

## Applied Design Research/SPDA 3031/501

### Instructor Information

**Bill Morgan** | Clinical Associate Professor  
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Office Hours are Monday, 3:00-4:00 or by appointment.

### Course Description, Structure, and Objectives

#### Description

- Apply designers' Generative, exploratory, and evaluative research methods to gather deep insights.
- Prerequisite(s): SPDA 2030 or SPDA 3030 with a C or better.

#### Structure

Applied design research is a process that combines design and research methods to solve real-world problems. It uses a human-centered approach to understand users' needs and develop effective and innovative solutions.

Here are some of the benefits of using a design-based research methodology:

- Design is a complex process that requires a deep understanding of the problem space.
- Research is an essential part of the design process.
- Research is used to inform **all** stages of the design process, from problem definition to ideation to implementation.
- Designers need to be able to identify research questions and collect and analyze data.
- There are a variety of research methods that can be used, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods.
- Research should be used to inform design decisions and to create more user-centered designs.

The research methods in this course are divided into three main parts; **Exploratory, Generative, and Evaluative**, however many of the methods used are applicable to more than just one type of data collection. Course assignments will gradually work through the design research process reflective of a design project, although they may not all apply to your projects.

#### Objectives

Students will learn to apply these principles to real-world problems and develop the skills necessary to become strategic designers.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the value and philosophical assumptions qualitative user research.



- Design and conduct valid and ethically sound qualitative user research projects as part of the design process.
- Read and analyze exemplary qualitative user research.
- Demonstrate ability to collect data through user interviews, ethnography (contextual inquiry), user observations, and usability tests.
- Apply various qualitative analysis approaches to user research.
- Ascertain skillsets that are useful in personal portfolios.
- Demonstrate ability to communicate research findings effectively.

## Required/Recommended Materials

Universal Methods of Design,  
Bella Martin & Bruce Hannington  
ISBN-13: 978-1631597480

\*Available as an eBook through the UNT libraries  
<https://discover.library.unt.edu/catalog/b7515075> \*

Research for Designers  
Gjoko Muratovski  
Sage Publications, LTD.  
ISBN 978-1-5297-0816-5  
ISBN 978-1-5297-0815-8 (pbk)

## How to Succeed in this Course

One trait that contributes to success is creating relationships. I am here to mentor you through your academic career and beyond. I welcome the opportunity to meet with you; a scheduled meeting works well for pre-defined items, but impromptu meetings are strongly encouraged. *Connect with me through email and/or by attending office hours.* During busy times, my inbox becomes full, so if you contact me and are waiting to receive a response within two business days, please send a follow-up email. A gentle nudge is always appreciated.

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter for faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodation at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member before implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](http://www.unt.edu/oda) website (<http://www.unt.edu/oda>). You may also contact ODA at (940) 565-4323.

## Supporting Your Success and Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together. Every student in this class should have the right to learn and engage in an environment of respect and courtesy from others. We will discuss our classroom’s habits of engagement, and I also encourage you to review UNT’s student code of conduct so that we can all start with the same baseline civility understanding ([Code of Student Conduct](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct)) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>)

## Assessing Your Work

A = 900-1000

B = 800-899

C = 700-799

D = 600-699

F = 500-599

Assessments are based on four major criteria:

Communication (20%)

Critical Thinking (20%)

Social Responsibility (20%)

Design (40%)

## Course Requirements/Schedule

### Modules

<b>Type</b>		<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>% of Final Grade</b>
In-Class Activities		300 pts.	30%
Class Assignments	10 total	300 pts.	30%
Personal Portfolio		100 pts.	10%
Course Project		300 pts.	30%
Points Total		1000 pts.	100%



			TOPIC
Week 1	15-Jan 17-Jan	INTRODUCTION	Syllabus & Canvas Review
Week 2	22-Jan		Ethics
	24-Jan	ETHICS HUMAN-CENTERED	Human-Centered Design
Week 3	29-Jan 31-Jan		Design as Practice, Research, & Thinking Design as Practice, Research, & Thinking
Week 4	5-Feb		Discuss Case Studies or projects with Ang
	7-Feb		Research Methods
Week 5	12-Feb		Methods & Methodologies
	14-Feb		
Week 6	19-Feb		Methods & Methodologies
	21-Feb		
Week 7	26-Feb		Methods & Methodologies
	28-Feb		
Week 8	4-Mar		Collecting Data
	6-Mar		
Week 9	11-Mar 13-Mar	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
Week 10	18-Mar		Communicating
	20-Mar		
Week 11	25-Mar		What is Strategic Design
	27-Mar		
Week 12	1-Apr	STRATEGIC DESIGN	Setting the Objective of an SDP
	3-Apr		Discuss Case Studies or projects with Ang
Week 13	8-Apr		Configuring a SDP
	10-Apr		
Week 14	15-Apr		Orchestrating a SDP
	17-Apr		
Week 15	22-Apr		Embedding a SDP
	24-Apr		
Week 16	29-Apr		
	1-May		

Late Work is only accepted with prior discussion. You will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class and describe that the calendar is subject to change, citing the [Emergency Notifications and Procedures Policy \(PDF\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049) (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049). Also, describe the standards for academic integrity in the course, citing the [Academic Integrity Policy \(PDF\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049) (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049).

Grades are based on mastery of the content. As a rule, I do not grade on a “curve” because that is a comparison of your outcomes to others. However, I encourage you to find opportunities to learn with and through others. Explore [Navigate’s Study Buddy](https://navigate.unt.edu) (<https://navigate.unt.edu>) tool to join study groups. Maximize your learning with our coaching staff at the Learning Center. Focus on areas where you struggle in this course by attending scheduled study group sessions with me the week before each exam. Forward together!

## Attendance and Participation

Research has shown that students who attend classes are more likely to be successful. You should attend every class unless you have a university-excused absence such as active military service, a religious holy day, or an official university function, as stated in the [Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy \(PDF\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-039) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-039>). Please let me know if you cannot attend a class due to an emergency. Your safety and well-being are important to me.

## Student Support Services & Policies

In addition to standards for success in courses, I feel UNT policies and procedures are professional standards worth integrating into your life. You can access these policies in Navigate ([Navigate.unt.edu](https://navigate.unt.edu)), in Canvas under the Help menu, in EIS, and on the [Student Support Services & Policies](#) page. I encourage you to read and absorb these important processes.