English 408C: The Rhetoric of Digital Design
Spring 2003

Instructor:   Deborah Maskens

Course website:  https://uwone.uwaterloo.ca
See “Using the Course Website” below.

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Office hours:  Mondays 4:30-5:30 p.m, HH 268, or by appointment

Class times:   Lecture: Monday evenings
               (ML117 + LT3 Flex Lab): 6-9 pm

Course Objectives:

After completing the course, students should have:

1. The ability to plan, prototype, test and write about effective website design
2. A practical sense of how rhetorical strategies affect brand experience in the digital realm.

Course Organization:

This course consists of a series of lectures, discussions, guest speaker sessions, and online discussion. Major project work will be case-based, comprising group prototyping and in-class heuristic and design evaluation sessions.

Required Texts:


3. Online readings as assigned.
Note: Groups will also be required to supply one VHS tape for recording their test session in the CCAT lab.

**Assignments and Distribution of Marks:**

1. An in-class midterm test worth 30 marks. The test will have two sections:
   
   Part one will test your grasp of the course concepts offered in Alan Cooper's, *The Inmates* text.
   
   Part two will test your ability to analyze a pre-assigned website design applying concepts and recommendations in the Krug *Don't Make Me Think* text.

2. A portfolio consisting of three process documents from your group (worth 30 marks):
   
   Digital Design Strategy (Response to Brand/Customer/Category insight)
   
   Digital Design Evaluation Plan (Pre/Mid/Post Evaluation Techniques)
   
   Revised Paper Prototype (minimum 10 screens)

3. An individual analytical essay or report [1,500 – 2,000 words] that describes the digital design process and findings (worth 25 marks).

4. Online and in-class participation (worth 15 marks in total): In-class participation includes your in-class presentation of design recommendations for your peer group (based upon usability observations). Online participation will be graded according to a rubric posted online

**Class Schedule**

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<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Class dates &amp; location</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, and Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>May 5 ML117</td>
<td>Introduction. Course Admin, Objectives and Expectations. Begin discussion of brands &amp; online brand experiences. Admin: Form groups of 4 students (self-select) Reading: Cooper, Part 1 (Chapters 1-2) Online: Internet research re: Roots brand &amp; Roots Air</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>May 12 LT3</td>
<td>Lecture: Intro to course website tools (hands-on). Introduction to Roots Air II case study. Reading: Cooper, Part 2 and Part 3 (Chapters 3-8) Online: Review brand/category/customer insight for Roots Air II</td>
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<td>Week</td>
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| 3    | May 19 | No class (Victoria Day holiday) – online discussion of Cooper, Krug text  
  Online Task: Submit Group Contract |
| 4    | May 26 | Lecture: Melanie Witzell, Idyll Strategic Design Inc.  
  Digital Brands: case studies & possibilities  
  Reading: Cooper, Part 4 (Chapters 9-11)  
  Online Task: Submit Digital Design Strategy for Roots Air |
| 5    | June 2 | Lecture: Robert Barlow-Busch, Quarry Integrated Communications  
  Personas & their role in the design process  
  Reading: Cooper, Part 5 (Chapters 12-14)  
  Assignment: Begin prototyping per Digital Design Strategy |
| 6    | June 9 | Lecture: Website design heuristics  
  Reading: Krug (all)  
  Admin: Pre-assign website URLs for design assessment  
  Tutorial: peer evaluation of earliest paper prototypes  
  Online: Mid-term preparation (online study group) |
| 7    | June 16 | Midterm test 3 hours in class.  
  Online: Refine prototype based upon heuristic review, Krug et al. |
| 8    | June 23 | Lecture: Paul Reader, Quarry Integrated Communications  
  Brand experience evaluation techniques  
  Tutorial: CCAT lab & testing walkthrough  
  Reading: Rubin & Nielsen chapters posted online |
| 9    | June 30 | Holiday (no class) - online  
  Online: Groups prep for test sessions (pre/mid/post protocols)  
  Online Task: Submit design evaluation plan for feedback |
| 10   | July 7* | Design Testing at UW CCAT Research Lab (ML 04).  
  Test groups: Groups 1-4  
  Observation groups: Groups 5-8  
  Reading: online |
| 11   | July 14* | Design Testing at UW CCAT Research Lab (ML 04).  
  Test groups: Groups 5-8  
  Observation groups: Groups 1-4  
  Reading: online |
| 12   | July 21 | Lecture: Feedback to Design Recommendations  
  Tutorial: Peer group presentations of test findings & design |
Due Dates:

The final assignment (completed portfolio and analysis) is due either:

- Friday, August 1st (to be marked with comments), or
- Friday, August 8th (to be marked without comments).

Papers and portfolios cannot be accepted after August 8th.

Using the Course Website

[1] Logging into Your Course:

Students will log into the course through the UWonE system https://uwone.uwaterloo.ca/ using their UWDIR userid and password. This is the same userid and password used on Quest and various other places on campus. If you do not know your UWDIR userid or password, a link is available from the front page of https://uwone.uwaterloo.ca/ to find it.

Once you are logged in, select your course and click on the [View Course] button.

[2] Once Inside the Course

All courses have a set of Course Tools which are assessable through the [Course Tools] button on the left hand side menu bar. Use this link to access such features as Announcements, Assignments, Communication, & Discussion Groups, which vary from course to course. You will log into the Assignments, Communication, & Discussion Group course tools using your 8 character UW userid and student id number.
More detailed information about each course tool and your UW userid is provided through the [help] button on the left hand side menu bar in your course.

**Note on Academic Offenses**

All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offense, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offense is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline) which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (p.1:11). If you need help in learning how to avoid offenses such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.