ENGH 375/507: Web Authoring and Design

Instructor: Douglas Eyman
Office: Robinson A 405-B
Office Hours: T 6:00-7:00 and by appointment
Contact: deyman@gmu.edu
Class: W 4:30 - 7:10 pm IN 336
Course Site: http://pwr.gmu.edu/courses/375/

Course Description

ENG 375/507, Web Authoring and Design provides a rhetorical foundation for web authoring and design in professional settings. Students will learn basic principles of writing for the web, information architecture, coding for accessibility, and usability testing. The production-oriented component of the course provides instruction in writing valid code and practice with web- and graphic-editing software tools.

In this course, we’ll be focusing on three main practices:

1. Rhetoric
2. Design
3. Code

Course Goals

We will approach authoring for the World Wide Web from a variety of perspectives:

• We will look historically at patterns and trends that have shaped the Internet and the web and how these patterns and trends characterize the web today.

• We will look critically at how individuals, businesses, government organizations, and others construct and distribute knowledge within and through electronic spaces.

• We will look rhetorically at a variety of web sites to better understand effective-and not-so-effective-web design and to identify trends in digital design and information architecture.

We'll learn to apply rhetorical principles as both heuristic and method for the design of websites. We'll explore design as a key element of web authoring. And we'll learn to code XHTML and CSS.

We will then apply these principles and practices by designing our own web spaces (working in raw code as well as composing with website editors), and by capturing, creating, and manipulating graphics. And, most importantly, by reflecting upon and writing about the choices we make as we select among available technologies and approaches to perform web-authoring tasks.
By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- make sound and informed technical, rhetorical, and design-related choices
- apply sophisticated strategies for web writing and digital content development
- critique, update, and troubleshoot web sites you have created
- continue to develop your skills in designing and creating web sites

Texts and Materials


Other readings listed in the schedule will be distributed online as PDFs or website links.

Assignments and Activities

Web Design Project

- Proposal Memo and Presentation
- Short Report + Reflection
- Web Design Product
- Presentation

Presentation (select 1 option)

- Web Design Presentation
- Web Authoring Resource Presentation
- Web Theory Presentation (ENG 507)

In-Class Modules

- Basic XHTML
- Separating Content from Presentation: CSS
- Working with Graphics
- Typography and Document Design
- CSS Layouts
- Design for Everyone: Web Standards and Accessibility
- Exploring Advanced Techniques

*Note that these are brief descriptions; full assignment descriptions and examples will be provided in class.*
Class modules
The class modules are the hands-on work of the class. Modules must be completed in the order in which they appear on the course schedule. Each module is worth 10 points each; see each individual module for the grading criteria for that module. The modules will be available on our class web site. Class activities and discussions will help you prepare for the modules, but it is your responsibility to read the modules and to prepare and submit your work in its entirety, so read the module instructions and steps carefully.

Presentation
Everyone does it once; due dates assigned in class; 20 points
For this assignment, you will present on one of three topics: a web design example, a web authoring resource, or an approach or method that focuses on web theory. Details about the requirements for these presentations will be covered in class and posted on the course website.

Final Project
The final project includes several components:

- Proposal
- Progress Report
- Presentation
- Project report/reflection
- Final Product

You will design your own final project. The design and content of the project (which must be web-based) is primarily up to you, but you must demonstrate a working knowledge of the principles discussed in class — rhetoric, design, and code. You will also produce a careful and thoughtful project report and reflection about how you engaged these principles in the production of your website/web project.

Grading
Punctuality and meeting deadlines are crucial to successful professional writing. If you are unable to turn in a project on time, you must make arrangements with me in advance of the class meeting in which the documents are due. Absences do not alleviate you of the need to turn in work by the set due date and late work will be penalized.

You are responsible for keeping track of your points in this class. Create an Excel spreadsheet and list the assignments, the total points, and the points you earn as the semester proceeds.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>task/activity</th>
<th>points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>modules 1-7 (10 points each)</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>presentation</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>class participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>final project proposal</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>final project presentation</td>
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<td>final project report</td>
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<td>final project product</td>
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<td>points possible</td>
<td>200</td>
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**Attendance**

If you miss more than 2 classes, your grade will be lowered a letter grade for lack of participation and professionalism. Being late for class or leaving early is considered unprofessional and will count as an absence. As always, there are legitimate reasons to miss class; thus, you may miss a class because S[tuff] H[appens]. If you know in advance that you must miss class, you should contact me and any project groups with which you are working **before** your absence to coordinate future activities.

**Course and Institutional Policies**

Because this is a class that requires collaboration and discussion, you are expected to attend class and be prepared. We will often work on projects and other exercises during class time, and there is no substitute for your presence during these workshops.

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus and schedule if warranted by pedagogical or logistical exigency.

**Academic Integrity**

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.
Office of Disability Services
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. [http://ods.gmu.edu](http://ods.gmu.edu)

University Policies
The University Catalog, [http://catalog.gmu.edu](http://catalog.gmu.edu), is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.

Other Useful Resources (see also the Links page on the course website)
- WRITING CENTER: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200
  [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu)
- UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES "Ask a Librarian"
  [http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html](http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html)
- COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380
  [http://caps.gmu.edu](http://caps.gmu.edu)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tasks/Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/23</td>
<td>1st Class: Introductions; Rhetoric, Design, Code</td>
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<td>Set up mason web account; Histories and How Stuff Works</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/30</td>
<td>Module 1: Basic XHTML – JLG chapters 1 &amp; 2; Duckett 1-4</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>Module 2: Working with CSS – JLG chapter 3; Duckett 10-13</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2/13</td>
<td>Module 3: Working with Graphics; Duckett 5 &amp; 16</td>
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<td>Project Proposal Draft Due – JLG chapter 4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2/20</td>
<td>Copyright and Intellectual Property Issues</td>
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<td>Working with Dreamweaver – JLG chapter 5</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2/27</td>
<td>Module 4: Typography and Document Design</td>
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<td>Final Project Proposal Due – JLG chapter 6</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3/6</td>
<td>Module 5: CSS Layouts – JLG chapter 7; Duckett 15 &amp; 17</td>
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<td>3/13</td>
<td>Spring Break - no class</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3/20</td>
<td>CSS, continued – JLG chapter 8</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3/27</td>
<td>Module 6: Findability, Usability, Accessibility</td>
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<td>Module 6, continued.</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>Module 7: Exploring Advanced Techniques – Duckett 8 &amp; 9</td>
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<td>Project Work; Progress Report Due</td>
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<td>5/8</td>
<td>Final Project Presentations; Project Report Due</td>
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