

Web Design Capstone :: Syllabus

Course: MMC 6936 Web Design Capstone, Section 11AH

Semester: Spring 2015

Meeting Times: Saturdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. EST

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Office Hours: Available by appointment

Overview

The goal of this capstone course is to bring together the skills that you developed in the University of Florida's web design master's program and show how you have mastered them. Those skills include, but are not limited to: pitching ideas; creating a logo and brand; sketching a site prototype; writing and gathering original content for a site; building a website with HTML, CSS, javascript/jquery and/or Wordpress; and using a Text Editor, Illustrator, Photoshop and/or Dreamweaver.

In this course, you will develop a simple business plan and website for an original startup. Your website must allow users at a distance to purchase items and/or services or place an order of some kind. In other words, the website must contribute to making money somehow versus just advertising the business.* The lone exception would be if you are designing a website for a smartphone app. The smartphone app does not need to be built this semester. However, wireframes for at least five individual app screens need to be designed, in addition to designing a website to promote the app.

Note: This final project is about starting an original business not designing someone else's site. Businesses that build websites and/or do graphic design are not permitted, with only a few, very rare, exceptions that must be cleared with the instructor before the initial in-class pitch.

Your final project will be evaluated on the execution of the business idea and the site content — both the visuals and text; the site's interface and coding; and the user experience.

Advice. It is highly advised that you consider working on your own original business idea versus working on someone else's site. This is your chance to start a business for yourself. Take advantage of this opportunity (and time) to build on an idea you've been kicking around. Here are some points to consider when building someone else's site:

1. You will very likely be frustrated working on someone else's business idea for this class because your ideas may not mesh with their ideas, and that will show in your work.
2. When working with others, you are often left waiting for content and draft approvals. Using dummy type / art and "filler" content will not be accepted.

3. You will likely be challenged to find meeting times when working with clients.
4. Someone else's goals will most likely not match up with the project's guidelines, which your grade in this course depends on.
5. By working on your own idea, you are investing in yourself. For that reason, you will find the project to be more enjoyable and will likely be more motivated.

Required Software and Equipment

Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, a Text Editor of your choice and a server to host your project. You are also required to have access to a digital camera to produce high-quality images.

Objectives

- To propose an idea for an original business; or to develop a site for an offline business
- To evaluate the competition of a business
- To summarize research from credible sources
- To write a business plan
- To pitch an idea for a business to a group
- To tell a story about a company
- To gather original, relevant visuals for your site
- To sketch the pages of your site and/or app
- To prepare art for the web
- To incorporate the characteristics of strong logo design
- To create a logo in Illustrator
- To critique logos
- To apply universal design principles to a website
- To write clean and relevant content for a company's web pages
- To organize content visually
- To build a website
- To conduct usability testing
- To apply user experience feedback
- To evaluate web designs for businesses
- To present a company website to a group

Evaluation	Points
Business Idea Pitch	20
Business Plan	150
Logo Draft	50
Logo Final	75
Sketches for Site	50
Website Design Draft/Pitch/Content/Art	125
Usability Testing	30
Final Website Design/Pitch	100
Attendance/Participation	80
Total Points	680*

* NOTE: Project points and the point total are subject to change.

Grading

100-94: A
93-90: A-
89-87: B+
86-84: B
83-80: B-
79-77: C+
76-74: C
73-70: C-
69-67: D+
66-64: D
63-60: D-
59 or lower: E

Semester Overview

We will meet live in class this semester. There will be some weeks you will be solely working on your site. The following is a breakdown of the live classes. A schedule with specific dates will be given out the first day of class.

Class 1: Syllabus, Schedule and Instructions for First Two Projects

Class 2: Business Idea Pitches

Class 3: Business Plan Due; Logo Discussion

Class 4: Logo Draft Due/Critiques

Class 5: Logo Final Due; Website Sketches and Draft Discussion

Class 6: Website Sketches Due/Critiques; Website Draft Discussion

Class 7: Website Draft Due/Critiques (class will be divided); Homework: Usability Testing

Class 8: Final Website Due; Evaluations and Presentations

Attendance

You are expected to attend the in-person classes listed on the course schedule. The instructor will not field “what-did-I-miss?” questions. A single missed class will result in 10 points off your attendance/participation grade. Students are permitted one unexcused absence, but they must write critiques of three classmates’ projects within five days of the missed class (by Thursday 5 p.m. EST). It is the responsibility of the student to reach out to the instructor via email or phone about which three projects to critique before the critique deadline. If the critiques are not completed within five days of the missed class, 10 attendance/participation points will be deducted. After one unexcused absence, other missed classes cannot be made up for points.

Tardiness

Being late to class is unacceptable and considered rude. Treat this class as if it were a job. Be on time. The instructor will note repeated tardiness and points will be deducted from your attendance/participation grade for lateness or leaving class early. Students will lose half of their attendance/participation points for that class (5 points) for being tardy or leaving early. These deducted points cannot be made up.

Missed Assignments and Late Work

No make-ups will be given for missed projects and drafts. If you miss handing in work at the deadline, it’s a zero.* Technical issues as a reason for not handing in work on time is not an excuse. Find a way, via email or Dropbox, etc.

If you use your one unexcused absence on a day of critiques, it is your responsibility to make a video of your draft pitch/presentation and submit it by the deadline for that project and email the instructor a link to your video — all of this is in addition to the three critiques within five days (see attendance above). Please do not put video link in Canvas message; email the instructor the link to your video presentation by that 8 a.m. deadline.

* Note: Only extenuating circumstances (such as a serious illness, accident, or death of a loved one, etc.) will be considered for a time extension on a project. The instructor will make that call on a case-by-case basis. The rare excused absence must be cleared with the instructor *before* the class missed, not afterward. Only one make-up, based on extenuating circumstances, will be permitted in the semester. Any requests for make-ups made after a class or deadline is missed, without prior notification and clearance, will not be granted. Examples of excuses not permissible are: work/project conflict; traveling; uploading/technical issues; stress; conflict in meeting times; etc.

Projects and drafts must be handed in on time to be evaluated for full credit. Deadlines are posted on each project assignment. See the individual project guidelines for the most up-to-date deadline dates/times. Projects handed in after the deadline will receive a zero. No exceptions.

Advice

Expect technology to crash during deadline. Give yourself more than enough time to save projects in the assignments folder. Remember, the excuse “I could not turn in my project on time because it would not save/upload” will not be accepted. Anticipate technology issues and give yourself upload/saving time. Also, read the checklist provided with each project to make sure you handed in everything correctly.

Proofread your work. Sloppy writing, bad grammar and poor spelling are unacceptable. Your writing will be read thoroughly.

Class Policies

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. See other netiquette guidelines at <http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty of any kind is not tolerated in this course. It will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs, and it will result in a failing grade for the course. Academic dishonesty includes using others' work that is not yours without permission and proper credit. This includes copying and using text, artwork, design, video, photographs, music, sound and visuals, etc., you find online or elsewhere. You must gain formal permission to use third-party material from the author/publisher and properly credit the material in assignments. Using another person's work verbatim and giving them full credit, without their knowledge, is considered unacceptable, too.

If you use someone else's words, image(s), artwork or video, permission must be obtained in writing (i.e. email) from an author/publisher and submitted to the professor along with your project.

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>.

Students With Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565 and www.dso.ufl.edu/drz/) by providing appropriate documentations. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.