

MMC 3260 Syllabus

# MMC 3260: Your Digital Life

Online | 3 credits | Fall 2015

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Office Hours: Weimer Hall 2041B Tuesdays noon-2 p.m. or by appointment. Also available over Skype by appointment.

## **Course Overview**

This course is primary about website building and the future altering of websites through a basic knowledge of code. It is also focused on establishing an online presence, maintaining an appropriate online persona, and creating a personal electronic brand that can differentiate yourself from the rest.

## **Course Objectives**

This course will give you the knowledge of how to create and cultivate an online presence. By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Build a personal website from the ground up
- Establish your own online brand
- Create an online portfolio and resume that can be used for professional purposes. This course includes significant content about building websites, but it is not a course solely about the web. You will learn introductory web design using HyperText Markup Language (HTML5), Cascading Style Sheets (CSS3) and basic Photoshop. You will be able to create web pages by hand, but you will not be taught Flash, Javascript, CGI scripting or the like, although you are free to experiment with them.

## **Class Meeting Time**

Because this class is online, there are no required meeting times. However, there will be work to be turned in *every* week. These will follow a general pattern of being due on Friday or Saturday by 11:55 p.m. as well as some assignments being due on Monday or Tuesday at the same time. You will never have anything due in the middle of the week and should take full advantage of your time each day. Two hours per day is not an exaggeration for how much time you will need to spend. This course teaches you a new skill and that takes time but is ultimately rewarding.

### **Course Difficulty**

If you've talked to other students from previous semesters about this course, then you've probably already heard that this course is a lot of work. They are correct but it is work worth doing. Get into the pattern of the assignments and setting time each day to work toward them. The quicker you understand HTML and CSS, the easier the assignments will get. The lecture videos and readings are important and practice makes perfect. The material is straightforward and easy to understand if you take the time to do so. It's not easy to get lost in this course, but it is incredibly easy to get behind.

### **Readings**

Most every week there will be several online readings. Some of these readings address the latest thinking about web design. Do not worry if these readings seem a bit dated in time published only. The material is evergreen and still highly applicable to today. These readings will be listed under each Module page.

The following textbook is recommended:HTML5 & CSS3 Visual QuickStart Guide (8th Edition) by Elizabeth Castro and Bruce Hyslop, ISBN: 0321928830.

This is only recommended if you learn better from a hardcopy. The Lynda.com tutorials are extremely detailed and more than sufficient to help you through the course.

Note: If you get this book, or any HTML or CSS book, make sure you

get the MOST RECENT EDITION possible. HTML and CSS code frequently changes, as do the best practices for how to implement it. Even a book three years old might be out of date already.

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints> (Links to an external site.) to submit a complaint.

### **Course Requirements**

Your semester grade will be calculated as follows:

Short Essays: 75 points

Quizzes: 70 points

HTML and CSS Practice: 180 points

Discussion and Peer Critiques: 175 points

Draft Work on Website: 200 points

Final Website: 300 points

Total: 1,000 points

### **Grading Scale**

A 920-1,000; A- 900-919

B+ 880-899 B 820-879 B- 800-819;

C+ 780-799 C 720-779 C- 700-719;

D+ 680-699 D 620-679 D- 600-619;

F 0-599

The grading scale is non-negotiable. A final grade of 879, for instance, is a B. All grades are final unless questions about grades are addressed in writing within 1 week after the grade is posted. If you have concerns

about your grades please check with me sooner in the semester rather than later.

More information about UF grading policies can be found here:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

## **Assignments**

Almost every week, you will have some assignment to turn in. This is a very hands-on course, so you will learn best by doing. When this class has been offered face-to-face in the past, there was usually a two-hour lab component each week in addition to lecture periods. So expect to spend some time on assignments every week.

Assignments will consist of short essays, quizzes, design documents, and coding practice. You are encouraged to work on long-term projects, such as your personal website, throughout the semester. You are also encouraged to spend time playing around with code on your own. While it is encouraged that you follow along with the lectures, it is highly recommended that you spend some time going beyond what the lectures teach you. The lectures that teach coding total only about six hours which spread out over the semester is incredibly manageable. This is the best way to learn code, through trial and error: try something and see what happens!

Details for every assignment will be available from the beginning of the semester. If assignment requirements change, you will be notified promptly.

