate for all students, faculty, and staff. All persons shall have equal access to its programs and facilities without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation. Racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, ageism and other forms of bigotry are inappropriate to express in this class. Reports of harassment are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help.

(or refer to http://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf)

Academic freedom and responsibility

Academic freedom is the freedom, without institutional discipline or restraint, to discuss all relevant matters in the classroom, to explore all avenues of scholarship, research, and creative expression, and to speak or write on matters of public concern as well as on matters related to professional duties and the functioning of the University. Academic responsibility implies the faithful performance of professional duties and obligations, the recognition of the demands of the scholarly enterprise, and the candor to make it clear that when one is speaking on matters of public interest, one is not speaking for the institution.

http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Academic_Freedom.pdf.

Availability of disability and mental health services

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing all students equal access to learning opportunities. The Office of Equity and Diversity has a Disability Resource Center (DRC) that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g. mental health, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical or systemic), are invited to contact DS to arrange a confidential discussion at 612-626-1333 (V/TTY) or drc@umn.edu.

Students registered with DRC, who have a letter requesting accommodations, are encouraged to contact the instructor early in the semester to discuss accommodations outlined in their letter.

For additional information please visit:

<https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/>

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via www.mentalhealth.umn.edu or contact Counseling/Consulting Services at 612-624-3323.

Academic services

If you would like additional help, please contact one of the offices listed below.

Center for Writing
10 Nicholson Hall, Mpls
612-626-7579

Student Academic Success Service
340 Appleby Hall, Mpls
199 Coffey Hall, St. Paul
612-624-3323