

Web Interactivity and Engagement

MMC 5XXX

3 CREDIT HOURS

FALL 2014

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
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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 backend 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 feel more 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).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course, you will:

- 1. Be familiar with CMSs and how to use them to effectively distribute large amounts of data.*

- 2. Become familiar with the programming language PHP and programming techniques generally.*
- 3. Modify the inner workings of a CMS to optimize user experience and visual appeal.*

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 work. 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 the professor and a successful 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. If you are going to miss a course you **MUST** do the following:

1. Let me know beforehand that you will be LATE or ABSENT;
2. Write a "journal entry" of sufficient length going over and explaining what we covered in the class you missed. This will be due prior to next class.

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. An updated web server space to access files, running PHP and preferably running Apache, AND
3. A database, preferably MySQL. If you have a hosting service, they likely offer MySQL services (most hosting services offer MySQL databases)

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:

What does a letter grade mean?

A: You completed the project exceptionally with very few errors.

B: You completed the project well, but there were some errors.

C: You completed the project adequately, but with too many errors or not enough effort.

D: You completed the project, but there are many errors and there are missing elements from the project specification.

F: You did not complete the project to the project specifications.

Grading on Creative Projects:

Each project will inevitably have a creative component. It is always difficult to grade based upon aesthetic and design decisions. At least 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 portion 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 with regard to feedback given.

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 other elements.

| Assignment | Points or percentage |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Create, set up, and post into a WordPress site | 50 points |
| 2. Create a WordPress Template <i>We are going to create a blank WordPress template from scratch. This will be a project and the basis for the other WordPress projects in class.</i> | 160 points |
| 3. PHP Lessons Assignment <i>Create a zip file of your PHP lesson work and send</i> | 10 points/each |

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| <p><i>it to me.</i></p> | <p>60 points total</p> |
| <p>11 PHP operation 1: <i>You will practice your PHP coding ability by creating a simple operation in PHP that can be executed from your web server.</i></p> | <p>50 points</p> |
| <p>12 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></p> | <p>220 points</p> |
| <p>13 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 project spans the entire semester after you set up your WordPress site.</i></p> | <p>150 points</p> |
| <p>14 PHP operation 2: <i>You will practice your PHP coding ability by creating a simple operation in PHP that can be executed from your web server.</i></p> | <p>60 points</p> |
| <p>15 Class Presentation: <i>You will create a thirty minute presentation as an entry point to a weekly topic. The expectation will be 25 minutes to 30 minutes of instruction and shared resources about a topic, and a paper to be submitted by the end of the semester.</i></p> | <p>100 points</p> |
| <p>16 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></p> | <p>300 points</p> |

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| <p>Class Participation</p> <p><i>You get points for every class you come to and participate in. If you miss class, you will be expected to send a brief statement about the class and your thoughts on the subject matter.</i></p> | <p>130 points</p> |
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GRADING SCALE:

Grade Values for Conversion. I do not do plus/minus grades.

| A | B | C | D | E |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1152 points and above | 1151 - 1024 points | 1023 - 896 points | 895 - 768 points | below 768 points |

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

Course Schedule:

****THIS SCHEDULE WILL CHANGE GREATLY THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER. PLEASE REFERENCE EMAILS AND SAKAI FOR ACTUAL ASSIGNMENTS AND DATES****

| <i>Week</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Topic</i> | <i>Assignment</i> |
|-------------|------------------|--|---|
| 1 | August 25 | Introduction to course and syllabus overview; class introduction; introduction to WordPress, content management systems, and database integration; and interaction of web technology | Reading assignments in email; email me personal questionnaire. Assign "Posts and Plugins." |
| 2 | Sept 1 | No Class | |
| 3 | Sept 8 | Environment, Story, Aesthetics, Performance and Usability lecture; Walkthrough of WordPress elements; WordPress themes; Looking at templating system; Basic concepts and items in PHP (recorded) | Reading assignment in email; "Create, set up, install WordPress site" assignment due. Assign "Class Presentation" project. |
| 4 | Sept 15 | Walkthrough of "Environment lecture;" Setting up a testing environment using XAMPP and other important tools for PHP; WordPress and other language integration (HTML, CSS, JavaScript, etc.); CSS and WordPress; | Reading assignment in email; Assign "Create a WordPress Template" assignment. |

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| | | Walkthrough of PHP objects and commands (recorded). | |
| 5 | Sept 22 | Core concepts of web design integrated into CMSs; Content management systems and large scale content organization systems walkthrough; Create a WordPress Template walkthrough; PHP programming (recorded) | Reading assignment in email; Assign "Modify the WordPress Template" assignment. |
| 6 | Sept 29 | Wireframeing and Mocking up; CMS integration with databases; Finish up Create a WordPress Template; PHP Programming (recorded) | Reading assignment in email; |
| 7 | Oct 6 | In-class critique of mockups; MySQL lesson; databases generally; Introduction to metadata; WordPress tutorial I; PHP Programming (recorded) | Reading assignment in email; Assign "PHP Operation" assignment; |
| 8 | Oct 13 | WordPress tutorial II; JavaScript integration; Effective use of design elements; Questions about project; PHP Programming (recorded) | Reading assignment in email. |
| 9 | Oct 20 | Custom content types and WordPress; "Effective Use of Design Elements" and User Interaction; Effective client | Reading assignment in email. |

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| | | communications; Break off brainstorming session; Custom Taxonomies and Custom Pages in WordPress (recorded); PHP Programming (recorded) | |
| 10 | Oct 27 | WordPress and SEO; Wireframing; CSS tutorial focused on WordPress; Resource management; Adding widgets and widget areas; PHP Programming (recorded) | Reading assignment in email; Assign PHP Operation II. |
| 11 | Nov 3 | WordPress tutorial III; analytics; Advanced Wireframing methods; UI/UX as a plan; Child and parent themes; | Reading assignment in email; Assign Final project; |
| 12 | Nov 10 | Questions and tutorials for final project; "Evoking Trust" and "Knowing Everything" article discussion; ; Javascript and PHP/Wordpress integration tutorial; Go over advanced PHP exercise #1; SEO techniques in CMSs; Responsive design in CMSs; | Reading assignment in email. |
| 13 | Nov 17 | Advanced CSS and PHP integration tutorial; creative uses for visual elements; brief discussion/review of color theory; Questions for | Reading assignment in email; mock up of "Final Project" due. |

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| | | final project; Loading jQuery; using jQuery; Setting up and using Analytics in a CMS; Child and Parent themes | |
| 14 | Nov 24 | Advanced WordPress tutorial I; Advanced JavaScript integration; | Reading assignment in email |
| 15 | Dec 1 | In class check in; brainstorming session; Advanced WordPress tutorial II | Reading assignment in email |
| 16 | Dec 8 | Critique final projects and goodbyes. | No reading. Final project due |

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