Interaction is at the heart of most digital creations: they may inform, entertain, challenge, surprise or offend—but in order to do so, they must first engage the user.

In this advanced interaction design course, we will expand our collective knowledge and boundaries of interaction design. We will explore how meaning is conveyed and interpreted through interactions that will go far beyond just the screen.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you will:

- Apply fundamentals of interaction design to a design process
- Critically analyze designs and experiences based on various research frameworks
- Create robust interactions based on current and emerging interaction patterns
- Lead and conduct design workshops

In short, you will grow as a designer and begin thinking about design more complexly.
Course Structure

The course is structured along two arcs of the design process: creative discovery and creative envisioning—underpinning both is research. This process is fuzzy at the front, messy in the middle, and clear often only at the very end. But as Charles Eames once noticed, “Eventually everything connects.”

How to be Successful in This Course

Although there is no single recipe for success, the following mindsets can help you navigate successfully through this class.

Embrace creative confidence. Design is risky. No venture is ever guaranteed success. Designers rely on creative confidence when making leaps, trusting intuition, and chasing solutions that they haven’t yet fully figured out. It takes time to build (or find) creative confidence. I hope that by the end of the course, you will have gained more.

Make the abstract concrete. Making an idea real can reveal insights that mere theory cannot. Good designers have a bias toward action, creating tangible—not necessarily beautiful—prototypes. Getting ideas out of your head and into the hands of others is a necessary step toward understanding.

Fail, then iterate. Most education systems don’t do much to reward failure, even though it can be a very powerful tool for learning. If you don’t fail at something every so often, chances are you are not taking many risks. We often learn more from failed attempts than successful ones. You have my permission and encouragement to get things wrong in this class, even though you don’t actually need it.

Reflect often. You will forget most of what you learned in school. Learning is enhanced and made more permanent when you reflect on your learning experience and its meaning to you. When you reflect on what you learn, how you learn, its value to you, and what else you need to know, you’re more inclined to own and appreciate your learning.
Semester Schedule

The following week-by-week breakdown explains topics we will cover. Everything is subject to change.

Complete explanations of what specifically is due, additional materials, and assignment submissions are available at canvas.unt.edu.

CREATIVE DISCOVERY · UNDERSTANDING INTERACTION

Week 1 — Jan 12
What is Interaction?
We spend time getting to know the course, each other, and what we mean by interaction design.

Week 2 — Jan 19
Are There Different Types?
Is interaction with a static object different from interaction with a dynamic system? We explore (and attempt to break) models of different interactions with systems.

Week 3 — Jan 26
Design Beyond Vision
After popularizing the concept of affordances in 1988, why does Donald Norman now tell us, "Forget affordances. Provide signifiers"? Are there non-visual signifiers? How might we design for them?

Week 4 — Feb 2
Design for All the Human Senses
We explore how interaction designers create experiences for all the human senses and begin a research journey of how you might do the same.

CREATIVE DISCOVERY · DESIGNERLY RESEARCH

Week 5 — Feb 10
Emerging Enabling Technologies
We explore emerging technologies that enable near- and far-future interactions.

Week 6 — Feb 11
Interaction Beyond Vision Workshop 1
You will lead design workshops that explores design beyond vision.

Week 7 — Feb 23
Interaction Beyond Vision Workshop 2
You will lead design workshops that explores design beyond vision.

Week 8 — Mar 2
Reflection / Inflection
Halfway through the course we pause to reflect on what we learned and how it can help us for the Creative Envisioning portion.
CREATIVE ENVISIONING · SAMS CLUB

Week 9 — Mar 9
Workshop

We begin an envisioning project with Sams Club Now, the innovation store that aims to reimagine the future of retail. More details will be provided on Canvas later in the semester.

Week 10 — Mar 16
Workshop

We continue our envisioning project with Sams Club Now.

Week 11 — Mar 23
Workshop

We continue our envisioning project with Sams Club Now.

Week 12 — Mar 30
Workshop

We continue our envisioning project with Sams Club Now.

Week 13 — Apr 6
Workshop

We continue our envisioning project with Sams Club Now.

Week 14 — Apr 13
Workshop

We continue our envisioning project with Sams Club Now.

Week 15 — Apr 20
Workshop + Showcase

We wrap up our project with Sams Club Now presenting possibilities and future-state scenarios.

Week 16 — Apr 27
Workshop + Showcase

We wrap up our project with Sams Club Now presenting possibilities and future-state scenarios.

Participant (not Attendance)

Attendance is mandatory in order to participate in the class. This is a highly interactive course. If you’re not here, you won’t be able to regain the experiences you missed. You are allowed one non-excused absence. Any additional absences after the second without prior approval will result in a letter grade reduction off your final grade.

If you are unable to attend class, let me know by email at least one day before if possible.
Grades

Students often think grades measure how much you learned. Only you can say how much you learned. In this class, grades reflect performance and quality of work.

Grade Breakdown

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UNT Policies

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences.

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Accommodation Statement. UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of 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 accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.
Course Safety Procedures (for Laboratory Courses). Students enrolled in [insert class name] are required to use proper safety procedures and guidelines as outlined in UNT Policy 06.038 Safety in Instructional Activities. While working in laboratory sessions, students are expected and required to identify and use proper safety guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that the UNT is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance. Brochures for student insurance are available in the UNT Student Health and Wellness Center. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention at the Student Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If students have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, they should be sure that the plan covers treatment at this facility. If students choose not to go to the UNT Student Health and Wellness Center, they may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. Students are responsible for expenses incurred there.

Emergency Notification & Procedures. UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.