

Web Interactivity and Engagement

MMC 5XXX

3 CREDIT HOURS

SPRING 2013

CLASS MEETING MONDAY 6:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M. Class meets live via adobe connect. You will access the connect classroom through sakai in the Course Materials section.

INSTRUCTOR: James F. Ayres, Esq.
jayres@law.ufl.edu
Office: 352-273-0757
Cell: 321-279-3275

OFFICE HOURS: My official office hours are from 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. on weeknights (Monday - Friday). You are welcome to schedule a meeting time with me as well. You should feel free to e-mail me whenever you have an issue and I will address it as soon as possible.

COURSE WEBSITE: Sakai - <http://lss.at.ufl.edu>]

COURSE COMMUNICATIONS:

You may feel free to contact me via e-mail at any time or by phone during business and early afternoon hours. E-mail is the preferred method of contact, however you should not hesitate to contact me via phone if necessary.

REQUIRED TEXT:

There will be no *required* text book for this course. I will frequently link to articles and resources that will be mandatory reading prior to the class meeting.

Below are two suggested books that will serve as a resource to follow for the subject matter of this course. The PHP book will likely serve you better when you are trying to work through problems in your programming while the WordPress book will help you obtain a deeper understanding of that specific CMS. The less experience you have with these topics, the more I would suggest you buy these books.

PHP Solutions: Dynamic Web Design Made Easy, by David Powers (2010)

ISBN: 1430232498

Professional WordPress (Wrox Programmer to Programmer), by Hal Stern (2010)

ISBN: 0470560541

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Additional resources, outlines, documents, materials, exercises, and other resources will be provided from time to time throughout the term (both in and out of class). All students are urged and expected to regularly be enriching themselves with both programming and design techniques, best practices, and news topics.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to provide you with an understanding of the most practical tool of a web manager, the content management system (CMS). Using WordPress, you will gain an understanding of CMSs and how they are valuable tools for saving time and handling large amounts of data. You will also learn more about server scripting using PHP and database integration with MySQL

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

You should be comfortable and competent with HTML and CSS. Image editing capability, ability to use FTP, capable visual design skills, and basic marketing understanding is key to success in this course. Having experience with Javascript, PHP, MySQL, Linux, and/or Wordpress will certainly soften the learning curve, but are not mandatory for success at the outset of the course (you will certainly feel comfortable with these technologies by the end of the course).

PURPOSE OF COURSE:

The purpose of this course is to provide you with an understanding of the most practical tool of a web manager, the content management system (CMS).

COURSE GOALS AND/OR OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course, you will:

- 1. Gain an understanding of CMSs and how they are valuable tools for saving time and handling large amounts of data.*
- 2. Have an understanding of the inner-workings of CMSs (through the popular programming language PHP).*
- 3. Be able to design and execute meaningful web sites and marketing devices based upon client specifications.*

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY & INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:

Practice makes perfect. This course is taught through and graded upon completion of time-sensitive assignments. Instruction will be a blend of tutorials, lectures, discussions, and critiques of sites. Each class will contain all of these different elements – to provide some variety and to touch briefly on all of the aspects of the web design process. Assignments will be structured from a mock client-freelancer

relationship. Specifications will be provided to you by me and a product will be expected by the deadline.

Course Policies:

Everyone in this course is assumed to bring the highest level of professionalism. Flexibility is available for exigent circumstances. However, absent a valid excuse, attendance is mandatory, projects are to be turned in on or before the due date, and participation during discussions is required.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance is required for every course. Several courses may be video recorded, at which point you may view the course any time prior to the final viewable time as stated by me.

ASSIGNMENT POLICY:

All assignments must be completed on or before the due date. Family death, severe illness, or other extreme circumstances may warrant an allowance of additional time for completion. Minor illnesses or inconveniences will not be sufficient as an excuse.

COURSE TECHNOLOGY:

1. This course will require a working, up-to-date computer, but may be either Apple or PC.
2. Prior to coming to the first class, you must set up a “sandbox” on the computer they use for the course. A “sandbox” is a localized software environment that allows development to occur in real-time on the local host. An e-mail will be sent out to you prior to the first class explaining the process for setting this up.
3. An updated web server space to access files, preferably running apache, AND
4. A database, preferably MySQL. If you have a hosting service, they likely offer MySQL services.

Since the vast majority of the technology used in this course will be open source, I will occasionally link to resources that may be helpful. All students are encouraged to participate in the learning environment by sending me helpful resources to share with the rest of the class.

I will provide technical direction or support for the core aspects of the course work. You will be responsible for troubleshooting errors in your programming work. I reserve the right to refuse technical support if I believe that allowing you to solve the problem on your own will facilitate learning.

UF Policies:

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

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>.

NETIQUETTE: COMMUNICATION COURTESY:

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. Learning how to communicate effectively with individuals that have a wide variety of backgrounds and beliefs is paramount to one's success in the global economy. Tolerance for ideas that you do not subscribe to, objective criticism of aesthetic decisions, and focused, relevant conversation is expected of every student in all course communications.

