Design Research Methods

How do you design a product or service that users will love, if you don't know what they want in the first place?

This course introduces you to methods designers use to understand the people. You will apply generative, exploratory, and evaluative research methods to gather deep insights.

Through examples, exercises, critiques, and creative projects, you will begin to think like a designer.

Learning Objectives

What is qualitative user research and it is valuable

How to fit user research into your own design process

How to plan user research projects that are valid and ethically sound

How to run a usability test, conduct user interviews, perform a contextual inquiry and make user observations

How to evaluate research results and apply qualitative analysis

How to make your research matter by communicating effectively about your research results

Course Context

This is designed for the B.S. in Project, Design and Analysis program. It is one of four design classes that every PDA student must take.

Required Texts

Universal Methods of Design,
Bella Martin & Bruce Hannington.

Course Materials

1 sketchbook (without lines) Digital or cellphone camera
Course Structure

This course has three main parts, each five weeks in length. Assignments build on previous weeks and gradually become more complex and challenging.

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<td>Exploratory Research Methods</td>
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<td>Generative Research Methods</td>
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<td>What is qualitative research? How is it different from quantitative research?</td>
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<td>Design Research Framework</td>
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Week-by-Week

Below is the order of the semester. Specific details and assignments will be provided at canvas.unt.edu.

Week 1 – Aug 23-25
Design Research
1A – Course Introduction
1B – What is Design Research (Part 1)

Week 2 – Aug 31-Sept 1
Design Research
2A – What is Design Research (Part 2)
2B – A Design Research Framework (Part 1)

Week 3 – Sept 6-8
Research Framework
3A – A Design Research Framework (Part 1)
3B – Exploratory Research Methods

Week 4 – Sept 13-15
Balance + Rhythm
4A – Exploratory Research Methods
4B – Exploratory Research Methods

Week 5 – Sept 20-22
Review of Principles
5A – Exploratory Research Methods
5B – Exploratory Research Methods

Week 6 – Sept 27-29
Line
6A – Exploratory Research Methods
6B – Generative Research Methods

Week 7 – Oct 4-6
Shape
7A – Generative Research Methods
7B – Generative Research Methods

Week 8 – Oct 11-13
Pattern, Texture + Space
8A – Generative Research Methods
8B – Generative Research Methods

Week 9 – Oct 18-20
Motion, Value
9A – Generative Research Methods
9B – Generative Research Methods
## How to be Successful in this Class

Discipline is the key to get the most out of this class. Below is a sample of how you should generally spend your time preparing for class. Note that not every week will necessarily follow this order.

### In-Class Day 2A
**Practice and Explore**

Come prepared for in-class exercises by being familiar with the reading and ready with questions.

### In-Class Day 2B
**Assess**

Review content and apply to exercises and semester project.

<table>
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<th>Out of Class</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prepare</strong></td>
<td><strong>Review and Reflect</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete reading(s).</td>
<td>Complete assignments. Reflect on what you learned.</td>
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<td>Take quiz(ies).</td>
<td>Write down questions you have or concepts that are unclear.</td>
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<td>Complete assignments. Discuss concepts you've learned with classmates.</td>
<td>Explain what you've learned to someone else.</td>
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Grading

A list of assigned readings and materials is listed in Canvas. Advance preparation and enthusiastic participation is an important part of the learning experience and critical to in-class discussions.

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<th>Percent</th>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
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<tr>
<td>15% Attendance</td>
<td>A+ 97-100 4.0  C+ 77-79 2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Quizzes</td>
<td>A 93-96 4.0   C 73-76 2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Design Exercises</td>
<td>A- 90-92 3.7  C- 70-72 1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Project Submissions</td>
<td>B+ 87-89 3.3  D+ 67-69 1.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Personal Portfolio</td>
<td>B 83-86 3.0  D 63-66 1.0</td>
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<td>B- 80-83 2.7  D- 60-52 0.7</td>
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Late Work

Late work is not accepted. The key to success in this course is communication. It is your responsibility to correspond via UNT email any absences before they happen and issues that might occur.

Attendance

Attendance is 15% of your total grade and is necessary to successfully complete this course.

You are allowed two absences. Any additional absences after the second without prior approval will result in a letter grade reduction off your final grade.

Academic Integrity

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

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.

COVID

If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Team at COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.