## **Personal Website**

Most of your course grade will come from a personal website that you design throughout the semester. Many of your weekly assignments will contribute to the overall development of your website. Details about what is required of your personal website can be found in Module 10.

## **Late Work**

Assignments may be turned in late up to 24 hours after the due date for

half credit. This is half credit of the grade you would've gotten had you turned in the assignment on time. For example, if your assignment was only good enough to earn an 80% and you turned it in 12 hours after the due date, you will only get 40% credit.

Assignments will always be due at 11:55 p.m., usually on Fridays and Saturdays or Mondays and Tuesdays though not exclusively. The IT help desk closes at 10 p.m., so if you are having technical issues submitting your assignment, send me the assignment via email with a note explaining your issue.

Make-up work is not permitted past 24 hours after the due date. Make-up work is also not permitted if you are dissatisfied with your score. However, under an extreme circumstance, if you have an excused absence AND the instructor was notified in advance, an exception may be made.

### **Technical Help, Web Design Help, and Extra Credit**

If you have questions about Canvas, such as how to submit assignments, how to post on the discussion boards, how to upload files, or if you find that videos or links aren't working, please post your question to the Technical Issues and Course Material Errors discussion board.

If you have any questions about coding your website, please submit them first to the Web Design Help discussion board before you email me. If you have a question, likely others in the class have a similar question. Please be as specific as possible, detailing what you are struggling with and what you are trying to accomplish. It will also help if you can upload a snippet of code or even the HTML and/or CSS documents in question.

I will try to answer these questions promptly. However, I encourage all students to check the Web Design Help discussion board frequently, and to try their hand at answering classmates' questions. When learning a new markup language like HTML, one of the best ways to learn the limits of the code is to troubleshoot: find mistakes and fix them.

To earn extra credit, then, sufficiently address another student's questions before I do. Depending on the complexity of the question, you can earn between 3-6 extra credit points. Throughout the entire semester, you can earn 30 extra credit points, which amounts to a 3% increase in your final grade.

Other extra credit opportunities may be offered throughout the semester, but answering technical questions is the primary way to earn extra credit. These opportunities will be announced in via Announcements or email.

### **Academic Honesty**

All work completed for this course must respect the intellectual property of others. When using somebody else's copyrighted material, whether words, images, media, or ideas, proper credit must be given. If direct quotations are used, they must be enclosed in quotation marks and properly cited. If copyrighted material is used indirectly, it must still be properly cited!

If in doubt, include a citation. If you have any questions at all, ask your instructor before the project is submitted. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an excuse!

The following is the UF Honor Code:

"I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University."

When submitting work for this course, the following honor pledge is implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

If you are aware of academic dishonesty, please notify the instructor or contact the Student Honor Court (392-1631) or Cheating Hotline (392-

6999).

### *Special Notes Concerning Plagiarism on the Web*

Stealing another person's content is painfully easy on the web. I'm positive that nearly all of us have at some point downloaded pirated music, watched movies or television shows uploaded illegally to foreign websites, or found other ways of getting free stuff online that normally should be paid for. Perhaps you even think it is ethical to download copyrighted material.

Whatever you do online outside of class is your own business, but when it comes to turning in work for this class, we strongly expect you to credit anything you get from somebody else.

If you get an image or clip art from another website, you **must have permission and give credit**. If you get audio or video from another website, you must give credit. Over the course of this semester, you'll likely find many websites that provide tutorials on how to design websites, or tutorials on how to do something cool on your website. Even if you borrow code from another website, you must still provide credit.

Just because it is easy to steal somebody's content doesn't mean it is ethical. Internet behavior is dictated more by developing cultural norms than by law. You can right click on any image or multimedia and click "Save Target As" to download that image. You can also right click on any webpage and click "View Source Code" to get the HTML code for that page. The web was built (and is still being built) through a culture of collaboration and open sourcing. Many people even want you to use their code and templates in your own websites. But most of them also expect credit to be given where credit is due.

We will be discussing ethical issues like this later in the semester, but if you have any doubt, ask me.

