Interaction designers use form to shape behavior. We create a dialogue between a user and products, systems or services. Truly meaningful design is more than interactions, it elicits emotion.

We will explore the founding principles of interaction design, how interaction design as a discipline came to be, its potential future(s), and—most importantly—how you fit in this broad landscape.

**Learning Objectives**

This course is designed to provide competency in these areas:

- **discovery** curiously exploring complexity in the word around you in order to understand it deeply
- **communication** translating knowledge gained from discovery into meaningful and actionable insights
- **envisioning** shaping insights into thoughtful artifacts, interactions or experiences that balance human and more-than-human needs
- **critique** the never-ending process of continuous improvement of ourselves, our process, and our world

In short, you’ll grow as an interaction designer.

**Textbooks**

There is no single required textbook for this course. You will have readings provided (PDFs or website links) throughout the semester.
Course Structure

The course is structured as a seminar. Each class will be some combination of: lecture, discussions (student-led and/or professor-led), project-based learning activities, workshops, and critique.

Attendance Engagement

This is a highly interactive course. If you’re not present, you won’t be able to regain the experiences you missed. You are allowed two non-excused absences. Additional absences 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. Missing five class sessions over the course of the semester for any reason(s), even if some portion of these absences are excused, will earn you a final course grade of “F.”

Evaluation

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

You will be evaluated on your class engagement week-to-week and your performance on a series of small-scale projects designed to introduce you to the tools, methods, mindsets and postures of interaction designers.

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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.
Suggested Readings

The following texts will be useful to you throughout your time in the masters in interaction design program at UNT.