Getting Help:

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Sakai, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for counseling and wellness resources, disability resources, resources for handling student concerns and complaints, and library Help Desk support. Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints> to submit a complaint.

Grading Policies:

Your final grade will be determined based upon the following criteria:

90% - Performance (composite score) on Assignments and Exercises

10% - Class Participation (including preparation, thoughtfulness, meaningful engagement, and performance)

Each project will inevitably have a creative component. It is always difficult to grade based upon aesthetic and design decisions. 75% of every assignment's grade will be based entirely upon completion of the project specifications (which will be provided to the student). The remaining 25% of the assignment grade, such as design choices and other added elements as described in the individual project, will be graded based upon how successful the design is. I urge you to contact me, or other students who are willing, for advice about the effectiveness of the design. Asking for intermittent feedback about a project during development is encouraged, though I reserve the right to refuse critique in favor of allowing you, the designer, an opportunity to develop the project further. Elements I will consider include consistency throughout the project, compliance with the client's design expectations and specifications, and emphasis on strong design elements such as composition, color, and shape.

Assignment	Points or percentage
1. Create, set up, and post into a Wordpress site	5%
2. PHP operation: <i>You will practice your PHP coding ability by creating a simple operation in PHP that can be executed from your web server.</i>	10%
3. Modify the Wordpress template: <i>Using PHP, CSS, and HTML, you will mock up and implement changes to the Wordpress template to suit your particular project needs.</i>	25%
4. Posts and Plugins: <i>You are expected to make a minimum number of posts to your Wordpress page. Additionally, you must install and use at least 3 secure plugins. This</i>	15%

<i>project spans the entire semester after you set up your Wordpress site.</i>	
5. Final Project: <i>Taking everything you learned throughout the semester, you will create a Wordpress blog for a mock client. Your role will be as a freelancer. Specifications will be distributed later in the semester.</i>	45%

GRADING SCALE:

Grade Values for Conversion

Letter Grade:	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E, I, WF
Grade Points:	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.00	2.67	2.33	2.00	1.67	1.33	1.00	0.67	0.00

For more information, see: <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html/>

Course Schedule:

FINAL PROJECT DUE: April 21, 2013 at 12:00 a.m.

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment
1	January 7	Introduction to course and syllabus overview; class introduction; introduction to Wordpress, content management systems, and database integration; and introduction to PHP	Reading assignments in email; email me personal questionnaire.
2	January 14	Setting up Wordpress; posts, elements, and organization; discussion of Wordpress resources	Reading assignments in email; assign "Posts & Plugins" assignment; assign "Create, set up,

		that are available.	install Wordpress site" assignment.
3	January 21	PHP programming I (installing PHP, embedding PHP, coding structure explained); discussion of client communication skills; Wordpress "pages" discussed.	Reading assignment in email; review of first five blog posts; "Create, set up, install Wordpress site" assignment due.
4	January 28	PHP programming II (variables, strings, arrays, booleans, constants, "echo"); in-class design discussion; introduction to Wordpress plugins	Reading assignment in email; Assign "Modify the Wordpress Template" assignment.
5	February 4	<i>**Recorded Lecture**</i> CSS and Wordpress; modifying Wordpress front page and posts	Reading assignment in email; mock up of front page changes due at midnight on Tuesday, February 5.
6	February 11	PHP programming III (loops, functions, GET values); in-class critique of mockups;	Reading assignment in email; assign "PHP Operation" assignment.
7	February 18	MySQL lesson; databases generally; CMS integration with databases;	Reading assignment in email.
8	February 25	PHP programming IV (creating an operation in Wordpress); design and usability lesson.	Reading assignment in email.
9	March 4	Spring break -- No Classes	N/A
10	March 11	<i>**Recorded Lecture**</i> Web 2.0, SEO, and responsive Design.	Reading assignment in email; PHP Operation assignment due at midnight on Tuesday, March 12.
11	March 18	Resource management; analytics;	Reading assignment in email.

		exploring modification of CMSs.	
12	March 25	Go over final project; creating custom posts/pages in Wordpress.	Reading assignment in email; assign "Final Project" assignment at end of class.
13	April 1	Javascript and PHP/Wordpress integration; advanced PHP exercise #1	Reading assignment in email; mock up of "Final Project" due.
14	April 8	Advanced CSS and PHP integration; creative uses for visual elements; brief discussion/review of color theory	Reading assignment in email;
15	April 15	Advanced PHP exercise #2; in-class project discussion/Q & A (45 minutes maximum).	Reading assignment in email; "Posts and Plugins" assignment due.
16	April 22	Last day of classes; critique of final assignments (15 - 20 minutes each).	Final Project assignment due at midnight the day before class (Sunday, April 21)

Disclaimer: This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.