### *How to Give Credit to Others*

Designing websites is not like writing an academic paper: there are far

fewer rules, and you have much more freedom in how you present your content. Many students have asked over the years how to give credit on their websites. While there's no right answer or best answer, below are some of the ways students give credit to others whenever they borrow or reference their work:

- Provide a simple text link back to the website.
- Leave a comment in your HTML or CSS code acknowledging where the code came from (you will be shown how to do this).
- Include a reference page on your website that lists where everything came from.
- Include a reference section at the bottom on every single webpage, perhaps in smaller print, telling people where your information comes from. There are likely many more ways to give credit to others. We take plagiarism very seriously, and students from previous semesters have been known to fail a project or the course for plagiarizing another's work. Students with Disabilities Students requesting course accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students will provide documentation of the necessary accommodation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor within the first two weeks of the semester. Please expect to discuss with your instructor through virtual office hours or email what your needs are. This course conforms to all requirements of the ADA and handles with sensitivity all matters related to gender, race, sexual orientation, age, religion or disability. Please alert the instructor if any issues arise.

### **Emergencies and Illness**

Despite our best-laid plans, semesters don't always finish as strong as they start. Family emergencies, personal struggles, and illness can come up suddenly and seriously disrupt your coursework. Should an emergency happen that hinders your ability to complete your schoolwork, please let the instructor know as soon as possible so that



we can help you complete your schoolwork in a timely manner.

If any emergency comes up this semester, please let me know as soon as possible. You don't have to fully reveal the nature of your emergency, but the more upfront you are with your instructors, the more willing they are to work with you. If you wait until the end of the semester to address an issue that's been growing all semester, it will be much harder to accommodate your needs.

### **Module Outline**

This course is broken into 16 modules, corresponding with the standard 16-week semester. It is not easy to get lost in this course as the next module opens the day the assignment for the previous module is due but it is easy to fall behind. This is a lot of work and you are expected to put in the time. You will likely have to log into the course several times a week to stay on top of the assignments, readings, and lectures.

Module 1: Taking Stock of Your Online Identity  
Assignment: Online Identity Audit, due Monday, August 31 at 11:55 p.m.

Module 2: The Web Design Process  
Assignment: Goal Analysis, due Saturday, Sept. 5 at 11:55 p.m.

Module 3: Introduction to HTML  
Assignment: Module Quiz, due Saturday Sept. 12 at 11:55 p.m.  
Assignment: HTML Practice, due Saturday Sept. 12 at 11:55 p.m.

Module 4: Web Design Do's and Don'ts  
Assignment: Website evaluations, due Friday, Sept. 18 at 11:55 p.m.

Module 5: Introduction to CSS  
Assignment: Module Quiz, due Friday, Sept. 25 at 11:55 p.m.  
Assignment: CSS Practice, due Friday, Sept. 25 at 11:55 p.m.

Module 6: Visual Web Design, or, How Not to Make Your Page Look Like it was Designed by a Five-Year-Old  
Assignment: Website evaluations and group discussion, due Friday, Oct. 2 at 11:55 p.m.

Module 7: Wireframes and Sitemaps  
Assignment: Post wireframe and

sitemap drafts, due Wednesday, February 18 at 11:55 p.m. Assignment: Critique classmates' wireframes and sitemap drafts, due Friday, Oct. 6 at 11:55 p.m. Assignment: Post revised wireframes and sitemaps for instructor review, due Monday, Oct. 12 at 11:55 p.m.

Module 8: Basic Layout with HTML and CSS Assignment: Module Quiz, due Monday, Oct. 19 at 11:55 p.m. Assignment: Layout Practice, due Monday Oct. 19 at 11:55 p.m.

Module 9: Mobile Web Design Assignment: Mobile Design Practice, due Monday Oct. 26 at 11:55 p.m.

Module 10: Work Week: Design First Draft of Website Assignment: Website Draft, due Thursday Nov. 5 at 11:55 p.m.

Module 11: Building Your Online Identity Assignment: Critique classmates' website draft, due Tuesday, Nov. 10 at 11:55 p.m.

Module 12: Multimedia and Plugins: Making Your Website Interactive Assignment: Multimedia Plan, due Tuesday Nov. 17 at 11:55 p.m.

Module 13: Revision Week: Finalizing Your Website Template Assignment: Website Revision, due Tuesday, Nov. 24 at 11:55 p.m.

Module 14: Search Engine Optimization and Marketing with Social Media No assignment. Working on final website.

Module 15: Work Week: Launching Your Final Website Assignment: Final Website, due Tuesday, Dec. 1 at 11:55 p.m.

Module 16: Finalization Week Assignment: Critique classmates' final website, due Tuesday Dec. 8 at 11:55 p.m.

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