Web Design Capstone :: Syllabus

Course: MMC 6936
Semester: Summer 2014
Meeting Times: Saturdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. EST
Professor: Dr. Amy Zerba
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Office Hours: Available by appointment

Overview

The goal of this capstone course is to bring together the skills 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; writing and gathering original content for a site; sketching a prototype; building a website with HTML, CSS, javascript/jquery; and using a Text Editor, Illustrator, Photoshop and/or Dreamweaver.

In this course, you will develop a business plan and website for an original startup that offers products and/or services online. The company can offer products and services offline, too, but the website must allow users at a distance to purchase items and/or services. This idea must be original and cannot be a design or redesign of an existing business. The business, and business name, must not exist before Aug. 1, 2014. (*Few exceptions may be granted).

Your final project will be evaluated on the execution of an original business idea and the site content; the site's interface and coding; and user experience.

It is highly recommended that the idea for the startup be your original idea, and not the business idea of a spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, family member, friend, friend of a friend, colleague, stranger or a business already in existence. Why?

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 camera to produce high-quality images.

Objectives

- To propose an idea for an original startup business
- To develop the business model for services/products offered by startup
- To evaluate the competition of a business
- To summarize research from credible sources
- To write a business plan for an original startup
- To pitch an idea for a business to a group
- To tell a story about an original company
- To gather original, relevant visuals for your site
- To tone art for the web
- To incorporate the characteristics of strong logo design
- To create a logo in Illustrator
- To critique logos
- To apply universal principles of design to a website
- To design a site-wide sketch or prototype
- To write the 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
Site Sketch and Writing	75
Website Design Draft/Pitch/Content/Art	100
Usability Testing	50
Final Website Design/Pitch	100
Attendance/Participation	80

Total Points   700*

* 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 eight times this semester. The following is a breakdown of the classes. A schedule with specific dates will be handed out the first day of class.

Class 1: Syllabus, Schedule and First Assignments
Class 2: Business Idea Pitch
Class 3: Business Plan Due; Logo Discussion
Class 4: Logo Draft Due/Critique
Class 5: Logo Final Due; Writing and Sketch Discussion
Class 6: Writing and Sketch Discussion Due; Website Draft Discussion
Class 7: Website Draft Due/Critiques; Homework: Usability Testing
Class 8: Final Website Due/Presentations

Attendance

You are expected to attend each class listed on the course schedule. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to watch the recorded missed class. 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 a response paper after viewing the recorded class they missed in addition to providing detailed feedback to at least two 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 professor via email or phone about which two projects to critique before the response paper deadline. If the paper and 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 to class 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.*

If you use your one unexcused absence and miss a critique, 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 response paper from the recorded class missed and critiques of two other classmates' projects within five days (see attendance above).

* 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), 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/.